

The God-given Roles of Man and Woman in the Christian's Everyday Life

By David P. Kuske

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Introduction

The assignment for this paper was to address theses 2, 3, 20 and 21 and antithesis 6 of the document entitled "Scriptural Principles of Man and Woman Roles" adopted at the 1993 synod convention. These points (with the most pertinent words underlined) are:

- **Thesis 2:** In love God established distinct male and female relationships (Ge 2:7,18,22)...headship for man and submission for woman. These roles *demonstrated God's unchanging will* for the complementary relationship of man and woman with each other. Two NT passages attest to this: 1 Co 11:3,8,9 and 1 Tm 2:12,13.
- **Thesis 3:** God established roles for man and woman *in his creative plan* before he united them in marriage and *before they fell into sin* (Genesis 1:17,18,22; 1 Corinthians 11:3,8,9). Therefore God's assigned *roles apply beyond the marriage relationship and in every period of history*.
- **Thesis 20:** Christians also accept the biblical role relationship principle *for their life and work in the world* (1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:6-17). Christians seek to do God's will consistently *in every area of their lives*. We will therefore strive to apply this role relationship principle to our life and work in the world.
- **Thesis 21:** Scripture *leaves a great deal to our conscientious Christian judgment* as we live the role relationship principle in the world. In Christian love we will *refrain from unduly binding the consciences* of the brothers and sisters in our fellowship. Rather, we will encourage each other as we seek to apply this principle to our lives in the world.
- **Antithesis 6:** We reject the opinion that male headship and female submission apply only to marriage or only to marriage and the church (1 Co 11:3,1 Tm 2:12).

These statements will come as no surprise to those who have followed the various statements published by the synod on this subject since the discussion of this doctrine began in earnest in the late 1970's. Let's go back to those documents published by the synod and review what they have said about the matter of the God-given man and woman roles in everyday life because they spell out in more detail the basis for these points.

In the process we will note two things of special interest. The four different groups that studied this subject and published statements on it all agreed in what they said about this matter. That in itself is certainly noteworthy. When four separate groups of our fellowship over the course of twenty years have studied Scripture and all have come to the same conclusion, one cannot lightly brush this aside with the notion that this is something that really hasn't been given much study or attention among us.

But just because four study groups have all come to the same conclusion (although it is significant) does not in and of itself prove that their conclusion is a proper one. Only if their conclusion is drawn from Scripture alone without any a priori human suppositions and only if their interpretation of Scripture was based on proper hermeneutical principles—only then will we accept their conclusion as truly scriptural.

So as we review the documents published in our synod leading up to the 1993 statement adopted by the synod, we will focus particularly on what they said about the God-given roles of man and woman in everyday life. Then we will give special attention to the basis on which they drew the conclusions they did which are summarized in the synodical statement.

BWT Statement of 1979

With the approval of the Conference of Presidents, the Board for Worker Training presented a statement to the 1979 synod convention. The following are several excerpts that are pertinent to our subject:

Holy Scripture assigns distinctive roles to man and woman in their relation to each other for this life. *These distinctive roles for man and woman in their relation to each other for this life were ordained by God at creation...*

The creation of Eve is preparatory to her bond of marriage with Adam. It pertained to the special manner in which she was created and to what she was like by this act of creation. Thereby her marriage to Adam was not yet affected. This becomes all the more evident when we consider that according to Scripture the creation of Eve is to be understood as being at the same time the creation of womanhood, of the whole female sex. What was determined for all womankind through the act of creation is what they were made to be like to fit them for marriage but does not yet place them into the marriage bond. That in the creation of Eve we are dealing with God's creation of woman as a separate sex, whether they would actually enter marriage or not, is also brought out in verse 23, when we hear the man saying: "This one shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Why? Was it because she was to be joined to him in marriage? No, but because in her creation "this one" was taken from man.

Concerning the creation of woman, note that according to verse 18 God says: "It is not good for man to be alone." God is speaking of man as the male generically, not merely of Adam as the first individual... Thus Eve is a helper already by virtue of her creation, even before she became the wife of Adam. *She is a helper by the manner in which she was made and by virtue of what she was like through God's creative action.* What was true of her is then true of all womankind inasmuch as they, too, are what they were made to be through Eve's creation...

That womankind was made for a subordinate position to man, to whom the leadership role is assigned by God creation, is clearly confirmed by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 11. In setting forth the relation of woman to man, the apostle here stresses that she was made for man and out of man...

Now what basis does St. Paul adduce [in 1 Timothy 2:12-15] for saying that a woman is not to exercise authority over a man? Does Paul point to the marriage bond in which a woman finds herself? Does Paul point to the relation in which she stands over against man in the bond of marriage? No, *he leads this—that she is not to exercise authority over man—back to something that was bound up with her creation, namely, to the fact that Adam was first formed, then Eve...*

The order of creation which assigned roles to man and woman was established by God in the interest of the institution of marriage and the family, upon which human society in this earthly life is basically structured... [This] is also the reason why the application of this creation order to the marriage bond is always in the foreground when the distinctive roles of man and woman are under discussion in Holy Scripture. *As we have already seen in discussing some of these Scripture sections, the applications to the marriage bond do not support the contention that the creation order is restricted to the marriage bond. Rather, it is in the very interest of maintaining the basic institutions of marriage and the family for this earthly life that the order of creation obtains also apart from the marriage bond, and apart from the family. The basic structure of the home and the relationships that are to obtain there will never be maintained for any length of time if the order of creation is not somehow reflected outside of marriage in the relationship of women over against men... In applying the broad moral principles that woman is*

not to exercise authority over men to her activities in public life outside the home, Scripture leaves a great deal to our conscientious Christian judgment...What the order of creation requires of the single woman in every instance and of the married woman over against other men besides her own husband is not defined as fully and precisely in Holy Scripture as it is with relation to the marriage bond. Hence, it cannot be delineated as fully by us. It is expressed in the broad statement that the woman is not to exercise authority over the man, and that she is to be in submission as the law says...

