

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE AND THE HUMAN DIGNITY OF WOMEN

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Abstract

My aim, in this article, is to focus on the human dignity and human rights of women from a classical Reformed perspective. The role women should play in the church and society will also be discussed. The central theoretical argument of this investigation is that Christians, in their calling to manifest the attitude of Christ, should always take the human dignity of women to heart and should be the champions of women's rights in church and society. Christians should therefore be involved in the normalisation of the position of women in both church and society. In this article, the Bible is interpreted from the perspective of classical Reformed hermeneutics. This investigation brings a deductive way of reasoning into play, thereby contradicting the inductive way of reasoning found in biblicism up until now. This inductive way of reasoning entails using the passages proclaiming the prohibition of the ordination of women in particular offices in the church as the sole evidence for the answer to the question. This text, however, approaches the passages in question from the broad perspective of the total anthropology of Scripture.

In order to do this, the article investigates the socio-historical role of women in biblical times. Secondly, the topic of women's rights according to the biblical message is addressed from the hermeneutical presupposition that Scripture reveals the ongoing work of God, the renewal of all things in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in a revelation-historical way. The revelation-historical (salvation-historical) information relevant to the topic is examined and eventually the result is applied to the current position of women in churches and in society.

1 INTRODUCTION

At their annual sessions, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations (UNHRC) deems it necessary to discuss and enhance the human rights of women. Discrimination against women in societies, the workplace, in civil institutions, religious institutions and the many cases of abuse of women are still the norm and force the UNHRC to act on their behalf. The annual reports of the Special Rapporteur paint a gloomy picture of the position of women in the world today. These reports mention the many cases of violence against women, trafficking, and the exploitation and violations of their basic rights, even in modern civilised constitutional democracies.¹ These reports reveal that women are more prone to perennial poverty and HIV/Aids infection as a result of their predicament. They also reveal that, although most countries value

respect for the human rights of women, these violations occur with the tacit approval of governments. The report of 2005 mentions forty-seven member states where abuse of the human rights of women was investigated.ⁱⁱ Thus, in spite of the efforts of the United Nations, liberal religious bodies and feminist organisations over many decades, the position of women in the modern world is far from satisfactory.ⁱⁱⁱ

2 THE SOCIO-RELIGIOUS PROBLEM

Schüssler-Fiorenza asserts that religion played and still plays a huge role in the establishment and continuation of this inferior position of women in society.^{iv} Camp is of the opinion that this is true of all the major religious traditions.^v Are religions, amongst others, really to blame for this state of affairs? In addressing this question it will be worthwhile noting some of the results of recent surveys.

- Kevane refers to the fact that, in Northern India and China, the abortion of female foetuses is much higher than abortions of male foetuses.^{vi} This is because families prefer baby boys to baby girls. Kevane refers to this situation as female infanticide. There are currently 80-100 million girls fewer than there should be.
- In Africa, survey evidence shows that parents prefer boys. A family that has two sons may decide that they have no need for further children since they do not really value girls. A family with two girls may, however, decide to go on having children in the hope of having a boy. This preference for sons also exists in the mostly Hindu and Muslim Indian community in South Africa. Parents hurry to have a second child when the first was a girl.^{vii}
- Malpractices such as the circumcision of girls, which has widely known destructive effects, the neglect of females when it comes to education, and the fact that Africa's grinding poverty falls heavily on the shoulders of women, are some of the consequences of the inferiority of women in African society today. Traditional religions, especially the patrilineal religions, can be seen as one of the main causes of this situation.^{viii}
- Sexual abuse of women is also prominent in places where bride wealth has to be paid. By paying bride wealth, the male feels that he is entitled to enjoy exclusive sexual access to his wife, and that means sex on demand. Surveys in Africa indicate a high incidence of non-consensual sex in marriage.^{ix}

What does this have to do with Christianity? Banda explains:

In Africa there has been an explosion of newer Christian churches whose membership comprises mainly women. It is sad but true to say that the translation and interpretation of religious texts have

often resulted in women being told that it is their duty to submit themselves to their husbands or partners.^x

Many fundamentalist traditions enable husbands to take advantage of the beliefs that women are inherently inferior and that they should be subordinate to men in all spheres of life. They know very well that their wives will persevere and will be hesitant to leave them and that women will not attempt to break out of the situation because of its religious sanctity. Many historical factors shaped the contemporary culture of gender insensitivity that still prevails in modern societies, such as the remnants of patriarchal cultures, old fashioned economic systems, ideologies of male superiority, ethnic customs and abusive political policies. But it is evident that religions have also contributed to women's predicament. Christianity did not change patriarchal structures; if anything, it rather entrenched them.^{xi} Christianity can therefore also be blamed - at least as far as certain traditions within Christianity are concerned.

3 CHRISTIANITY AND GENDER

In Christian theology, the position of women in churches and in society was neglected for many centuries, although the subject was debated in the early churches. However, the councils of Laodicea (352) and Chalcedon (451) ruled against the ordination of woman in ecclesiastical offices and the latter even restricted the use of deaconesses. Early inscriptions prove that women were ordained in official positions between the second and third centuries, but this was the exception rather than the norm.

Between the decision of Chalcedon and the nineteenth century the debate was virtually non-existent and women were not ordained in churches in mainstream Christianity. Virtually all prominent exponents of the different traditions in Christianity in the past more or less regarded women as inferior and were satisfied that social relations should demonstrate this inferiority. This is true of the Church Fathers,^{xii} Thomas Aquinas,^{xiii} Luther^{xiv} and Calvin.^{xv} Christian traditions were thus part of the entrenchment of the inferior and subordinate position of women in church and society throughout the centuries.

However, in modern times the liberation of women in Christian churches became a prominent debate in this religious tradition. In the various traditions, the debate focused especially on the topic of the ordination of women in all the ecclesiastical offices. Many theologians argue that as long as women cannot occupy the same positions as men in the church, their position in the church will remain inferior and this perception of inferiority will continue to flourish in all the other spheres of society, as has been the case in many communities. This topic is currently a burning issue in South African ecclesiastical circles also. Recent years have also witnessed the emergence of many female theologians, who argue for the rectification of the human dignity of women both in church and society. The voice of women is no longer silent.^{xvi}

Western society witnessed the rise of a new awareness of women's rights in

the church as far back as the nineteenth century. Certain traditions, such as the Congregational Churches, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, the Mariavite Church in Poland and Christian religious groups such as Christian Science phased in the ordination of women. This trend continued in the twentieth century and most churches in the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist (with exception of the Southern Baptist in the US), Hussite, Methodist, Anglican, Wesleyan and Reformed traditions resolved to ordain women in the ecclesiastical offices.^{xvii} Ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches favour the ordination of women in offices, while a body such as the International Council of Reformed Churches and other smaller bodies in conservative Christian churches actively oppose it.

