

HEIRS TOGETHER OF THE GRACIOUS GIFT OF LIFE

Preamble

We want to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We want to understand more clearly what He requires of us, and we want to appreciate more deeply the freedom He has given us. We are sincerely committed to the authority and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. We believe Scripture interprets itself as the clear passages throw light on those which are more difficult for us to understand. (II Peter 3: 15-16) We also believe that it helps us to apply particular passages to ourselves today if we try to understand the reasons why each book was originally written and learn all we can about the historical setting to which it was originally addressed.

As we search the Scriptures to learn what God's will is for the relationships between men and women, we believe it is important to study Jesus' attitude toward women and how He treated them. The Gospels include many descriptions of what Jesus said and did without explicitly prescribing that we should do likewise. But a significant part of the Christian's life of sanctification is the imitation of Christ. This is just one reason why we do not restrict ourselves to "simple, direct statements of God's will" in the formulation of doctrinal statements. Descriptive passages have an important role to play along with prescriptive passages in clarifying Christian doctrine.

The New Testament draws several different lessons from Genesis' description of the creation of Adam and Eve. Rather than starting with the applications expressed in I Corinthians and I Timothy, we prefer to start this discussion in Ephesians 5 where we find the New Testament's most comprehensive instruction regarding husbands and wives. Ephesians appears to be a circular letter, originally written for a number of different congregations, and thus it is addressed to a diverse audience. So it is more likely to express general principles that deserve wide application. But a letter like I Timothy which is addressed to an individual - or even I Corinthians which is addressed to one specific congregation - is more likely to apply such general principles to a particular time, place, and situation. We who live in a different time and place will then have to adjust the application accordingly - obviously without compromising the general principles.

But when we speak of general principles which God has given us to guide us in Christian living, we must be careful not to make the Law more prominent than the Gospel. Just as the Good News of the forgiveness of sins is the foundation of our relationship with God, so it ought to permeate our relationships with one another. Then we will be able to say together with the Psalmist, "I run in the path of Your commands, for You have set my heart free." (Psalm 119:32) People who believe the gospel do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but are transformed by the gospel and are therefore spiritually equipped to understand and appreciate what Ephesians 5 and parallel passages say about the husband's "headship" and his wife's submission to him.

The New Testament uses the word "head" several times to describe a husband's relationship to his wife. But the English word "head" has acquired such strong connotations of authority that it is difficult for most modern American readers to understand the wider connotations that would have come to the mind of a Greek-speaking Christian in the first century. The New Testament context of the word "head" often emphasizes respon-

sibility, identification, and connectedness more than authority. While we do not deny that responsibility includes some elements of authority, we do not believe that authority is the primary characteristic of a Christian husband's relationship with his wife.

In English we are accustomed to distinguish between the words "man" and "husband" and between the words "woman" and "wife." But in Greek the word *aner* can be used to mean either "man" or "husband" and the word *gyne* can mean either "woman" or "wife." The translator must therefore make a choice on the basis of his understanding of the context. In a number of passages where the NIV has "man" and "woman" we prefer the translation "husband" and "wife" - as do a number of Bible translations.

Therefore, in order to testify to the truth which God has revealed in the Holy Scriptures, we present the following statements of what we believe, teach and confess:

The Image of God

1. God created Adam and Eve in His own image, distinct from the animals, (Genesis 2:20) and gave them both responsibility over the rest of His creation. (Genesis 1:26-27)

Gen. 2:20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. *But for Adam no suitable helper was found.*

Gen. 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and *let them rule* over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created man in his own image, *in the image of God he created them*; male and female he created them.

2. The sin of disobedience ruptured the relationship between God and Adam and Eve, ruined this image of God in man, and rendered human beings unable to restore the image by themselves. (Genesis 5:1-3)

Gen.5:1-3 This is the written account of Adam's line.

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them.

And when they were created he called them "man."