The Lord wants his order of creation with respect to the distinctive roles of man and woman to be clearly reflected in the work and worship life of his church...To understand the apostolic directions...to uphold the order of creation in the work and worship life of the church we need to remember that, unlike God's Old Testament people, the New Testament church has no binding legal regulations and prescriptions from God beyond that which is imbedded in the moral law, God's immutable holy will for this earthly life. If we take any of St. Paul's injunctions which he voices in stressing the order of creation as special precepts for the New Testament church, as regulations that hold good only in the church and in its worship life and have no application to anyone outside of the church or to any other setting, then we are misunderstanding them...There were such additional binding, divine precepts and regulations for God's Old Testament people, the Sinaitic Law Code...These precepts...did not apply to people outside the covenant nation...God's New Testament children are no longer minors, whose life must be guided and controlled and kept in bounds by a discipline of outward regulations. They are adult children who live in the full light of Christ's finished redemption. That full light revealed in Christ Jesus suffices to constrain them to live according to the immutable holy will of God. Every injunction of St. Paul that he voices in reference to the order of creation must also be led back to the moral law and be understood as in some way expressing a demand that is imbedded in the moral law...The New Testament church has no binding legal precepts beyond the moral law, the immutable holy will of God for all men...There are other imperatives in the New Testament that express God's saving will, e.g. the imperative to repent, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. These imperatives are a most forceful divine invitation to salvation. They reveal God's saving will in Christ Jesus and are full of creative power to effect the repentance and faith by which the sinner enjoys salvation. Gospel imperatives, revealing God's saving will in Christ Jesus, are also imperatives: preach the Gospel to all creatures; make disciples of all nations by baptizing; do this in remembrance of me, with reference to the Lord's Supper. In these three imperatives addressed to believers, to Christians, to the church, everything is embraced that belongs to the special Gospel mission entrusted to his believers. They, too, are filled with the creative power to effect what the imperatives state...The Gospel imperatives connected with the means of grace are neither New Testament ceremonial laws nor precepts of the moral law, demanding something of us...The biblical injunctions, however, which uphold the order of creation with reference to the distinctive roles of man and woman are neither Gospel imperatives nor are they special legal precepts for the New Testament church. They belong to the immutable holy will of God for this earthly life.

The 1979 convention referred this BWT statement to the congregations, conferences, and 1980 district conventions for study and reaction. The 1981 BWT report to the synod stated that the reports from the 1980 district conventions indicated improvements that could be made in the statement: the role of man should receive more direct treatment; the role of woman should be taken up more fully showing also her positive role in the church; more should be said about the woman's role in society with more applications and examples; expansion of the exegetical portions of the paper; additions of antitheses for the sake of greater clarity and precision; simplification of language so that it can be published in a pamphlet for the laity. The BWT suggested that "the Synod might understandably wish to refer desired elaborations of the pertinent scriptural principles to a commission or committee whose constitutional responsibilities are not restricted to the operation of synodical schools." The convention referred this suggestion to the COP for action.

The '81 report of the BWT also highlighted what it felt were areas worthy of special attention and added some thoughts in regard to them. Two are worthy of mention in connection with our present study: 1) some passages to be noted in regard to the point that the NT church has no binding legal regulations beyond the moral law: Mt 22:37-40, Ro 13:9-10, Ro 3:20, Eph 2:13-15, Ga 5:1, Ga 5:13-14, Col 2:6-23; and 2) the comment, in regard to the NT leaving a great deal to our conscientious judgment in applying the God-given roles of man and woman in everyday living, that “as long as the God-ordained relationship between man and woman is wholeheartedly embraced, differences in judgment in making applications need not and will not disturb the church.”

In the excerpts cited above, the key points are all based on Scripture, not on human judgments. It was no secret that the original draft of the BWT statement was made by Prof. Carl Lawrenz, and his typical approach of basing every point on careful exegesis and clearly established scriptural principles is evident throughout. The point that the creation of Eve is preparatory to the bond of marriage with Adam, that her creation is to be understood as being at the same time the creation of womanhood, that she is a helper by virtue of her creation before she became the wife of Adam, and that what was true of her is true of all womankind—this point is based on a careful exegesis of Genesis 2. Prof. Lawrenz’s exegesis of this portion of Genesis was subsequently printed in the 1981 *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* for everyone to examine in detail. This point is established further in the BWT statement by NT passages (1 Co 11 and 1 Tm 2) in which the apostle Paul cites creation and not marriage as the basis for his instructions to the NT churches in regard to the roles of man and woman as God ordained them. These NT passages make more explicit what is implicit in the OT.

A second major point—why special attention is given to marriage in the application of the God-given roles of man and woman—is based on a general truth taught in Scripture. This truth is that society in this earthly life is basically structured on God’s institution of marriage and the family. The BWT statement does not elaborate on this truth, most likely because it could assume that in the WELS this is universally understood to be scripturally true. This point is also accompanied by a reminder of a basic point of biblical interpretation: the fact that when a general truth is applied to a particular situation it does not mean that the application of the general truth is restricted by this application. Thus the application of the general truth of the headship of man especially to marriage does not mean that the principle is restricted in application to marriage.

A third major point—that it is a misunderstanding to maintain that the NT injunctions hold good only in the church and in its worship life and have no application to anyone outside of the church or to any other setting—is based on another general truth taught in Scripture. This truth is that the NT church has no binding legal precepts beyond the moral law. This point was elaborated on only briefly to underscore the NT freedom from any “ceremonial laws” (such as the minor children of Israel had in OT times) and to show how the NT injunctions which uphold the order of creation do not fit the category of Gospel imperatives.

The truth that the NT church has no binding legal precepts beyond the moral law has been emphasized in our seminary’s instruction from the time of its first great theologian, Dr. Adolph Hoenecke. It has also been the subject of numerous *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* articles: 1915 = “Gottes Wille and Befehl” by John Schaller; 1916 = “Gibt es im neuen Testament gesetzliche Verordnungen?” by August Pieper; 1917 = “Wie erkennt man ein Moralgebot?” by Herman Meyer; 1943 = “Our Christian Liberty and Its Proper Use” by Edmund Reim; 1960 = “The Law is Not Made for a Righteous Man” by August Pieper; 1968 = “Ministering to God’s Free People” by Armin Schuetze; and 1985 = “The Order of Creation As Moral Law and as it is Applied by the NT Writers to the Role of Man and Woman”. Perhaps the BWT statement miscalculated a bit in assuming that this truth is commonly known and understood in the WELS because of the seminary training of our pastors and the many *Quarterly* articles, but it certainly did not introduce a thought that was unscriptural.