Although liberal Protestantism addressed this issue over the last century, more than seventy percent of the mainstream Christian traditions still maintain that women should be subordinate to men in the local ministry of churches. The Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox traditions, the Evangelical Movement; the Charismatic Movement, the African Initiated Churches and some large segments of conservative Protestantism still regard the ordination of women in ecclesiastical offices as being against the will of God.^{xviii}

Much can be said for the argument that the subordination of women in religious institutions, and thus also in the Christian churches, finds its way into society and develops into a general culture where women are seen as inferior and are treated as such. For that very reason Christian theology must take the liberation of women seriously.^{xix}

Christianity must become an agent of liberation of women. That is the least that can be expected of a religion where love is the central command, a religion that instigated the demise of slavery, fought racism and campaigned for the rights of the poor and the needy. This goal makes it of utmost importance that the so-called androcentrist character of the Bible and the prescriptions regarding the subordination of women are revisited.^{xx} The problem, especially in conservative Christianity where women are regarded as subordinate, is that theologians assume that the issue of the liberation and equivalence of women can only be fulfilled through a hermeneutics of biblical criticism. In other words, they argue that the problematics surrounding the ethic of women liberation are based not in the interpretation of the Bible, but on the Bible itself. They accuse the liberationists of approaching the Bible with a hermeneutics of suspicion and of suspending the biblical message in favour of a modern humanist approach. In their view such an approach is completely unacceptable. In this respect they are correct. However, that is not enough of a reason to resist all changes in the traditional views supporting the absolute subordination of women in the church. In my opinion the traditional viewpoint goes astray by approaching the issue from a biblicist point of view, which entails that the position of women in the church should be based on certain single passages rather than on biblical anthropology as a whole. Being an ethicist in the classical Reformed tradition, where this perception is prominent, I want to question both the position of biblical criticism and biblicism itself in

favour of a third position.^{xxi} *I would argue that a hermeneutics founded in the recognition of the authority of the Bible, as it is expressed in the classical Reformed Confessions, can also support the liberation of women in the church and, as a result, also in society. This conclusion can be reached when the topic is investigated using a deductive way of reasoning.*

My aim, in this article, is to focus on the human dignity and human rights of women from the classical Reformed perspective. The role women should play in the church and society will also be discussed. The central theoretical argument of this investigation is that Christians, in their calling to manifest the attitude of Christ, should always take the human dignity of women to heart and should be the champions of women's rights in church and society. Christians should therefore be involved in the normalisation of the position of women in both church and society.

In this article the Bible will be interpreted from a classical Reformed perspective and not approached with a hermeneutics of suspicion.^{xxii} This investigation brings a deductive way of reasoning into play, thereby contradicting the inductive way of reasoning found in Biblicism up until now. This way of reasoning entails using the passages proclaiming the prohibition of the ordination of women in particular offices in the church, as the sole evidence for the answer to the question. This text, however, will approach the passages in question from the broad perspective of the total anthropology of Scripture.

In order to do this, the socio-historical role of women in biblical times will be investigated. Secondly, the topic of women's rights according to the biblical message will be addressed from the hermeneutical presupposition that Scripture reveals the ongoing work of God; the renewal of all things in Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in a revelation-historical way. The revelation-historical (salvation-historical)^{xxiii} information relevant to the topic will be examined and eventually the result will be applied to the current position of women in churches and in society.

4 THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN BIBLICAL TIMES

To establish what the status of women should be according to Christianity, some scholars and studies^{xxiv} refer to the socio-historical background of the Bible in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The findings are interesting. Both the proponents of the subordination of females in church and society, and those committed to the total emancipation of women, draw conclusions from this material. The reason for this is that the position of women in the Israel of the Old Testament was to a certain extent, ambivalent. On the one hand the women were regarded as inferior, having far fewer rights than the man. De Vaux summarises woman's position in Old Testament times in his conclusion:

... that the wife called her husband *ba'al* or 'master'; she also called him '*adôn* or 'lord' (Gn 18:12; Jg 19:26; Am 4:1); she addressed him,

in fact, as a slave addressed his master or a subject his king. The Decalogue includes a man's wife among his possessions, along with his house and land, his male and female slaves, his ox and his ass (Ex 20:17; Dt 5:21). Her husband can repudiate her, but she cannot claim a divorce, all her life she remains a minor. The wife does not inherit from her husband, nor daughters from their father, except when there is no male heir (Nb 27:8). A vow made by a girl or married woman needs, to be valid, the consent of father or husband and if this consent is withheld, the vow is null and void (Nb 30: 4-17).^{xxv}

Some modern day Christians, for example in African Christianity, use this historical material to endorse the inferior position of women within their own environment.^{xxvi}

On the other hand, many examples in the Old Testament can be found where women occupied influential social positions in spite of the customs and cultures of the day and contradictory to the andro-centric language of the day. The following examples can be mentioned here:

- In spite of occupying an inferior position, in jurisprudence a woman did have legal protection (Dt. 21:14; Js. 15:19; Jdg. 1:15; Nb. 30:10; Ex. 22:21; Dt.10:18; 24:17, 21; 26:12-13; 27:19). She was also respected in society (Gn. 16:4; Ex. 21:17; Lv. 20:9; Dt. 21:18-21; Pv. 19:16; 20:20; 30:17).
- Deborah acted as a prophetess and as a leader of Israel (Jdg. 4:4).
- Miriam, the sister of Aaron, acted as a prophetess (Ex. 15:20).
- Huldah acted as a prophetess (2 Kn. 22:15).
- Anna acted as a prophetess (Lk. 2:36).
- Athalia became Queen in the place of Ahaziah after his death. She was deposed not because she was a woman, but because she was a murderer and a tyrant.

Some Christians find enough reason, in the above biblical material, to believe that women should be emancipated.

The question is: To what extent can the biblical historical material be used in ascertaining what the position of women should be in church and society today? Can these examples be regarded as prescriptive for people on one side of the fence or the other?

Although interesting, one can question the use of this material in formulating principles for Christianity today. The way in which this material must be used needs further investigation. Socio-historical material is helpful in understanding Scripture, but it cannot be regarded as prescriptive, except when Scripture itself presents it as such. Normally such material is only descriptive and denotes a social situation or predicament. The fact that women were regarded as inferior does not mean that this view relected the will of God.

Both groups also draw arguments from the written texts of the Bible to prove their points. In particular they refer to the androcentric character of the written

texts. The guardians of male superiority proclaim that the emphasis on maleness in the terminology indicates the superiority of male persons according to the biblical perspective of human relations. On the other hand, the same androcentric language is used by some advocates of female liberation in their argument that the biblical message is intrinsically opposed to the emancipation of females and that the message is therefore irrelevant in a modern environment. This was the position taken by Stanton after her attempt to introduce a Women's Bible in the late nineteenth century.^{xxvii} Good examples of this point can be found in the modern feminist theology of liberation, such as the commentary of Tamez on the epistle of James and the commentary of Corley on 1 Peter.^{xxviii}

However, today most feminist theologians justifiably query this assumption. This argument has lost its relevance mainly because scholars have become conscious of the fact that the male term is a generic term, and usually includes the female.^{xxix} Both the Old Testament and the New Testament were written within certain historical, social and cultural contexts. The authors use the expressions of their times and, since they lived in a patriarchal society they used the patriarchal languages and expressions of their day. This does not necessarily mean that they intended to promote and strengthen patriarchalism or that their message is blemished by androcentrism. The argument of the androcentric character of biblical language can no longer, therefore, be put forward as proof either for the justification of a doctrine of female inferiority or for a rejection of the text because of its so-called bias against women.

The biblical scholar should investigate more than just the historical situations and the androcentric language of the texts. The underlying theology of Scripture should also be investigated. It will then be possible to reveal the biblical message about social relations, including the biblical message of the relationship between men and women. In fact, it becomes clear that the message regarding the position of women runs against patriarchal society's bias and its culture of inferiority (in biblical times). Some feminists are therefore justified when they accept that it is possible to uncover the patriarchal biases and thereby bring to light the Bible's liberating message for women as well as men.^{xxx}

To determine what Scripture teaches about the status of women and gender relations, we need to investigate deeper theological principles. One way to do this is to investigate the development of biblical anthropology within the framework of the continuous main themes of the biblical message, namely revelation history, as this approach is called in classical reformed theology.