When Adam had lived 130 years, *he had a son* in his own likeness, *in his own image*; and he named him Seth.

3. Once sinners have been brought to faith in Jesus, the damage done to the image of God by the Fall into sin is gradually repaired by the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification. (Colossians 3:10 II Corinthians 3:18)

Col. 3:10 (You) have put on the new self, which *is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

2 Cor. 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are *being transformed into his likeness* with ever-in-

creasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Marriage

4. The beautiful, mutually complementary relationship which Adam and Eve enjoyed before they fell into sin was a perfect example of God's gracious plan for marriage. (Genesis 2:18, 23-25)

Gen. 2: 18 The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper *suitable for him*."

Gen. 2:23-25 The man said, "This is now *bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh*; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man."

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and *they will become one flesh*.

The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

5. In the only reference Jesus makes to Genesis 1 and 2, He teaches about marriage. (Matthew 19:4-6 Mark 10:6-9) He talks about Adam and Eve as the first husband and wife, and makes no reference to Adam as "the head" or to his authority.

Matt. 19:4-6 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be *united to his wife*, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore *what God has joined together*, let man not separate."

Mark 10:6-9 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be *united to his wife*, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore *what God has joined together*, let man not separate."

6. Marriage is a unique institution designed by God for the human beings He created. In the Old Testament the LORD used this institution as a picture of His relationship to the people of Israel, calling Himself her husband. (Isaiah 54:5 62:4-5 Jeremiah 3:14 Hosea 2:16)

Is. 54:5 For *your Maker is your husband*-the LORD Almighty is his name-the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.

Is. 62:4-5 No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; *as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you*.

Jer.3:14 "Return, faithless people," declares the LORD, "for *I am your husband*. I will choose you-one from a town and two from a clan-and bring you to Zion.

Hos.2:16 "In that day," declares the LORD, '*you will call me 'my husband'*'; you will no longer call me 'my master.'"

7. In the profound mystery of the marriage relationship, husband and wife become “one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24 Ephesians 5:28, 31-32) The New Testament portrays marriage as an acted-out parable which illustrates the intimacy and love that binds Christ and the Church to one another. (Ephesians 5:21-33)

Gen. 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and *they will become one flesh.*

Eph. 5:21-27 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the Husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Eph. 5:28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Eph.5:29-30 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-for we are members of his body.

Eph.5:31-32 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." *This is a profound mystery-but I am talking about Christ and the church.*

Eph. 5:33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Husbands and Headship

8. Scripture describes a husband as the “head of his wife, as Christ is the head of the church, His body.” (Ephesians 5:23)

Eph 5:23 For *the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body*, of which he is the Savior.

9. The Greek word for "head" is kephale. This word has different connotations in different contexts. Sometimes the New Testament uses the word kephale as a metaphor to stress the authority the “head” exercises. (Ephesians 1:22 Colossians 2:10) But more often in the New Testament the context stresses the heads connection with the body or its loving responsibility for the body. (Ephesians 4:15 5:23 Colossians 1:18 2:19)

Eph. 1:22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be *head over everything* for the church which is his body.

Col. 2:10 And you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the *head over every power and authority.*

Eph.4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is *the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

Eph. 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife as *Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.*

Col. 1:18 *He is the Head of the church, which is His body. He is the Beginning, the first among the dead to become alive that He may be first in everything.* (An American Translation)

Col. 2:19 He has lost *connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows* as God causes it to grow.

10. Christ exercised His role as "head" in sacrificial love (Ephesians 5:25) humility (Philippians 2:5-8) and service. (Matthew 20:28)

Eph. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and *gave himself up for her.*

Phil. 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but *emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant*, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, *He humbled Himself* and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (New King James Version)

Matt. 20:28 ...Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

11. As "the Head," Christ has promised to lead, to protect and to provide for "His Body, the Church;" (John 10:3-4 Ephesians 1:22-23 4:15-16) so a husband has similar responsibility for his wife. (Ephesians 5:25-33)

John 10:3-4 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. *He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.* When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and *his sheep follow him* because they know his voice.