A 1981 Series of *Quarterly* Articles

When the 1979 synod convention called on the congregations and conferences to study the BWT statement and the scriptural passages and principles involved, the seminary faculty made an exegesis of the pertinent passages the focus of its regular study meetings. Each passage was assigned to a faculty member. His

exegesis was critiqued by the entire faculty, and after a revision reflecting the faculty reactions was approved, it was published in the *Quarterly*. The editor in commenting on this series of exegeses wrote, “The faculty agrees unanimously and wholeheartedly on the final conclusions regarding the Bible’s teaching of subordination. It insists to a man that this teaching is to be taught and practiced by all of us. Not everyone on the faculty is agreed on every exegetical point involved in this study. The differences, however, lie in areas of interpretation that do not involve doctrine. For example, does the term ‘prophesy’ in 1 Corinthians 11:4-5 refer to a joint speaking of God’s Word by the assembled group, or is it direct revelatory action in which the impulse came from God, not the will of the speaker? The faculty is fully agreed that subordination is taught in Scripture and that Scripture imposes on the New Testament Church of God no law beyond what it reveals as the immutable will of God.” (WLQ, 1981, p242)

Obviously there is too much material in these seven articles to do any more than to give a few quotations and summary statements that add something pertinent beyond what was already cited in the excerpts from the BWT statement. The first comes from the article on 1 Co 11:3-16.

These verses address the Corinthians about the *custom* of veiling and wearing long hair which in their society gave expression to the *principle* of the headship of man. Paul shows the Corinthians that the latter is a principle established by God in the manner and purpose of woman’s creation. Since the *custom* gave expression to the biblical *principle*, to refuse to follow the *custom* could also be understood to be a denial of the biblical *principle*. This passage does not establish the custom as a universal practice which must be observed, but it does establish that social customs which give expression to the biblical principle of the headship of man will be observed by Christians as a witness of their faith. (WLQ, 1981, p83)

Sometimes the statement is made that the Scripture never says anything about the God-given roles of man and woman in regard to society in general. That statement certainly cannot stand in the light of 1 Corinthians 11 where Paul’s application of the principle urges the Corinthians to observe a custom of their city’s society. Nor does the argument hold that he spoke of keeping this custom of the Corinthian society only when they came together to worship (vv 4,5,13). When Paul speaks of cutting off or shaving the head (v6) and men having their hair cut short (v14) and women leaving their hair long (v15), he obviously is not speaking of something that involves a quick change in appearance only for the time they spend together in public worship.

What about the possibility that the word “man” in 1 Corinthians 11 could be translated “husband”? Could ἀνδρῶς here mean “husband”? In other words, could Paul in this particular context be narrowing down Christ’s headship not only from “all human beings” to “all male human beings” but even further to “all husbands”? The question is legitimate since in Greek ἀνὴρ can mean “male human being” or “husband”; the context alone decides the matter. *We will find that verses 8, 12, and 14 make it evident that ἀνὴρ in this context is not referring to “husband” but to “male human being”.* (N.B. from the comments on verse 12: *The male comes into existence through the female; the articles are obviously generic because the meaning cannot be that the husband comes into existence by his wife.*) (WLQ, 1981, p86. Cf. also a paper by Pastor M. Riley presented to the Manitowoc Pastoral Conference in April, 1993, which makes a study of all the passages in the NT where ἀνὴρ and γυνή are used = “The Proper Translation of ἀνὴρ and γυνή in the NT” available from the essay file of the WLS library.)

Does the principle of man’s headship stated at the outset in verse 3 apply only to Christians? Or does it apply to every man, believer or unbeliever, and is it therefore a universal principle applying to all people throughout history since the creation of man and woman?

Why does Paul say every man? The thought might suggest itself to us that the unbelieving man does not recognize or follow Christ’s headship since this can be done only in faith. But Christ is the head of the

whole universe also as a result of his redeeming work (Col 1:20, Eph 1:22). *Also, in the development of the thought in verses 8, 9, and 12, Paul speaks of every man with the creation of man and woman in mind. An unbelieving man may reject both the truth which God's Word presents about his position as "head" [of woman] by creation and his position as "body" by creation and redemption, but his rejection of these truths does not make them any less true.* (WLQ, 1981, p86)

Next an excerpt from the *Quarterly* article on 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 which underscores the fact that what is involved in the role relationship of man and woman is a matter of God's law, not just a church custom.

Earlier in the context Paul had pointed out that the reason why women were not to speak in the church under the conditions that he was discussing was that the law requires women to be in subjection. Whatever is in conflict with God's law ought to be shameful in the eyes of God's people. Whenever the speaking of a woman gives or seems to give evidence of a lack of awe and respect for the holy immutable will of God in regard to human behavior, the sensibilities and consciences of God's people are wounded...It was the Word of God [spoken about by Paul a couple chapters earlier in 1 Co 11] that laid down the principle that women are to be in subjection... This Word of God had not come from them; it had come to them. They had not originated it and therefore it was not theirs either to change or to ignore. Moreover, it had not come to them alone. By condoning what God does not allow, they were not only guilty of ignoring the Word of God but also endangering the fellowship and unity which ought to exist between them and all the other churches of the saints.

Paul's manner of dealing with the situation in Corinth is a valid guide for us today. The social and cultural condition that we must deal with may not be the same as those under which Paul had to apply the directives of God's Word. But divine principles do not change. One of those principles laid down in God's law according to the inspired apostle is that women are to be in subjection to men. That principle we can expect and should expect always to be taken into consideration with utmost seriousness by all those who wish to be known as God's people. Any conduct or any custom by which that principle is set aside is to be viewed as a shameful thing by all those for whom the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures are the only source and norm by which all teachers and all teachings, as well as conduct, are to be judged. (WLQ, 1981, pp183-184)

Next some excerpts from the *Quarterly* article on 1 Timothy 2:11-15. Here again it is demonstrated that the statements are in error which maintain either that the NT makes no application of the God-given man and woman roles beyond the home or the church or that Paul is speaking only of husband and wife rather than man and woman.

In speaking of the place where Paul wishes his instruction [on prayer] to apply, he says in παντι ποτω, that is, every place where Christian men are found. The suggestion that this means "in every place of public worship" does not have much to commend it in view of the fact that when Paul uses this expression elsewhere it has a broader meaning (1 Co 1:2, 2 Co 2:14, 1 Th 1:8)...That Paul's words are to have broader application than just to public worship is made more evident by Paul's comment later in 3:15 where he gives Timothy the reason why he is writing these instructions to him... It is clear that he is not referring primarily to the conduct of Christians gathered for public worship, but to their conduct as Christians in general, both individually and jointly. Paul's instructions in the first part of chapter 3 involve the conduct of a Christian overseer and deacon at home (vv2-5,12) and in the whole community (vv7-8,11). Going back to 2:9f. where Paul speaks about women's dress, we note that the same is true. What Paul says applies to Christian women at home and in the community as well as in public worship...