5 THE POSITION OF WOMEN ACCORDING TO THE BIBLICAL MESSAGE

Tamez correctly points out that in establishing what the Bible teaches about women, we need to investigate more than just the texts dealing with women.^{xxxi} She refers to all the texts that deal with oppression and liberation. But one can go even further and state that all texts dealing with the

relationship between God and humankind should come into the discussion. The totality of biblical anthropology should be taken into account. This cannot be done in the space of one article, but for the purposes of this investigation I would like to give prominence to the following biblical themes for further reflection: the creation and fall, the covenant, the kingdom of God and the formation of the church, the redemption in Christ, the gifts of the Spirit and the second coming of Christ.

5.1 Creation and fall

When dealing with the theme of creation and fall and its relevance to the position of women, three topics are important. These are the creation of the human in the image of God, the creation of the woman as a helper for the man, and the effect of human sin.

As in the case of Adam, Eve too was created by God, yet in such a way that her propinquity to Adam was assured. But were they equal? Kaiser argues that the expression:

She was to be 'bone of [his] bone and flesh of [his] flesh' (Gn. 2:23), must be seen in the wider context. Both male and female originated from the hand of God. The male person was so linked to the soil that as his fortunes went, so did the fortunes of nature; and the woman was likewise linked to the man, for she was 'taken from man.' Both, however, shared equally in the highest gift given to any of the orders of creation: the image of God (*imago dei*). Male and female shared alike and equally in this highest mark yet set on creation.^{xxxii}

Furthermore, Kaiser explains that the definition of this *imago dei* only becomes clear (e.g. knowledge, Cl 3:10; righteousness and holiness, Ep 4:24) later on in New Testament times. In the initial stage of God's revelation, the precise content of the image is less specific. According to Kaiser we may see it expressed in concepts such as the possibility of fellowship and communication with God, the exercise of responsible dominion and leadership over the creation owned by God, and the fact that in some way unspecified as yet, God is the prototype of which male and female are mere copies, replicas (*selem*, 'carved or hewn statue or copy') and facsimiles (*demut*, 'likeness'). Kaiser points toward the core principle of the position of male and female before God, namely that both have been created by God. Both bear the image of God and thus enjoy human dignity and the rights flowing from dignified creatures. This God-given attribute to humankind was not lost with the fall and must still be regarded as the foundation of equality between the sexes.^{xxxiii}

Brueggemann says that human beings in the image of God have both male and female characteristics, so that the communal, intersexual character of humankind is affirmed.^{xxxiv} The consequence of this point of view is that the equality brought about by the *imago dei* and the human's dominion over creation is most important in the relationship between husband and wife. The functional differentiation between them is of secondary concern. God created male and female equally with only a functional differentiation in the sense that they have different obligations.^{xxxv} The male person is the head of the

household and should care for the family. He became the *primus inter pares*. His wife should help him with the human family – not on the basis of subordination but of co-operation, as a help and a partner, because she bears the same image of God. But as Yahweh's partners, both have the same function in creation.

However, the fall brought about a change in this God-created order. Owing to sin, this equality became inequality. Sin distorted the co-operation into subordination of females and her 'sameness' into inferiority. She was regarded as inferior in jurisprudence, as is evident in Ex 17:20; Dt 5:11 and Nb 27:8. She was looked upon as a subordinate in social life (Ex 21:3; 2 Sm 11:26; Pv.12:4; Gn 8:12 and Jdg 19:26). The Dutch Old Testament scholar Vriezen draws the conclusion that all forms of patriarchalism in Old Israel and in the time of the New Testament are a result of sin. The wife's relationship of dependency on her husband is punishment for sin.^{xxxvi} The curse on the female in Gn 3:16 is not an instruction to the husband to rule over his wife, but a description of the consequence of the fall. So is the curse on the man's need to labour (Gn 3:17-19). To manage these consequences of sin, God forbade the buying and selling of wives, as was the norm in the old East. This is a valid argument because it proclaims the continuing importance of the *imago dei* after the fall. God's redeeming and renewing work is to break through the barriers of patriarchalism and to restore the creational relationships of men and women's mutual dependency and submission to one another (Ep 5:21).

5.2 The covenant

In the Old Testament, the concepts of election and covenant were central to the relationship between God and his people.^{xxxvii} The covenant was a monopoleuric agreement between God and his people in which God made his people his partners in his renewal of fallen creation.^{xxxviii} God initially established this agreement with Abraham and reaffirmed it several times. This covenant, as an agreement, had everything to do with relationship between God and his people – between God and the individual, between husband and wife, between men and women and between parents and children. These relationships were initiated by God in his grace.^{xxxix} Every single person in the household of the grace of God is situated in a particular relationship with God and each other.

In the covenant, God's promise was of primary concern, but he also stipulates his commandments to his people.^{xl} The promise entailed the liberation of the people; that God will give them the Promised Land and that he will be their God and that the people will be his children. They had to live within this relationship, and that meant total obedience to his laws.^{xli} The people assumed their duties, imposed upon them voluntarily, and thus inherited the blessings of the agreement with God. This new relationship established by the covenant, was the foundation of Old Testament ethics.

In the New Testament dispensation the covenant continued but the promises were made to all believers. These promises found their point of contraction in

the coming of Christ. In Christ the covenant is fulfilled and the people of God, that is the believers in Christ, receive the promise of justification by faith, the blessing of the Holy Spirit, the assurance of eternal life, the final renewal of the creation and vindication over the power of sin.^{xliii} The church of the New Testament, as the new people of God, can therefore be named the covenantal community and the family as the covenantal family.

In this covenant, God included men, women and children. His agreement stretched out to everyone in the household of grace. He also set up a sign of the agreement. In the Old Testament dispensation the practice of circumcision was instructed to serve as an outward sign of the covenant (Gn 17:10-12). In the New Testament the sacrament of baptism became the sign denoting that God made these promises to believers and their children (Ac 2:39). When people turned to the faith, they and their children were baptised as a sign of their new relationship with God (Ac 16:33). This sign signifies the incorporation of people into the church as a new community. This new community relativises all social barriers such as race, gender, ethnicity and class.^{xliiii} People become 'one in Christ' and their status should then be understood in terms of their baptism and not in terms of their birth.^{xliv}

In this agreement, which constituted the new relationship between God and the faithful and between the faithful in their own midst, there is no discrimination. God does not discriminate. The covenant was erected with every single person – man, woman and child. In this relationship there is no superiority or inferiority - everyone is equal as children of Yahweh. Thus the covenant became an expression of the equality between men and women in the most essential aspect of God's involvement with humankind. The logical consequence of this fact is that believers should treat each other as equals, especially in the church, since this is the place where the agreement of the covenant should shine as a sign of God's grace. The covenant is an emblem of the equality of God's people within the household of grace, and obliges the faithful to manifest this equality in the fulfilment of the commands of the covenant in daily life.

5.3 The kingdom of God and the formation of the church

Closely related to the idea of the covenant is the idea of the kingdom of God.^{xlv} Spykman correctly asserts:

Covenant-and-kingdom are not two independent themes. They are more like two sides of the same coin. What holds for the one, holds for the other. They share the same starting point. They are alike in their depth of meaning and coterminous in their cosmic scope.^{xlvi}

While he maintains, with good reason, that the covenant is more *foundation* orientated and that the kingdom is more *goal* orientated, one can also say that the covenant uses the grace of God as its starting point while the Kingdom use the kingship of God as its main motive.