Eph. 1:22-23 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed Him to be head over everything *for the church* which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Eph 4:15-16 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. *From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

Eph. 5:25-33 (See thesis 7)

12. When Scripture calls the husband "head of his wife," it stresses his responsibility to love, nurture and care for his wife. (Ephesians 5:25, 28-29, 33 Colossians 3:19)

Eph. 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy.*

Eph. 5:28-29, *In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.*

Eph. 5:33 *However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

Col. 3:19 *Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.*

13. The New Testament uses the word “head” when describing the unique, mutual, one flesh relationship between husband and wife (which is protected by the Sixth Commandment). The New Testament does not use the word “head” when describing the authority relationships between parents and children or between masters and slaves (which are protected by the Fourth Commandment). A proper distinction can be made between the unique one-flesh marriage relationship and all other relationships.

Exodus 20:14 You shall not commit adultery.

Exodus 20: 12 Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

14. Responsible Christian husbands will act as “head” in their own homes in a wide variety of ways. Diversity from house to house is not only permissible but may even be desirable, as long as the husband accepts his responsibility, guided by Scripture. (Ephesians 5:25, 28-29, 33)

Eph. 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy.*

Eph. 5:28-29 *In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.*

Eph. 5:33 *However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

Wives and Submission

15. The New Testament teaches that each Christian wife will want to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ. (Ephesians 5:22-24 Colossians 3:18 I Peter 3:1)

Eph. 5:22-24 *Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.*

Col. 3:18 *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

I Pet. 3:1 *Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may*

be won over without words by the behavior of their wives.

16. The basic meaning of the Greek verb *hypotassomai*, which is usually translated "submit" is "to arrange oneself under" another person. Such submissiveness is urged upon all Christians, not just wives. (Ephesians 5:21 I Peter 5:5 I Corinthians 16:16)

Eph. 5:21 *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

I Pet. 5:5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. *All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

1 Cor. 16:16 I urge you, brothers, to *submit to* such as these and to *everyone who joins in the work*, and labors at it.

17. The submission which the New Testament urges upon Christians in marriage is a virtue worked by the indwelling Spirit of God. This "arranging oneself under" another person recognizes the worth, wisdom and needs of another and puts that one first. Thus Christian wives will respect their husbands even as Christian husbands will be considerate of their wives. (Ephesians 5:33 Colossians 3:19 I Peter 3:7) This loving submission displays the spirit of Christ, and is how all Christians are to deal with each other. (Ephesians 5:21 John 13:34-35)

Eph. 5:33 However, *each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself*, and the wife must respect her husband.

Col. 3:19 *Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.*

1 Pet. 3:7 Husbands, in the same way *be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect* as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Eph. 5:21 *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

John 13:34-35 A new command I give you: Love one another. *As I have loved you, so you must love one another.* By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

The Church

18. The Gospel bestows the faith which makes all believers one in Christ Jesus and is the basis for relationships between men and women in the church. (Galatians 3:26-28)

Gal. 3:26-28 *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus*, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for *you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

19. Jesus urges His disciples to serve one another rather than trying to rule over one another. (Mark 10:42-45 Ephesians 5:21) Since the Gospel is predominant in our relationship with God, it will also predominate in our relationships with one another in the church.

(Matthew 6:12, 14-15)

Mark 10:42-45 Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as *rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them*, and their high officials exercise authority over them. *Not so with you*. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave to all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Eph. 5:21 *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*

Matt.6:12 Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matt. 6: 14-15 *For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

20. There is much we can learn from the example of our Lord and the history of His Church. Jesus' attitude toward women (John 4:1-27, 39-42) and how He treated them (Luke 10:38-42) ought to be studied and imitated. The activity of such women as Miriam, Deborah, Priscilla, Phoebe and other coworkers of Paul (Romans 16:6, 12) indicates that there are many responsible positions that women have filled without any censure from God.