When we take up 2:11-15, then, the context does not compel us to understand that what Paul says applies only in public worship...When Paul addresses a woman about learning and teaching and tells her what is right (v11, 12b) and wrong for her (v12a) and why (vv13-14), this is not a special instruction for woman which applies only when she is present in public worship. While it also applies there, yet what is right and wrong for her is right and wrong everywhere, not just in church. The instructions given in this section have a general application, then, as well as applying to public worship. This was true in the preceding context (2:8-10) and in the following context (3:2-5, 7-8, 11-12)...It is true in these verses also...(WLQ, 1981, pp243-244)

It is clear that the meaning of ἀνὴρ and γυνή in the preceding verses is not husband and wife but man and woman. The instruction in verse 8 is not just for husbands, nor is the instruction of verse 9 just for wives...When we take up verses 11-15, then, there would have to be a compelling argument from within these verses for the meaning to shift from “woman” to “wife.” *The syntax of verses 11-12, however, compels us to continue with the meaning of γυνή as “woman.” Some argue that the syntax and content of verses 14b and 15 refer to a wife, but this argument strains both the syntax and thought. The continued meaning “woman” is most natural in these verses again (as most, if not all, of the translations read.)* (WLQ, 1981, pp244-245)

Several things are worthy of special comment about these exegetical articles on the key Old and New Testament passages dealing with the man and woman roles. One is the constant emphasis on the meaning of individual words and verses as determined by the context, both immediate and the wider context of all of Scripture.

Another is that the basic roles of headship and subordination do not apply only to husband and wife in the marriage relationship, nor only to members of Christ’s church (i.e. only to Christian men and women), but to all men and all women whether husband and wife or single, whether members of the church or not. This is a relationship God established between man and woman in general by creating woman after man, out of man and for man.

A third is that the applications of this principle in Scripture (to husband and wife in marriage, to the custom of society in Corinth, to the silence of women in the worship service at Corinth, and to the woman’s activity in any learning and teaching situation) do not limit the application of the principle which is God’s will for all men and all women of all time (the loving headship of man and the willing subordination of woman).

An excerpt from August Pieper’s 1916 *Quarterly* article, “Gibt es im Neuen Testament gesetzliche Verordnungen?” (translated by C. Lawrenz) will serve as a good close to this section by underscoring the foregoing three points: “[In 1 Corinthians 11] Paul is in no way prescribing a Christian dress code but the twofold moral matter based on God’s order of creation. It is the modesty and subordination of woman over against the man which was endangered in lax Corinth, as well as within Christendom, that he wants to inculcate. He is not concerned about the observance of a national custom for its own sake, but insofar as it gives expression to something that is universally moral... The state of affairs is the same with respect to 1 Corinthians 14:34ff. Paul does not want to establish the legal or evangelical external regulation that the woman is to be silent in the assembly... Where the “being in submission” is not denied by the public speaking, praying, and prophesying of the woman; there it is neither immoral nor obstructive for the Gospel... Also in 1 Timothy 2:12ff. he does not want anything else. The woman is not to teach publicly when she thereby becomes the lord over the man. It is against this that also the whole argumentation in this passage is directed... The public praying, prophesying, and teaching of the woman is not in itself immoral or unevangelical (naturally much less that which is done in private). But against both law and gospel is the emancipation of the woman from the subordination and modesty especially ordained for her which will... as a rule exclude her from participation in public life.” The last words about participation in public life must be viewed in the light of the customs of American society in 1916. This is what Pieper himself emphasizes throughout the article and specifically in connection with the brief excerpt just cited: “if the outward custom is different among another people or at

another time, then that custom takes the place [of the present custom] as the outward procedure in the precept, while the actual meaning always remains that which is abstractly moral. The outward action and form is never in itself a moral precept. A fashion which is wholly inoffensive in New Orleans in high summer may be outrightly unchaste in winter in St. Paul. The behavior of a youth which one takes for granted can become the subject of disciplinary procedure in a Lutheran pastor.”

Two COP Pamphlets “Man and Woman in God’s World” (1985,1987)

As a follow-up to the 1981 synod resolution, the Conference of Presidents appointed a committee composed of one pastor from each district to write a pamphlet on the God-given roles of man and woman. This committee invited members of synod to send them anything published on the subject or personal studies that might be helpful to the committee for its work. After considering all that it received and doing an exegesis of the pertinent passages, the committee agreed on the content for the pamphlet which it submitted to the COP. After some revision the COP published it in 1985 in fulfillment of the assignment given it by the 1981 convention. It was felt that an expanded study which would go into the pertinent passages in a little more detail would also be helpful. This expanded study was published in 1987.

First, several excerpts from the shorter pamphlet that are germane to this present paper.

When God brings Eve to Adam, the man does not use personal names to discuss himself and his helper. He uses the more general titles of “man” and woman.” He calls the one God has made “woman” not Eve; and he states that she has been taken out of “man,” not out of Adam. The first man and woman whom God created represent in their lives what the Lord wants in the lives of all people. What applies specifically to that man and woman we know as Adam and Eve applies to all men and women generally (p9)...Although the first chapters of Genesis show us an ideal situation which we can never attain, they lay down the basic principle to guide men and women in their relationships with one another. This principle is that the man is to be the head of the woman. Other portions of God’s Word define and clarify our Lord’s will and show how we are to apply that will to various situations in our lives [p10]...

The application Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 11 on the basis of the headship principle is clear...The significance and social implication of that particular custom [of covering the head] may have changed for us, but also today in their choice of styles and in their actions Christian women will conduct themselves in a way that clearly shows they recognize the man as the one God has ordained to be the head (p13)...

In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul tells women to “remain silent in the churches” (v34). Such silence is not a blanket rule, as though he were forbidding women even to speak in a worship setting. Paul simply asks the women to be silent when it comes to teaching that exercises authority over the assembly of believers... Women are to be silent and are not to speak because they “must be in submission, as the Law says” (v34). When Paul refers to “the Law” he shows that his application does not pertain only to the congregations of his day. “The Law” refers to the first five books of the OT which includes the opening chapters of Genesis, so Paul’s exhortation is not rooted in a changing custom of the day. It is based on the headship principle which God established at the time of creation and which therefore applies to all times [pp16,17]...