In essence, the Kingdom is all about the reign of God and his divine rule over

the whole creation. The Old Testament proclaims the reality of this rule. The New Testament proclaims the rule of God as it is manifested in the coming of Christ and the formation of the people of God.^{xlvii}

The reign of God is a present and future reality. Küng (1992:56) calls it futurist-presentist eschatology.^{xlviii} This reign has already been manifested in the coming of Christ, but will be revealed in its completeness at the end of time. The whole history of the covenant is an indication of the historical reality of the kingdom. God's rule establishes various signs of the kingdom in this fallen reality - especially in the form of people acknowledging the rule of God and co-operating in the proclamation of this divine rule. Just as the reign of God is realised in the coming and teaching of Christ, it is also realised in the community that results from the work of Christ, namely the Christian, the Christian family and the Christian church.

The church is both the universal community of believers, and the local church. The local church bears all the attributes of the people of God. It is an *ecclesia completa*. It has the same responsibility, namely to embody the reign of God and everything it represents such as love, hope, peace and joy. The church is also called to reveal and promote the reign of God. The essence and calling of the church must therefore be defined within the broader concept of the kingdom. The church is subservient to the kingdom and every aspect of church life is determined by this fact. The church should minister the authority of Christ over all spheres of life and Christians as stewards in the kingdom should manifest this authority in daily life.

Christ as the head of the church confers this stewardship on all believers - men and women. There is no superior and inferior stewardship in the kingdom of God. Both male and female believers should administer the authority of Christ in all spheres of life, including the church. Just as the covenant employs men and women, without discrimination, as partners of God, so does the kingdom when establishing them as stewards. As in the case of the concept of the covenant, no ideology of the superiority of males in church or society can be founded on the biblical teaching of the kingdom of God. In the Kingdom all stewards are equal.

5.4 Redemption in Christ

The coming and the work of Christ is the fulfilment of the promises of the covenant and the manifestation of the present reality of the kingdom. In Christ, God's promise to renew everything and to restore the goodness of the creation reached its fulfilment. In Him people receive a new life, that is, the possibility of living according to the renewing principles of the kingdom. In Christ a new dispensation emerged (2 Cr 5:17).^{xlix} History took a turn for the better under the rule of the crucified, but resurrected, Lord.

The redemption in Christ institutes the third core principle of biblical anthropology. The first principle is the fact that humans are created in the image of God. The second is the destructive influence of the fall on all humans' ability to lead a good life. The third principle teaches the restoration

of fallen humankind and thus the restoration of people's ability to do the will of God and to live as new people in obedience to God's rule. This third principle is founded on the doctrine of reconciliation and everything this entails. Christ reconciled people with God and with one another. This reconciliation becomes the foundation of all social relationships such as marital relationships, family relationships and labour relationships (Ep 5:21-33; Cl 3:18-19; 1 Pt 3:1-7).

Just as humans are regarded as equal according to the first and the second principles, they are regarded as equals according to the third. God reconciled all human beings with Him, irrespective of gender or any other social differences. Gl 3:28 reads:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (See also Cl 3:11).

Patriarchalism, as a vestige of sin and a remnant of the fallen creation has become null and void owing to the reconciliation in Christ. Furthermore, all the other doctrines of the superiority and the inferiority of people such as slavery, ethnocentrism and racism are hereby regarded as contradictory to the reconciliation in Christ. The new creation, with its reconciled people, has a culture of equality. Christians as new people in Christ should therefore promote this culture in church and society. Part of this calling is to reject all forms of patriarchalism and to establish gender equality as a sign of the renewed relationships that exist between the people of God. Like men, women should be free to fulfil their calling as people of the kingdom in all spheres of ecclesiastical and social life. However, equality in Christ does not eliminate the differences that exist between men and women. The oneness of male and female in Christ does not obliterate the physical and psychological differences as these were established at creation. The woman is still sharply and visibly differentiated from man.^l The redemption integrates the creational order, of equality in dignity, but with functional differentiation between men and women.

5.5 The gifts of the Spirit

For the fulfilment of their calling as stewards in the Kingdom, Christian men and women are bestowed with the gifts of the Spirit, irrespective of persons. Male and female believers are blessed with the gifts of the message of wisdom; the message of knowledge, the gift of faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy (Ac 21:9), discernment of spirits, speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues (1 Cr 12:8-11). Other gifts include the gifts of serving; teaching (admonishing), encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leadership and showing mercy (Rm 12:6-8; see also 1 Cr 13:2; 14:6; Cl 1:28). The believers who receive these gifts are encouraged to utilise them in the edification of the congregation and to promote each other's spiritual growth. Of particular interest is the fact that female believers are bestowed with the gifts of teaching, prophecy and leadership, gifts that are of particular value in the ministry of the Word.^{li}

As a result of their reconciliation in Christ and in the employment of their gifts,

believers have many obligations in their relationships with each other. These obligations are the following:^{lii}

- The congregation should love one another (Jn 4:12; Hb 3:1; Rm 12:10 ff; Mt 5:43; 1 Pt 1:22; 1 Pt 2:17; 1 Ts 4:9).
- The congregation should serve one another (Jn 13:14; Ts 3:8; 1 Pt 4:10; Gl 6:10; Mk 10:44; Rm 12:7, 8, 13; Ef 4:28; 1 Cr 12:25; Mk 10:43).
- The congregation should pray for one another (Jm 5:16; 1 Jn 5:16; Rm 15:30).
- The congregation should attend to one another (1 Ts 5:14; Hb 12:14, 15; Jd 22, 23; Gl 6:1; Ac 20:28).
- The congregation should enter into the spirit of one another (Rm 12:15, 13:8; Gl 6:2; Fl 2:18; Hb 13:3; 2 Tm 1:8; 2 Cr 7:3; Mt 25:31-36; 1 Cr 12:360).
- The congregation should live in peace (Rm 12:18; 14:19; 1 Ts 5:13; Ef 4:3; Cl 3:15).
- The congregation should persevere in the communion of the saints (Ac 1:14; 2:42, 46; Rm 15:6; Hr 13:16; 1 Jn 1:3).
- The congregation should bear with and forgive one another (Rom 12:14, 19; Ef 4:2; Gl 6:2).
- The congregation must preserve its unity (Ef 4:3, 12; Cl 3:15; 1 Cr 12:25).
- The congregation should admonish one another (Rm 15:14; Cl 3:16; 1 Th 4:18).
- The congregation should live in harmony with one another (1 Pt 3:8; Ef 4:32; Rm 12:10).
- The congregation should have compassion for one another (Ef 4:32; Rm 12:15; Hb 13:3).
- The congregation should speak truthfully to one another (Ef 4:25).
- The congregation should join with others in following the example of the apostle (Fl 3:17).
- The congregation should accept one another (Rm 14:1; 15:7).

These obligations also pertain to women in the congregation; there is no discrimination or exclusion. They have to serve, pray, admonish and speak truthfully in the congregation. In itself these obligations indicate that women could speak truthfully (preaching the gospel) to, and admonish, male believers. Admonishment in the community of believers involves the ministry of the authority of Christ. One can thus conclude that male and female believers were regarded as equal in their duty to administer the authority of Christ to their fellow believers. It goes without saying that the calling to the ministry of the Word also implies the official ministry under certain conditions, as I will explain later.