John 4:1-42 *(Jesus speaks with the woman at the well in Sychar.)*

Luke 10:38-42 *(Jesus teaches Mary.)*

Romans 16:6 Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you.

Romans 16:12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.

Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

21. Christians are able to practice the unity of the Spirit as they worship and work together in the church although in the world they observe different role relationships such as employer/employee and magistrate/citizen. (Ephesians 4:3-5 Galatians 3:26-28)

Eph. 4:3-5 *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.* There is one body and one Spirit-just as you were called to one hope when you were called-one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Gal.3:26-28 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

22. In gatherings of believers a husband and his wife will behave in a way that reflects their commitment to the marriage relationship designed for them by God. (I Corinthians 11:2-16) Likewise those who preach and teach will be honored by the people whom they serve. (1 Timothy 5:17)

1 Cor. 11:2-16 I praise you for thinking of me in every way and for keeping the truths as I delivered them to you. I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, *the head of a woman is her husband*, and the head of Christ is God. Any man who keeps his head covered when he prays or speaks God's Word dishonors his head. *But any woman who prays or speaks God's Word with nothing on her head dishonors her head.* She is exactly like the woman whose head is shaved. If a woman wears nothing on her head, she should also get her hair cut. But if it is a disgrace for a woman to get her hair cut or shaved off, she should keep her head covered. A man shouldn't cover his head, because he is God's image and glory; but a woman is a man's glory. The man wasn't made from the woman, but the woman from the man, and the man wasn't made for the woman but the woman for the man. That's why a woman should wear something on her head to show she is under authority, out of respect for the angels.

Yet in the Lord a woman needs a man, and a man needs a woman. As the woman was made from the man, so a man is born of a woman, and it all comes from God. Judge for yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with nothing on her head? Doesn't nature itself teach you it's disgraceful for a man to have long hair but that it's a woman's glory to wear her hair long? Her hair is given her as a covering. *But if anybody means to argue about it—we don't have such a custom*, nor do God's churches. (An American Translation)

1 Tim. 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double *honor*, especially those whose work is *preaching and teaching*.

23. Jesus has final authority and ultimate responsibility in His Church. (Mark 2:9-12 Revelation 1:12-18) The public administration of this authority (The Ministry of the Keys) is entrusted to called and ordained servants of the Word through the believers who call them. (Matthew 16:18-19 Luke 10:16 Acts 20:28 Romans 10:14-15)

Mark 2:9-12 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But that you may know *that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....*" He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.

Rev. 1: 12-18 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and *among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man,"* dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. *In his right hand he held seven stars*, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I

am the First and the Last. I am the Living One: I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And *I hold the keys of death and Hades.*"

Matt. 16:18-19 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. *I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*"

Luke 10:16 "*He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.*"

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which *the Holy Spirit has made you overseers*. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood

Rom. 10:14-15 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And *how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?*

Making Decisions in the Church

24. The New Testament does not prescribe how the church must organize itself. How the church chooses to structure itself in varying situations is a matter of Christian liberty and sanctified common sense.

25. The New Testament does not prescribe which process the church must use to make decisions. Over the centuries the church has been governed in a wide variety of ways.

26. If Christians choose to organize themselves democratically, they should realize that the New Testament neither defines what voting is nor prescribes who should be allowed to vote. Since the New Testament does not prohibit women from participating in the decision making process of the church, it is not automatically sinful for women to express their opinions or to cast votes in a gathering in which men are also participating.

The World

27. Men and women, whether married or single, are commanded to respect the marriages of others. (Exodus 20:14, 17)

Exodus 20:14 *You shall not commit adultery.*

Exodus 20:17 *You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*

28. While Christians do not force their beliefs and practices on the world, they are to be a salutary influence by word and deed on the society in which they live. (Matthew 5:13-16) Thus in the world a husband and wife will behave in a way that reflects their commitment to the marriage relationship designed for them by God.