The headship principle is equally valid in society, since this principle is part of God’s unchanging will for men and women in their relationships with one another (p20)...Paul exhorts us to offer ourselves “as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1). This exhortation applies to the Christian when serving the Lord as much in society as in the church and in the home. The Christian will seek to uphold and reflect the principles of God’s Word at all times and in every area of life [p2]...We who

have been made free in Christ need to decide carefully in each situation how our Lord wants us to apply that principle in secular society. In doing this we will remember that we are the light and salt of the earth. We will strive according to the new man to give glory to God by honoring his Word before the world [p22]...For the application of the principle in a society Scripture leaves a great deal to our conscientious Christian judgment. As long as the God-ordained relationship between man and woman is wholeheartedly embraced, differences in judgment in applications need not and will not disturb the church [p21].

Next some excerpts from the expanded study of man and woman in God's world.

We must be careful not to burden people with applications unless they are clearly within the biblical principles. However, the principles stand and are to be applied for the entire human race for all time. A church and a people faithful to their Lord and his Word will seek to know and do their Lord's will in every moment of their lives [p16]...For this reason [Paul's words in 3:14,15] the entire context of 1 Timothy 2:1-3:15 must be broader than what we today are likely to understand to be what people do in church or when they go to church. Instead, it is meant to be a guideline for what people do because they are the church. The applications and principles Paul gives in this section are applicable and God pleasing not only when they are done in church, but throughout a Christian's life [p25]...If a local, prevailing custom [such as covering the head in 1 Co 11] has at its base an attitude that falls in line with God's principle for the relationship of men and women, God wants his people to live in keeping with his principle. If a Christian's words or actions were to undo this principle, they would cause confusion and offense not only in the world but also among those Christians who understand God's principles correctly and try to carry them out in their lives. God's principles need to be applied to the situations so that the actions of God's people are once again in line with his principles. If the customs of the unbelieving world around us are in line with God's principles, Christian men and women should not undermine them [p34]...Similarly God has not given us a code of laws to follow as we apply this principle to Christians assembled as the church or to Christians as they live out their lives in a society which often cares little or nothing about God's will. God gives only a few applications, but two of those do treat situations that go beyond the home or the church. The words of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 apply in every phase of a woman's life. Those of 1 Corinthians 11 deal with an earthly custom. A Christian will not hold or exhibit one set of attitudes and principles when he is among believers and a different set of attitudes and principles outside the fellowship of believers [p42]...We are not warranted in making a code of laws to apply this principle to the Christian man and woman in their lives at home, in church or in society. Scripture does not do so. The wisest method is to follow the practice of the apostle—study the principle, understand the principle and urge Christian men and women to live by the principle in every area of their lives. In doing so Christians will have the warrant to make specific applications of the principle in given situations. But such applications dare not be understood as general laws or regulations binding on all areas and ages of the church...Rather, let us continue to preach the saving gospel so that its influence will win women and men to understand and carry out the roles God has given them [p44].

Again, it would be good to examine on what bases these statements are made that the principle applies to the Christian's everyday life. It will not surprise you to learn that they are the same scriptural and hermeneutical bases as the previous two items.

One is that "the creation account offers three noteworthy evidences that God established a role relationship between the first man and the first woman. As the first evidence we note that God created Adam *first*... Second, the woman was made *for* the man... Third, God made the woman *from* the man [p6 of the expanded study]."

A second basis is the fact that "the creation account not only relates the history of two human beings. It also teaches that the relationship established between the man and the woman carries implications and offers

applications for all human beings who were destined to come into the world after them. Five factors lead to this important conclusion. First, the creation of the man and the woman is revealed to us in the broader context of the creation of all things...Second, God created the man and the woman ‘male and female’...What we learn about ‘male and female’ from the creation of the first two human beings carries implications for all other men and women in the future...Third, the name ‘Adam’...is also a class name for all human beings...Fourth, the name that the first man gave his ‘suitable helper’...was ‘woman’ a generic and descriptive name for the entire female part of the human race...Fifth, the Lord’s words in Genesis 2:24 clearly demonstrate that this man and woman were the first in a long line and that descendants would follow in their footsteps [pp10,11 of the expanded study].” That God is speaking generically of man and woman in Genesis is substantiated by the generic use of *άνηρ* and *γυνή* in the NT passages. “A basic principle of biblical interpretation is a word is always understood and translated in its widest possible meaning unless there are specific reasons in the context to limit its meaning [p32 of the expanded study].”

The third is the fact that two of the applications God’s Word makes of the principle “go beyond the home or the church,” and even if it didn’t, applications do not limit the principle because God does not give us one set of attitudes and principles to follow when we are among believers “and a different set of attitudes and principles outside the fellowship of believers” [p42 of the expanded study].

The Theses and Antitheses Adopted at the 1991 and 1993 Synod Conventions

The 1989 synod convention received the document *Man and Woman in God’s World* “as a correct exposition of the scriptural teachings in this matter” and asked the COP to “prepare a brief, formal doctrinal statement for consideration by the 1991 convention.” A special committee was appointed by the COP to prepare this “brief, doctrinal statement.”

The doctrinal statement presented by the COP in 1991 was adopted by the convention “as a correct exposition of the scriptural teachings as stated in ‘Man and Woman in God’s World.’” The convention also agreed that since members of synod had had little opportunity to make suggestions for refinement in wording of this doctrinal statement, “any suggestions for refinement in wording of the statement be forwarded to the Conference of Presidents for consideration.” The convention committee that submitted this resolution had several suggested refinements in wording which it submitted to the COP. This committee chose the words “refinement in wording” because it felt that though all the points listed in the statement were scriptural, some of them could be made even more clear by some minor refinements. The synod convention in 1993 noted the minor revisions made in the statement as having “improved the wording” of the 1991 statement and adopted it “as an improved and correct statement of the Scriptural principles.”

On the basis of 1 Co 11:3 and 1 Tm 2:12, antithesis 6 rejects the opinion that male headship and female submission apply only to marriage or only to marriage and the church. On the basis of 1 Co 11:3, thesis 20 says that Christians accept the biblical role relationship for their life and work in the world, that they seek to do God’s will consistently in every area of their lives, and that therefore they strive to apply this role relationship principle to their life and work in the world.

It should not be forgotten that antithesis 6 and thesis 20 are based on several earlier theses, 2 and 3. It is these two theses, which were emphasized in each of the three previous items published on this subject for our synod, that are the keys to the fact that the God-given roles of man and woman apply in the Christian’s everyday life.