5.6 The second Coming of Christ

The second coming of Christ is the last chapter in revelation-history and is the climax of history. The second Coming of Christ will inaugurate the completely renewed creation and the vindication of humankind over the deep destructive force of sin. The people of God and their works will be beautified and they will

rule with Christ - even over the angels (1 Cr 6:3). The church will then be the triumphant church in the impeccable kingdom of God.

The female children of God will share in this event and the consequences thereof in exactly the same way as male believers. They will also enter the consummated kingdom to rule with Christ. Their works will follow them (Rv 14:13). In other words, the fruits of the testimony and the works of faith of female believers in this dispensation are just as important to God as those of male believers and after the coming of Christ, will be an integral part of the new dispensation. The New Testament's perspective was revolutionary in the cultural 'umwelt' of the first century and certainly contradictory to the expectations of the future in the old religions. According to pagan religious beliefs, the male was privileged also in the life hereafter!

From this perspective, the biblical message sees anthropology, as this was revealed from the story of creation, through to its logical consequence. Men and women were created in the image of God. Although each has a unique position in their relationship with each other, they share, on an equal basis, in the covenant, the kingdom, the reconciliation in Christ, and the gifts of the Spirit. Eventually, both men and women will participate and contribute to the new dispensation inaugurated by the second Coming of Christ.

The biblical message, as it unfurls throughout the history of revelation and salvation, teaches the equality of men and women. Their functional differentiation does not establish a culture of male superiority and female inferiority. On the contrary! Each in their own way must serve God as equals before Him and should therefore be seen and treated as equals by all God's children. But should females be ordained in the official ministries in the church? Is the anthropology of Scripture as it develops in the revelation history not contradicted by 1 Cr 14:33-35 and 1 Tm 2:12-15, where the women are instructed to be silent in the church because of her subordination to the male believer?

5.7 Contradictions?

At first glance these passages, as well as 1 Cor 11:1-16, suggests that the authority of Christ over the male is used as the model for the authority of the husband over his wife. Just as the man should be subordinate to Christ, so should the wife be subordinate to her husband. In 1 Cr 14:33-35, the Bible instructs women to be silent in the churches. 1 Tm. 2:12-15 repeats this instruction to silence and bases it on the order of creation. The foundation of this instruction is that the man was created first and the man therefore has authority over his wife. This instruction is strengthened by the fact that the woman was the first to sin. Is the subordination of women part of the order of creation and of the re-creation? Are all women subordinate to all men? Should there be a prohibition against the ordination of women in official ministries in the church today?

Some churches used these passages to 'prove' the subordination of women in the New Testament dispensation also.^{liii} Furthermore, these passages are also used as the main reason for asserting that women should not be ordained in

the official ministries because such an ordination will limit the authority of their husbands. This argument leaves us with a very difficult question. Are Christians forced to admit that the Bible is, in fact, contradictory? That is the implication of the conservative approach. The counter argument of liberal scholars is that these passages are contextually bound and that they have no relevance at all for the church today, particularly in view of the fact that they contradict the Bible's main message regarding social relations. However, the liberal approach is also problematic not only because it approaches these passages with a hermeneutics of suspicion, but also because it runs against the idea of the unity of Scripture. Furthermore, what criterion should be used to ascertain whether an ethical instruction or principle for ministry is time-bound or not? This view inevitably compromises all other New Testament ethical instructions and principles for worship and ministry.

Is a third position possible? To answer this question, we need to investigate the three passages. 1 Cr 11:3 affirm that the man is the head of the woman and Christ is the head of man and God is the head of Christ. The word used for head is *kephalè*, which means 'the head of a body' or 'origin of something'. In these passages, *kephalè* indicates an origin. The woman originates from the man because she was created out of the rib of the man. The creational order of the man as *primus inter pares* is reiterated, as is the functional differentiation between men and women. In this respect, Grosheide is correct.^{liv} But no inferiority can be deduced from this explanation because of the addition that 'the head of Christ is God'. If the woman is inferior to the man then Christ is inferior to God (as Arius asserted!) and such a view is contrary to the doctrine of the Trinity. The latter should not be seen as an ontological statement but as a Christological proclamation which entails that the Messiah comes from God.^{lv}

What about the instructions to women to be silent in the meetings of believers? Can this instruction be used to refuse the ordination of women in official ministries today? In my opinion, the answer can be found in 1 Cr 11:5, because this passage contains the logical consequence of the Bible's entire anthropology. The conservative approach does not pay enough attention to the information provided in this passage.^{lvi} The argument can be developed in the following way:

- This passage states that females may not prophesy with an uncovered head. Such a practice will disturb their relationships with their husbands, with the husband as *primus inter pares*. As a sign of this relationship, the woman must prophesy and pray with a covered head. *But she may prophesy in public on behalf of the church and could play a liturgical role!*^{lvii} This prophesying means public teaching, admonishing or comforting; and delivering God's message to the congregation.^{lviii} This argument is strengthened by the evidence of women who actually prophesied. The four daughters of Philip had this gift (Ac 21:9). Paul also refers to women who did work in the ministry. He mentions Priscilla (a fellow-worker Rom 16:3) and the 'work' of Maria (Rom 16:6). According to Ridderbos, with reference to Strack-Billerbeck, this 'work' (*kopos*) of Maria referred to work in the congregation, such as the ministry of the

Gospel.^{lix} Paul uses the same word to describe the *ministry* of the people working in the church (1 Ts 5:12). Hauck reaches the same conclusion in his research into the meaning of the word *kopos* in the New Testament.^{lx} 1 Tim 5:9 also refers to women (the widows) in an official ministry of some kind.

- But one should bear in mind that there are also conditions set for the ministry of women. The first condition is based on the creation of history (1 Tm 2:13-14). The reference to creational history is in accordance with the anthropology revealed in the theme of creation and fall and reaffirms the principle underlying the unique relation in marriage, where the husband is the *primus inter pares*. The work of women in the ministry should not degrade this relationship.^{lxi} It also corresponds with the conditions set for men in the ministry. Their behaviour must also be such that it keeps the marital and family relations in good order and high esteem.
- The second condition is based on the lifestyle of the believers amongst unbelievers and the need to adhere to the good social customs of that time (1 Cr 14:35 & 1 Tm 2:8-12). This condition entails that the conduct of women in the church should express a spirit of piety, humility and modesty and should not portray the extravagance and disorderliness of pagan society of the time. It seems that the apostle was troubled by various forms of disorderliness in the congregation due to influences from outside. People in the church were acting against the good social customs of the day. The reference to disgraceful behaviour, as it is also applied to men's hairstyles and the uncovered heads of women in 1 Cr 11:13 & 14 had to do with the social customs of the time and age of the Corinthian church. According to Louw and Nida the word used in these instances clearly pertains to behaviour that was contrary to the social customs of the time.^{lxii} Believers should refrain from dishonouring good social customs. What the apostle has in mind here is behaviour that hinders prayer.^{lxiii} Both the men and women have to glorify God when they prophesy - he by prophesying with a bare head and she by prophesying with a covered head, according to the customs of the day. In this way men and women did not obliterate the uniqueness of the male and female.^{lxiv} Indeed, by adhering to this norm, they distinguished themselves from the ungodly people of their time.^{lxv} The women must draw attention to herself by her spiritual qualities, and not by external adornment.^{lxvi} In these cultural circumstances of the time, prophesying while wearing a veil meant that the woman remained true to her femininity, in contrast to the disgraceful conduct of some women in society at large.