Matt. 5:13-16 *"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its salti-*

ness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

29. Their Christian liberty allows believers to exercise Christian judgment as they apply what God says about individual roles to life and work situations. (Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9 Colossians 3:18 - 4:1 I Peter 2:11 - 3:7)

30. We believe that a woman who is given authority over a man because of her God-given abilities or because the circumstances of her life require it can accept such responsibility with a clear conscience. (1 Corinthians 7:17)

I Cor. 7:17 Nevertheless, *each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him* and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.

31. All Christians will refrain from unduly judging brothers and sisters if they make different applications of what God says to varying situations. (Matthew 7:1-5)

Matt. 7:1-5 *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

In order to clarify the positive statements presented above, we present the following statements of what we do not believe:

Interpretation and Application of Scripture

1. We do not believe that the spiritual oneness we have in Christ as expressed in Galatians 3:28 sets aside the distinctive responsibilities which husbands and wives owe each other as expressed in Ephesians 5:21-33.

GaI.3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, *for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

2. We do not believe that when Genesis 3:16 says, "Your husband will rule over you," this is God's prescription for how He wants men and women to treat each other because Genesis 3:14-19 is a description of the destructive consequences of sin.

Gen. 3:14-19 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all

the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. *Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you.* "

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it, 'cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

3. We do not believe that 1 Corinthians 11:3 prescribes a general headship of men over women. This is one of the passages where we believe the scriptural context indicates the words *aner* and *gyne* are to be translated "husband" and "wife" as explained in the final paragraph of the Preamble. St. Paul refers to God's purpose in creation (1 Corinthians 11:8-9) which was clearly marriage (Genesis 2:18) and then stresses the interdependence of Christian husbands and wives. (1 Corinthians 11:11-12)

I Cor. 11:3 I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. (An American Translation)

1 Cor. 11:8-9 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; *neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.*

Gen.2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. *I will make a helper suitable for him.*"

1 Cor. 11:11-12 In the Lord, however, *woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.* For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

4. We do not believe that 1 Timothy 2:12 prohibits all women from any exercise of authority over men because St. Paul refers to the sin of Adam and Eve (1 Timothy 2:14) who are identified as husband and wife in Genesis 3:17. The reference to childbearing (1 Timothy 2:15) also indicates that he is discussing the relationships between husbands and wives.

1 Tim. 2:12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.

1 Tim. 2:13-14 For *Adam was formed first, then Eve.* And Adam was not the one deceived; *it was the woman who was deceived* and became a sinner.

Gen.3:17 To Adam he said, "*Because you listened to your wife* and ate from the tree of which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it, 'cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.”

1 Tim. 2:15 But women will be saved *through childbearing*-if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

5. We do not believe that 1 Corinthians 14:34 forbids every type of speaking by women in the assemblies of the church. (1 Corinthians 11:5)

1 Cor. 14:34 Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.

1 Cor. 11:5 And *every woman who prays or prophesies* with her head uncovered dishonors her head-it is just as though her head were shaved.

Headship and Submission

6. We do not believe that when the New Testament identifies the husband as "the head of his wife" it gives him license to abuse his wife in any way.

7. We do not believe that the word "head," when used as a metaphor for the husband in the New Testament, primarily stresses the exercise of authority.

8. We do not believe that a man is responsible to be the "head" of another man's wife or daughter. (Ephesians 5:23)

Eph. 5:23 For the husband is the head of the *wife* as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

9. We do not believe that a woman is required to submit to a man simply because he is a man. (1 Peter 3:1)

1 Pet. 3:1 Wives, in the same way be submissive to *your* husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives.

Postscript

We are willing to explain and defend this document, but we are also willing to be instructed. We do not regard this document as the final word on this issue. We hope it will contribute to further study of the Scriptures and lead to a God-pleasing unity and harmony among us.

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The Third Sunday in Advent

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