The first is that the roles of headship for man and submission for woman were established by God before sin entered the world. These roles are his unchanging will for all people established at creation. In his Word, God explains to sinful mankind how his moral law of love is to be carried out in the complementary relationship of male and female. This means two things are true: 1) These roles are not just for Christians to follow, but for all men and all women (or to say it another way, it is not just Christians who sin against God’s will when they do not carry out their role as man or woman as God Word says—unbelieving men and women also sin against

God's will when they do not follow the God-given roles); and 2) These roles do not apply in limited areas of the lives of Christians, such as when they are gathered together as a congregation.

This first point is based on two scriptural truths: 1) The Holy Spirit's generic use of the words "man" and "woman" in Genesis 2, 1 Co 11, and 1 Tm 2; and 2) The Holy Spirit's leading the headship of man and the submission of woman back to creation and to the distinct way God created woman: after the creation of man [Ge 2:8, 1 Tm 2:13], for man [Ge 2:18, 1Co, 11:9], and out of man [Ge 2:22, 1 Co, 11:8].

It is also based on a basic rule of biblical interpretation which deals with universal principles in Scripture. That rule is that a principle is universal if the people about whom a statement speaks includes all mankind, if the rationale for that statement indicates it is God's will for all people, and if the immediate and wider context of Scripture do not limit the statement in scope or time. As has been pointed out in every document published on this matter for our synod, the man/woman roles qualify as universal on all three counts.

Although the doctrinal statement does not refer to this, it certainly is also significant that in all the applications of this principle made in the New Testament, the inspired writers do not present these applications to men or women as mere suggestions but as things they are to carry out as part of their obedience to God's will. In 1 Co 11 Paul says that the men and the women are obligated (ὀφείλω, v7 and v10) by the fact that woman was created for man and out of him to follow the custom in Corinth that gave expression to the God-given role of male headship (v3). He also begins by stating that this matter is also a part of the teachings they received from God via him for them to hold on to (κατέχω v2). In 1 Co 14 he uses two third person imperatives and the expressions it is "not allowed" and "the Law says" (v34) to make it clear that women speaking in the assembly of the Corinthian congregation would be acting contrary to their God-given role. In 1 Tm 2 Paul uses a third person imperative (v11) and the expression "I do not permit" (v12) to make clear that a woman teaching a man in a way that indicated she had authority over him would be contrary to her God-given role. In Eph 5 Paul uses imperatives (vv 22,24,25,33) and the expression of a continuing obligation (ὀφείλω, v28) in speaking to men and women about carrying out their God-given roles in marriage. Remember also that these words about the roles of man and woman in marriage are part of his broader instruction about living a life of love that includes admonitions to avoid immorality (5:3ff.) and drunkenness (5:19ff.) as well as words about the roles of children and parents, slaves and masters (6:1ff.). In 1 Pe 3 Peter uses imperatives (v1,4,7) and such expressions as "do what is right" (v6), "the way holy women" live (v5), and "so that nothing will hinder your prayers" (v7) in speaking to men and women about carrying out their God-given roles in marriage. It is clear from the way the NT writers apply the principle (imperatives, obligation, not allowed, not permitted, part of the teachings the apostle gives them from God, the Law says, doing what is right, the way holy people live, not hindering one's prayers) that the application of the principle is a matter of doing God's will, not merely a guideline for happiness that they can choose to follow or not depending on their individual situations.

The second key point (thesis 3) is that God established the male/female roles when he created man and woman. Therefore God's assigned roles do apply to men and women in general, not only to those men and women who are married. This point is based on the same two scriptural truths as those cited for point one. And this point is also based on a basic rule of biblical interpretation. That rule is that the applications of a general principle in Scripture do not limit that principle to those applications. As has been noted several times earlier, two of the NT applications of the man/woman roles do treat situations that go beyond the home or the church, but even if they didn't, this would not limit the application to home and church situations.

Thesis 21 addresses the difficulty we face as Christians in applying a principle of God's Word in our lives when the world around us considers the principle an expression of male chauvinism which considers women inferior to men. The world views the principle this way because there are a number of things it does not understand. It does not understand that male headship does not mean that men are masters and women are servants. Rather man is like the head of a body which leads and guides the actions of the body to the mutual happiness of both. Man is a loving head who follows the example of Christ in doing everything he can, even giving his life if necessary, in order to provide for the woman's every need and for her happiness (Eph 5:25-29, Col 3:19, 1 Co 11:11-12, 1 Pe 3:7).

The world also does not understand that woman's role of submission is not obeying orders (cf. Scripture's use of ὑποτάσσω and not ὑπακούω which is used of children and slaves). Instead, in the same way as the church submits to Christ, she gladly and willingly follows man as the loving head who guides and leads according to what will serve their mutual happiness (1 Co, 11:3 and 11, Eph 5:22-24, 1 Pe 3:2-6).

The world will especially have a problem with woman's role of submission because its whole way of thinking is contrary to that of a follower of Christ in this regard. The world thinks of greatness as being able to lord it over others and to exercise authority rather than to submit to others (Mt 20:25). But our Lord Jesus says, "Not so with you. Instead, let whoever wants to be great among you be your servant, and let whoever wants to be first among you be your slave" (Mt 20:26). The Christian woman understands what the world doesn't, that the role of submission and service is what is great and makes her first before God just as her Lord Jesus is great and first because he "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20:27).

Because the world does not understand, Satan can use this principle to put a stumbling block in the way of people with whom we seek to share the gospel in carrying out our Savior's great commission. He will also work hard to use it to turn people whom we now serve with the Word away from us to another shepherd who will tell them what they want to hear about the roles of man and woman.

But we need to be sure that it is really the principle that is turning them away rather than sinful male chauvinism that we might be practicing in our homes and congregations. Husbands in the home and men in the church whose words and actions betray a condescending "women are to be quiet and obey" attitude, are distorting the woman's role of submission and failing to carry out the role God gave them as men. Women and the service they rendered to the Lord, to the church, and to the leaders of the church are very much in evidence on the pages of Scripture. In Romans 16, for example, Paul praises Priscilla, Phoebe, Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis for the work they did for him and for the church.