Taking all these arguments into account, is fair to argue that what the apostle is saying is that the woman may prophesy and pray in the church as long as she does not compromise her relationship with her husband, in other words, inflict some sort of damage on their marital relationship. Her freedom and equality should not inhibit the functional differentiation in her relationship to her husband. And this principle applies to the overall relationship between

men and women.^{lxvii} This unique relationship must not be disturbed, as apparently happened in the troubled church of Corinth. It will therefore be fair to conclude that the apostle was concerned to ban disruptive behaviour rather than enforce a complete silence on women in worship settings.^{lxviii} *In other words, she may be ordained in an official ministry except when there is proof that such an ordination will violate her marital relationship. Furthermore, her work in the ministry should not inhibit her femininity and her Christian spirituality.* But, conditions are not only dictated to women, but also to men. The conditions that are implicitly laid down for the ordination of women correspond with the conditions set down explicitly for the official ministries of men (See 1 Tm 3:1-7 & Tt 1:6). Both the male and female, therefore, can serve in ecclesiastical offices as long as they meet the conditions laid down in the New Testament for both of them.

The admission of women to the ministry in the church corresponds with the thesis of gender equality, as this topic is accentuated and developed in all the major themes of revelation history. The biblical message does not contradict itself.

6 WOMEN IN THE CHURCH TODAY

Biblical anthropology indeed proclaims the liberation of women in church and society. The church must convey this message, especially in view of the destructive message of Christian theology in the past regarding women, and the discriminatory actions in many churches today. The ongoing and growing global debate on this issue must be welcomed and appreciated. According to Küng, progress has been made in improving the position of women in mainstream ecclesiastical structures. He says:

Much has changed, as far as individuals, married couples, communities and theological faculties have been able to change it. Changes have taken place in the partnership of men and women, the division of work, education and professional training for daughters and the preparation of sons for being fathers and sharing in household tasks, birth control, the language of worship, the presence of women representatives in many decision-making bodies at the parish and diocesan level, and the possibility for Catholic women to study theology. But much for which the hierarchy has been responsible has not changed.^{lxix}

This is indeed true. The continuous normalisation of the position of females in the church is still, therefore, of the utmost importance, because it has been proved that religious views that proclaim the inferiority of women result in discrimination against women in society at large. Indeed, the religious convictions about the divine sanction of the inferiority of women breed a culture of disrespect, and even abuse. If a young male grows up in a religious community where females are regarded as subordinate, and where women are not allowed to participate in certain functions, his views about the position of women in society will inevitably be formed by his religious experience. This

is why many Christians in South Africa, especially in black traditional communities and white conservative communities, still regard women as inferior. The same is true in the Muslim communities'.^{lxx}

The church as the people of the new covenant and the kingdom of God therefore has a very important calling amidst the prevailing culture of woman abuse, namely to teach the biblical perspective on gender equality, to manifest this equality in ecclesiastical structures to its fullest extent, and to act as the conscience and the voice of abused women and girls in society. *The Reformed Churches in South Africa have to review their current position at the next meeting of their National Synod if they want to be true to Scripture and if they want to be credible.* During the Apartheid era in South Africa, the late well-known missiologist Bosch challenged the churches to act as 'alternative' communities by manifesting true reconciliation between black and white people in the churches and, by doing so, teaching society that black and white people can co-exist peacefully.^{lxxi} The same has to be done in the case of gender. The church can then act as an 'exemplary' community, in other words, as a model of the gender relations according to which the community should live.^{lxxii} With their current point of view of gender relations the Reformed Churches in South Africa are failing to be such an exemplary community.

7 WOMEN IN SOCIETY TODAY

In society at large, the disrespect for the human dignity of women and the violation of their human rights are still a matter of serious concern. Humanity faces a progressive occurrence of domestic violence against women, sexual abuse and the dehumanisation of girls in pornography and the public entertainment business. Girls and women are still more prone to poverty and HIV/Aids than their male counterparts and, in many developing countries, have less access to education and work opportunities. Our modern world, with its freedom and democracy, still fails women.

As they have to do in their churches, Christians must take the inferior position of women in society to heart. Every Christian should be a champion of the total restoration of the human dignity of women and girls. Christ lived a style of equality and respect, and the Christian as the impersonator of Christ's attitude, must translate and develop this life in a modern context. The following areas of action can be indicated.

- Churches and Christian organisations should act as 'watchdogs' over the human rights of women. Quite often, discrimination occurs unobserved, especially in male dominated institutions. Christians in big corporations, political structures and governmental positions can exert influence in the formulation and execution of human resource policies.
- The topic of the human dignity and human rights of women should be an integral part of school curricula. The following quotation, taken from Gottstein, stresses the value of education:

Peace and stability in a multi-ethnic society can only be maintained if education relating to tolerance and ethical behaviour starts at an early age and continues throughout life through the school system, the churches, the media, the law

system, and the trade unions and so on. Without general consensus on a number of basic rules and principles of behaviour, a peaceful and stable society is not possible. People must be constantly reminded of these rules and principles. Prominent among them rank the following: honesty, readiness to help others in distress; law enforcement solely by the central authority thereby excluding the private use of force; recognition that even a noble purpose does not justify unethical means.^{lxxiii}

This is also true of gender sensitivity. Many young men in South Africa come from patriarchal families, where females are regarded as inferior, and it is of the utmost importance that their perception of women be corrected at an early age. Christians should therefore exert influence, especially in the preparation and implementation of educational programmes, in order to nurture a respect for women.

- The rectification of the position of women in society should be part of an affirmative action programme. Such a programme is currently in place in South Africa, and is very successful as far as the position of women is concerned. More and more women are occupying senior positions and the cabinet has the highest percentage of women on it than any other government in the world. But in many other institutions, including religious institutions, female leadership is still an exception to the rule. Here also, Christians should exert their influence.
- Symbolism is a very important factor in reconciling people. Gottstein refer to the impact of the symbolic acts of Willy Brandt when he went down on his knees before the Warsaw ghetto memorial, and on Mitterrand and Kohl's visit to the Verdun battlefield.^{lxxiv} Christianity is rich in symbolism and symbolic acts that can rectify the human dignity of mothers, sisters and daughters and should use this symbolism.
- Christians must ensure that the topic of the human dignity and human rights of women is an important issue in political campaigns in those countries with a bad human rights reputation.
- In cases of abuse, all the available judicial routes for highlighting these abuses and preventing further abuses should be exploited. It is estimated that only a very low percentage of rapes in South Africa are reported and become an action at law.
- Lastly, Christians, following Christ, should be examples of gender sensitivity in their own lives. Jesus showed just such sensitivity in his approach to women in a time and age characterised by the blatant oppression of women.

8 CONCLUSION

In the past, Christian theology has erred by establishing a doctrine and culture of the subordination of women. This state of affairs was the result of an over emphasis on the androcentric language of the Bible, the influence of patriarchal society over many centuries, the view that the biblical message should be distilled from the many random events described in the Bible, and those texts that apparently prohibited the ordination of women. A deeper developing theology, within the framework of salvation history, was largely neglected. Liberal theology reacted by blaming the Bible itself and by developing an extra-biblical theology of women's liberation. However, this approach only deepened the suspicion that Christianity is an androcentric and patriarchal religion and people justifiably argued that Christians have no moral right to address the problem of the violation of women's rights today.