Peter reminds us that "it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men" (1 Pe 2:15). Certainly this is also true in regard to how we live our roles as men and women according to God's will. We as husbands (especially as pastors who set an example for the flock) and we as men of the church (especially as pastors who are leaders of the flock) will seek in everything we do to emulate our Savior. We will want to serve as loving heads who do not lord it over our wives or the women of the church. Instead, we will make sure that in every single thing we decide or do that we are guiding and leading in a way that enables our wives and the women of the church to serve their Lord and the church in every way they can with their God-given talents according to their God-given role. Only in this way will we be able to silence, at least a little bit, the ignorance of foolish people who do not understand God's good and gracious will and who accuse us of male chauvinism.

The problem is that there will be many differences of opinion as to just exactly how this is to be done. To cite only a few examples. Is a wife stepping out of her role by managing the finances of the family or even managing a household of servants as the noble woman of Proverbs 31 or Luther's wife Katie did? Is a congregation encouraging women to step out of their roles by holding informational meetings (e.g. about items to come up in the quarterly business meetings) in order to consult with the women of the congregation to make sure that what is decided is really for the mutual happiness of all? May a woman write an article for the *Northwestern Lutheran* that informs the people of our synod about some person or organization and the work that person or group is doing for the Lord?

Some in our fellowship will say that these things are all fine, others will see them as crossing the line into violations of the male/female roles as God ordained them. That's the problem with general principles, isn't it? As thesis 21 says, a general principle "leaves a great deal to our conscientious Christian judgment." And if we have difficulty in agreeing exactly how the man/woman roles are to be put into practice in our homes and congregations, it is not surprising that agreement becomes even more difficult when dealing with situations in the world where feminism is prevalent and exercising authority is considered greatness rather than humble service to others.

We will rightly resist any effort on the part of a person or group in our fellowship to set up a code of things that may or may not be done by man and woman in living their God-given roles in the home, the church, or in their everyday lives. We would rightly resist such an effort for several reasons. Making a list of rules would rob NT Christians of their liberty since the NT church has no binding legal rules and regulations from God other than the moral law of love. Also, manmade rules inevitably destroy the God-given principle they are intended to fortify. Rules do this by leading to only an outward obedience which lacks the inner attitude of love which motivates and is the essence of truly God-pleasing obedience to the principle. As thesis 21 says, “In Christian love we will refrain from unduly binding the consciences of the brothers and sisters of our fellowship.”

This maintaining of our freedom, however, does not mean that we will ignore the principle in our lives. “Rather, we will encourage each other as we seek to apply this principle to our lives in the world” (Thesis 21). The responsibility to apply the principles God enunciated in his word to guide Christians in carrying out the law of love is an individual matter first and foremost. Christian living is the thankful response of each individual believer to God’s grace in Christ. But it is also part of Christian living that we encourage one another to live our whole lives according to God’s will as he makes it known to us in his word.

Perhaps the examples of how we apply several other expressions of God’s will in our lives will prove helpful. When God speaks of our use of the money he gives us, he tells us to give and to give generously for the work of our church and the support of people in need. Some churches make a rule of tithing for their members, and many of our WELS congregations used to have a set amount as a minimum that was to be given by every family. We have done away with that minimum and resisted the effort of anyone to set up tithing as the rule of giving for our congregations. Instead, we know that what God desires is that each person determine in his heart how much he or she is going to give (1 Co 16:2, Acts 11:29, 2 Co 9:7). We don’t have any rules that spell out what percentage of income “generous” means. Nor do we set up rules that spell out exactly how often each person must give in order to qualify as one who gives “regularly” (i.e. whether it is to be daily, weekly, monthly, etc.). What we do instead is to constantly encourage one another to be regular, cheerful, and generous givers whose gift reflects a heart compelled to giving by Christ’s amazing love for us. We would initiate church discipline only if, after patient and careful instruction on the matter, a person by word or action denied the principle that God wants Christians to give for the work of the church and to support the needy.

Or take the principle of church fellowship as another example. God tells us out of love for him to treasure the purity of his Word and to protect our souls from harm by joining in religious activities only with those who teach and practice his Word without compromising with error. Some wanted rules that forbade any WELS member from praying with a Missouri synod relative under any circumstance or to attend a service including weddings and funerals in a non-WELS church. We resisted any such code of conduct for practicing church fellowship. Though we don’t have any set of rules that spells out exactly what may or may not be done, we regularly (or has it become somewhat irregular of late?) encourage one another to join in religious activities only with those who teach and practice God’s Word without any compromise with error. We would initiate church discipline only, if after patient and careful instruction on the matter, a person by word or action denied the principle that God wants us to practice church fellowship only with those with whom we agree fully in doctrine and practice.

The same is true of the principle of the God-given roles of man and woman. We have not, nor will we ever (for the reasons cited earlier) set up a code of rules about these roles. We will not say that under no circumstance may a woman be an usher for a church service or the director of a mixed chorus. We will not say that under no circumstance may a congregation hold a meeting to which it also invites the women of the congregation to inform and consult with the members of the congregation about matters to be decided at a forthcoming quarterly meeting of the voters. We will not say that under no circumstances may a congregation send out a letter soliciting suggested names for the congregation’s nominating committee to consider in its work of preparing a ballot of men to serve in the various leadership offices of the congregation. We will not say that under no circumstances may a woman serve as a member of a congregational committee, be it ad hoc or permanent. What we will do is encourage one another as members of a congregation and a synod of

congregations to make sure we are always upholding and never violating the God-given roles of man and woman in any of these matters.

The law of love for our fellow Christians in congregation and synod demands that, even though we are sure that what we are doing is an adiaphoron, we will not do it if it puts a spiritual stumbling block in the way of any weak Christian or congregation. We would initiate disciplinary action only, if after patient and careful instruction about our God-given roles as man and woman, a person or congregation by word or action denied that these roles are part of God's unchanging will for our lives.

Neither will we set up a code of rules that governs how Christians are to live according to their God-given roles in their everyday lives in the world. We will not say that under no circumstance may a woman vote in a state or national election. We will not say that under no circumstance may a woman hold a public office. We will not draw up a list of jobs or positions that a woman may or may not hold in the work world. This does not mean that we will not say anything about these things. Like the principles of giving and church fellowship we will constantly be encouraging one another, as thesis 20 puts it, to accept and apply the biblical role relationship principle in our life and work in the world. And like the other two principles, we would initiate disciplinary action only; if after patient and careful instruction, a person or congregation by word or action denied that the roles of male headship and female submission applied beyond the home and the church (Antithesis 6).