In fact, biblical anthropology runs against any form of patriarchalism and discrimination against women in either church or society. While the biblical message maintains the differentiation in the roles of men and women in the family, it repeatedly proclaims the equality of male and female in their human dignity, in their distinctive relationship with God, in their redemption in Christ, in the bestowment of the gifts of the Spirit and in their obligations to society. Christians who take the biblical message seriously, therefore, and who act according to the attitude shown by Christ, should become champions of the liberation of women in the many societies where women are still oppressed. Christian churches must become the voice of the women who suffer fates such as trafficking, 'honour' killings, despicable labour practices, sexual harassment and all other forms of violations against their basic human rights. An injury to the human dignity of any woman is a revolt against God and an open rejection of his divine promise to renew this broken world.

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ENDNOTES

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 - 11 D Gaitskill, "Devout domesticity, A century of African women's Christianity in South Africa", (in A Cornwell, "Readings in gender in Africa", Oxford, James Curry, 2005, 185.
 - 12 E Behr-Sigel, "Women in the Orthodox Church, heavenly vision and historical realities", *Echoes*, 7, 1995, 35
 - 13 H Küng, "Women in Christianity", London, Continuum, 2005, 30, 38. Küng refers to the statement of Aquinas that females are *mas occasionatus (occasional male)*.
 - 14 S C Karant-Nunn & M E Wiesner-Hanks, "Luther on women", A sourcebook, 2003, 9.
 - 15 J L Thompson, "John Calvin and the daughters of Sarah: Women in regular and exceptional roles in the exegesis of Calvin, his predecessors and his contemporaries"

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- Durham, Duke University, 1989; J R Watt, "Women in the consistory of Calvin's Geneva", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 24(2), 1993, 429.
- 16 In this respect the studies of Landman, Klopper and Ackermann are important. See inter alia C Landman, *The piety of Afrikaans women, : Diaries of guilt*, Pretoria, Unisa, 1994: her "Leefstyl-Bybel vir vroue: Afrikaans-speaking women amidst a paradigm shift", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, vol XXXI(1), 2005, p. 147; her "Educating the body of the female child: Feminisms in dialogue with Jerome (d420)", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, vol. XXXII(1), 2006, 147 and her & V Molobi, "Black women's life stories as sources for teaching church history", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, vol. XXVIX(1), 2003, 247; F Klopper, "Women, monotheism and the gender of God", *In die Skriflig*, vol 6(3), 2002, 421; D Ackermann & R Bons-Storm, "Libarating faith messages: feminist practical theologies in context, Leuven, Peeter, 1998.
- 17 This information can be found on the World wide guide to women in leadership, [Web]http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Chronology_Ordination.htm] Date of access: 24 February, 2006.
- 18 See E Behr-Sigel, "Women in the Orthodox Church, heavenly vision and historical realities", 35; E Behr-Sigel & K Ware, "The ordination of women in the Orthodox Church", Geneva, WCC Publications, 2000, 1; C Galerui, "The Orthodox Church and the question of admitting women to the ordained ministry", (in Ecumenical Patriarchate, "The place of women in the Orthodox Church and the question of the ordination of women", Katerini, Tertios, 1988, 39); S Nador, "On being the Pentecostal Church, Pentecostal women's voices and visions", *Ecumenical Review*, 2004(3), 338.
- 19 Schüssler-Fiorenza, "Sharing her word, Feminist biblical Interpretation in context", p. 23.
- 20 M E May, "Feminist theology", (in E. Fahlbusch et al, *The Encyclopaedia of Christianity*, Leiden, Brill, 2001, volume 2, 306).
- 21 In the Reformed churches in South Africa women cannot serve in particular offices. The resolution was taken in 1988 on account of a study report dealing with biblical material. In 2003 the National Synod of the GKSA resolved that women can serve as deacons. However, this decision was put on hold in 2006 pending a further study.
- 22 Good examples of a hermeneutics of suspicion can be found in the discussion of the various options for an understanding of 1 Tm. 2:8-15 by L M Johnson, "The First and Second Letters to Timothy, A New translation with introduction and commentary", Doubleday, The Anchor Bible, 2001, 208 and C Wolff, "Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther", *Zweiter Teil: Auslegen der Kapitel 8-16*, Berlin, Evangelischer, Verlagsanstalt, 1982, 140.
- 23 Revelation-historical or salvation-historical refers to the idea that biblical history should be seen as the unfolding of a divine purpose rather than a series of random events, and that the Bible contains one developing theology and not a number of (sometimes conflicting) theologies. The German word is *Heilsgeschichte*. In this revelation-history every book of the Old and New Testaments has its own contribution to the 'mighty acts of God in history'. See J Barton & J Bowden, "The original story. God, Israel and the world", London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2004, 49.
- 24 See for example Reformed Churches of South Africa, "Handelinge van die Drie-en Veertigste Nasionale Sinode (Acts of the Forty-third National Synod)", Potchefstroom, GKSA, 1988, 502-523).
- 25 R de Vaux, "Ancient Israel. Its life and Institutions", London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1988, 39.
- 26 Valuable information regarding the social position of females in this tradition can be found in H Pretorius & L Jafta, "A branch springs out, African Initiated Churches", (in R Elphick & R Davenport, "Christianity in South Africa, A political, social and cultural history", Cape Town, David Philip, 1997, 211-226); B Pityana, "The renewal of African moral values" (in M W Makgoba, ed, "African Renaissance: The new challenge", Mafube, Tafelberg, 1999, 144); D N Nwachuku, "Women in Africa in the process of adjustment and change", *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 16(3), 1992, 232; H K Schneider, "The Africans, an ethnological account", New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1981, 85-86; L Teffo, "Moral Renewal and African Experience(s)", (in M W Makgoba, ed, "African Renaissance, The new challenge", Mafube, Tafelberg, 1999, 153) and Vorster, "Ethical perspectives on human rights", 190).
- 27 May, "Feminist Theology", 305.

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- 28 E Tamez, "James", (in E Schüssler-Fiorenza ed, *Searching the Scriptures*. "A feminist commentary". New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1998, 383.): K E Corley, "1 Peter," (in E Schüssler-Fiorenza ed, *Searching the Scriptures*. "A feminist commentary". New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1998, 357.)
- 29 G Braulik, "Das Deuteronomium und die menschenrechte," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, volume 166, 1998, 1-17. This fact is acknowledged in feminist Biblical scholarship since the publication of E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, "In memory of her: A feminist theological construction of Christian origins", New York, Crossroad, 1983, See also the classic study on the theology of Paul by the Dutch theologian, H Ridderbos, "Paulus. Ontwerp van zijn Theologie", Kampen, Kok, 1971, 515.
- 30 May, "Feminist Theology", 306.
- 31 Tamez, "James", 381
- 32 W J Kaiser, "Toward an Old Testament theology" Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing Company, 1978, 77
- 33 Vorster, "Ethical perspectives on human rights", 93; G A Jonsson, "The image of God. Gn 1:26-28 in a century of Old Testament research", Lund, Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1988, 72; T.C. Vriezen, "Hoofdlijnen der Theologie van het Oude Testament", Wageningen, Veenman, 1966, 188. See also in this regard E Brunner, "Dogmatics (volume 2)", London, Lutherworth, 1949, 64.
- 34 W Brueggemann, "Theology of the Old Testament, testimony, dispute, advocacy". Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1997, 452.
- 35 Adam and Eve were created in a marital relationship and their different roles pertain only to marriage. There is no reason to assert that the subordination of women is part of the creational order, and that this means that all male persons must rule over all females. This information qualifies the restriction put on women in 1 Tim. 2:11-13.
- 36 Vriezen, "Hoofdlijnen der Theologie van het Oude Testament", 446. L Berkhof, "Systematic Theology", Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust, 1976, 263.
- 37 Barton & Bowden, "The Original Story. God, Israel and the World", 47.
- 38 See G J Spykman, "Deformational theology: A new paradigm for doing dogmatics". Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1992, 257.
- 39 For an interesting and illuminating discussion of the relational meaning of the Hebrew word *berit* (covenant), see W J Dumbrell, "Covenant and creation. An Old Testament covenantal theology", Devon, Paternoster Press, 1984, 16.
- 40 See the thorough explanation of the doctrine of the covenant in Reformed Theology by the Dutch theologians J van Genderen & W H Velema, "Beknopte Gereformeerde Dogmatiek", Kampen, Kok, 1992, 510). The inextricable relationship between covenant and law can be found in both Ex 20 and Dt 5. See O Kaiser, "Introduction to the Old Testament. A presentation of its results and problems", Oxford, Blackwell, 1975, 63. (Translated by J Sturdy).
- 41 P R Davies, "Ethics and the Old Testament", (in J W Rogerson, M Davies & M D Carroll eds. "The Bible in ethics", The Second Sheffield Colloquium, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1995, 164): H D Preuss, "Theologie des Alten Testaments, Band 1: JHWSs erwählendes und verpflichtendes Handeln", Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1991, 70.
- 42 See F F Bruce, *New Testament History*, Basingstoke, Pickering, 1985, 198.
- 43 See D J Bosch, *Transforming Mission, Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, New York, Maryknoll, 1991, 72.
- 44 See C Breytenbach, "Reconciliation: Shifts in Christian soteriology", (in W S Vorster (ed), "Reconciliation and reconstruction: Creative options for a rapidly changing South Africa", Pretoria, University of South Africa, 1986, 21).
- 45 The concept Kingdom of God became a prominent theme in Reformed Theology in the last century. This was due to the influence of theologians such as Kuyper and Bavinck and the Calvinistic Philosophy that was developed in the Netherlands and influenced the thinking in the US and other parts of the world where this theology put down roots. Two books that were very influential in the later stages of this development were Ridderbos, H, "De komst van het Koninkrijk. Jezus' prediking volgens het synoptische evangeliën", Kampen, Kok, 1950; T van der Walt, "Die Koninkryk van God – naby!", Kampen, Kok, 1962; J Bright, "The Kingdom of God", New York, Abingdon Press, 1973 and G R Beasley-Murray, "Jesus and the Kingdom of God", Grand Rapids, Eerdmans. 1987. Many scholars in many disciplines in Reformed theology elaborated on the

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- implications of the biblical idea of the kingdom of God in their own fields of study such as church polity, Christian ethics, ecclesiology and missiology.
- 46 Spykman, "Reformational theology: A new paradigm for doing dogmatics", 258.
- 47 G R Beasley-Murray, "Jesus and the Kingdom of God", 20; T van der Walt, "Die Koninkryk van God – naby!" 32; D Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, Leicester, InterVarsity Press, 1981, 419.
- 48 H Küng, "The church", Kent, Burns and Oates, 1992, 56.
- 49 Ridderbos, "Paulus. Ontwerp van zijn Theologie", 41.
- 50 C K Barrett, "A commentary of the First Epistle to the Corinthians", London, A & C Black, 1994, 251.
- 51 H Merkel, "Charisma", (in E Fahlbusch, et al, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, volume 1, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1999, 402).
- 52 See J A Heyns, "Die kerk", Pretoria, N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1977, 90.
- 53 This interpretation by the Dutch theologian Grosheide strengthened the conviction in Reformed circles that the New Testament also proclaimed the subordination of women. See F W Grosheide, "De eerste brief aan de kerk te Korinthe", Kampen, Kok, 1957, 289.
- 54 F W Grosheide, "De eerste brief aan de kerk in Corinthe", Kampen, Kok, 1957, 293
- 55 F J Pop, "De eerste brief van Paulus aan de Corinthiërs", Nijkerk, Callenbach, 1978, 229.
- 56 For example Grosheide, "De eerste brief aan de kerk in Corinthe", 379
- 57 Ridderbos, "Paulus, ontwerp van zijn theologie", 515; See also L L Belville, Kephale and the thorny issue of head covering in 1 Corinthians 11:2-6, (in T J Burke & J K Elliot, *Paul and the Corinthians, studies on a community in conflict, essays in honor of Margaret Thrall*, Leiden, Brill, 2003, 217); C. Wolff, *Der erste brief des Paulus an die Korinther, Zweiter Teil: Auslegen der Kapitel 8-16*", Berlin, Evangelischer Verlag, 1980, 71; Pop, "De eerste brief van Paulus aan de Corinthiërs", 231.
- 58 A Robertson & A Plummer, "A critical and exegetical commentary on the first Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians", Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1929, 229.
- 59 Ridderbos, "Paulus, ontwerp van zijn theologie", 515
- 60 F Hauck, "Kopos", (in G Kittel ed, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, volume 3, 1965, 829).
- 61 W Orr & J A Walther, "1 Corinthians, A new translation, introduction with a study of the life of Paul, notes and commentary", New York, Doubleday, 1976, 313.
- 62 J P Louw & E Nida, *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament based on semantic domains*, New York, United Bible Society, volume 1, 1988, 759.
- 63 See the discussion of 1 Tm. 2:8-9 by H Marshall, "A critical and exegetical commentary on the pastoral Epistles", Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1999, 447.
- 64 Pop, "De eerste brief van Paulus aan de Corinthiërs", 238.
- 65 See the discussion of 1 Cr 11:2-16 by Barrett, "A commentary on the first Epistle to the Corinthians", 246-258.
- 66 H Ridderbos, "De Pastoral Brieven", Kampen, Kok, 1967, 80.
- 67 H Ridderbos, "De Pastoral Brieven", Kampen, Kok, 1967, 85.
- 68 T D Lea & H P Griffen, "The new American commentary, 1, 2 Timothy", volume 34, Nashville, Broadman Press, 1992, 100; H Ridderbos, "De Pastoral Brieven", Kampen, Kok, 1967, 86.
- 69 Küng, "Women in Christianity", 103
- 70 Vorster, "Ethical perspectives on human rights", 185. See also N Calder, "Shari' a", (in C E Bosworth, et. al, "The Encyclopaedia of Islam", Leiden, Brill, volume IX, 1997, 321) & J Robson, "Hadith", (in B Lewis et al, "The Encyclopaedia of Islam", Leiden; Brill, volume III, 1986, 23).
- 71 See D J Bosch, *Transforming mission, paradigm shifts in theology of mission*, New York, Maryknoll, 1991, 172.
- 72 J H van Wyk, *Moraliteit en verantwoordelijkheid, opstelle oor kerk en politiek*, Potchefstroom, PU vir CHO, 1991, 99.
- 73 K Gottstein, "Violent and peaceful settlement of ethnic conflicts" (in S Bekker & D Carlton, "Racism, Xenophobia and ethnic conflict", Durban, Indicator, 1996, 28-29). See also J A van der Ven, J S Dreyer & H J C Pieterse, "Attitudes towards human rights among South African youth", *Religion and Theology*, 7(2), 2001, 113.
- 74 Gottstein, "Violent and peaceful settlement of ethnic conflicts", 35.