What complicates the whole matter even more is that this is not the only principle of God's Word that applies in the life of a Christian man and woman. Living in an increasingly anti-Christian society as we do forces a Christian in some situations to have to make a choice between one of two principles of God's Word that apply in that situation.

Much has been said in the previous paragraphs about encouraging one another "as we seek to apply this principle to our lives in the world" (Thesis 20). But most of what was said dealt with the woman's role. However, as important as it might be in our day to encourage women to apply this principle in their lives, what is even more important is the encouragement of men to apply this principle in their lives. Theirs is the headship role and so the carrying out of God's will in this matter begins with them. If they do not take the lead, or if they lead as a chauvinistic, domineering master rather than a loving head, God's will in this matter is thwarted, if not destroyed, by them right from the start. As has often been said during the discussion of this matter during the past 25 years in our synod, it is the role of the man that needs to be taught and put into practice as much if not more among us than the role of the woman. This fact cannot be stressed too often or too much.

Conclusion

There are three basic questions that are vital to the discussion of the God-given roles of man and woman. They are: What is the principle? Where does it apply? and, How does it apply? The first two questions Scripture answers clearly. The third question Scripture does not answer, but as part of our NT freedom, God asks us to show our love to him by how we carry out the principle in our lives.

What is the principle? It is not what some (perhaps many?) of us would have answered to that question 25 years ago before the discussion of this matter began. What some of us would have said then (and what the conservatives in LC-MS are essentially saying now) is that women are to obey their husbands at home as well as being silent in the public gatherings of the congregation and not teaching a man—especially not the Word of God in the public worship service of a congregation. The obedience at home idea is not really what Scripture says, the silence is really an application of the principle to the situation in Corinth, and the not teaching a man—especially not the word of God in worship—is too narrow an interpretation of the Timothy passage. The principle simply is the headship of man and the submission of the woman. Though headship involves authority, Scripture's use of the metaphor of man as the head emphasizes a special kind of exercise of authority. It is an exercise of authority in which those who are in authority cannot separate themselves from those under authority any more than a head can separate itself from the body without doing great harm to both. Instead the head cares for the body, seeks its own and the body's happiness, and so exercises authority in a loving, selfless way. The

other part of the principle is that this special kind of authority exercised by the man in a loving, selfless way is matched by willing submission, respect, obedience and love on the part of the woman.

Where does the principle apply? It is not limited to the Christian husband or wife in marriage and to Christian men and women gathered as a congregation. It applies to the non-Christian husband and wife also—in fact it applies to all men and women in every phase of their life, whether they are Christians or not. Scripture makes this evident by: 1) emphasizing that God established the man/woman complementary relationship at creation before he instituted marriage or mankind fell into sin; 2) using the generic words man and woman in speaking of this matter both in Genesis and several NT passages; and 3) applying the principle to a custom of society in Corinth and in speaking of the Christian life in general in 1 Timothy 2.

How does the principle apply? When we ask “What about this situation...? or What about this situation...?”, Scripture gives us no rules for us to use in answering those questions. The applications that Scripture makes in the NT do help us understand the principle better and give us some general guidelines. But they don’t give us a set of rules how we are to apply the principle in each and every given situation. As noted earlier, Scripture doesn’t do this for the use of our money in giving and it doesn’t do it for applying the principle of church fellowship either. Instead, as was said above, this is part of the wonderful NT Christian liberty we have as believers.

Because we have full and free forgiveness by God’s grace through the redeeming work of Christ, we don’t *have* to do God’s will to be saved. Instead, in faith-born love we *want* to do God’s will to thank and glorify him. So when God says, “Men, I want your role toward women to be that of selfless, loving headship” and “Women, I want your role toward men to be that of willing, loving submission”, we gladly seek to do what God wills, not just in a couple areas of our life, but in everything we do in our relationship as male and female with one another.

This doesn’t make living the man/woman role relationships easy for us, because in every situation of life as “children of light” we need to stop and consider “what pleases the Lord” (Eph 5:8,10). But we find joy in such daily considerations because what we do as male and female in our relationship with one another becomes one among many ways every day of thanking our Lord for his gracious love toward us. Instead of considering how we might get out of doing God’s will or getting away with as much as we can without crossing the line and violating the principle, we commit our lives and bodies to our Savior as instruments of righteousness (Ro 6:13).

The world may not understand this principle, but by living our heavenly Father’s will we let our light shine that others may see our good deeds and glorify him (Mt 5:16) and perhaps at times by our actions we may even silence the ignorance of the people of the world (1 Pe 2:15). It is also true that we as Christians may not always agree how the principle is to be applied. But as long as the God-ordained relationship between man and woman is wholeheartedly embraced, differences in judgment in making applications need not and will not disturb us living as we do under the liberty we have as NT Christians.

What can cause confusion is if people fail to remember that God has not answered the question how the principle applies because of our NT freedom. If people then work backward from this and begin to argue that maybe he didn’t tell us clearly where it applies either, they either end up raising doubts about whether the principle applies to everyday life or even whether there is a principle that expresses God’s unchanging will for our lives.

The point has also been raised whether we really need to make an issue of the first two questions Scripture does answer. This point is raised because what the principle is or where it applies is really not a fundamental doctrine of Scripture which directly involves the gospel. But the denial or failure to practice any portion of God’s Word means a church body is no longer truly orthodox, and the yeast let loose in a church by its failure to take any portion of God’s Word seriously will inevitably work its way through the whole lump. Scripture says that clearly and the history of the church provides many examples of that fact.

Prof. S. Becker’s words quoted earlier (the *Quarterly* article on 1 Co, 14) bear repeating: “The social and cultural condition that we must deal with may not be the same as those under which Paul had to apply the directives of God’s Word. But divine principles do not change. One of those principles laid down in God’s law according to the inspired apostle is [the headship of men] and that women are to be in subjection to men. That

principle we can expect and should expect always to be taken into consideration with utmost seriousness by all those who wish to be known as God's people. Any conduct...by which that principle is set aside is to be viewed as a shameful thing by all those for whom the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures are the only source and norm by which all teachers and all teachings, as well as conduct, are to be judged."

May the prayer expressed in the closing words of the document adopted by the 1993 synod convention be fulfilled among us! "With these statements of what we confess and what we reject we offer the prayer as Christian men and women that God will fill us with his Holy Spirit, giving to each of us a better understanding of and appreciation for our God-assigned responsibilities, that in loving service to him and to each other we hallow his name and share in his mission in every God-pleasing way."