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1 Timothy 2:9-15 Reconsidered (Again)

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The present study agrees that the theological motive of the Pastor's instructions to Christian women (1 Tim 2:9-12, 15b) may be inferred from his midrash on Eve's biblical story (1 Tim 2:13-15a; cf. Gen 1-4). In recalling the salient moments of Eve's story, concluding with her childbirth as symbolic of a restored relationship with God (2:15a; cf. Gen 4:1-2; 1:27-28), the Pastor illustrates God's interest in saving women qua women to underwrite the choices a Christian woman makes about her public practices: her modesty proffers a persuasive defense of the gospel for those who think its claims lack cultural or personal purchase. This article concludes with a "hermeneutical postscript" that proposes a reading of this passage as Scripture and, so, formative of today's Christian faith.

Key Words: Eve, women, midrash, canonical approach, virtue ethics, modesty, worship, pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

My interest in 1 Tim 2:9-15 is largely shaped by the struggles of women I have taught who have extraordinary gifts for Christian ministry but whose conservative faith traditions have demonized their sense of vocation and have even attempted to silence them by appealing to this one text as stipulating a biblical norm.[1] In stating my interest pedagogically, I do not mean to diminish the importance of a variety of difficult exegetical decisions that face its interpreters. The decisions one makes about authorship and occasion, the precise meaning of odd

1. For another scholar's response to a fundamentalist reading of 1 Tim 2:9-15, represented in *Women in the Church* (ed. A. J. Kostenberger, T. Schreiner, and H. Baldwin; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), see K. Giles, "A Critique of the 'Novel' Contemporary Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 Given in the Book *Women in the Church*, Parts 1 and 2," *EvQ* 72 (2000) 151-67, 95-215.

words used, the nature of their syntactical and rhetorical relationship, and the performance of all parts of the composition within a canonical whole are all decisive elements in a critical description of the "plain meaning" of this passage.

Yet, I would observe that the long history of this text within the church indicates that its instruction for Christian women provoked little interest prior to the nineteenth century—presumably in response to social pressures that began to forge a woman's public identity and her individual rights as a woman.[2] The different instructions given to the Christian men (2:8) and women (2:9-15) of 1 Timothy, while idealized by their author according to contemporary myths for a more general application, were routinely ignored by their subsequent readers or more simply presumed because of the evident differences of gender that in turn required different definitions of a woman's social role. Precritical interpreters merely assumed that women were to remain silent in the public square and submit to the men in their lives (husbands, teachers, elders), whether as an ordinance of creation (cf. 2:13) or because of the fiction that women are by nature more easily deceived than men (cf. 2:14).[3] Thus, while Christian men are to refrain from an inherent impulse toward competition and violence (cf. 2:8), women are encouraged to be modest in their social manners "against the grain" of their inherent "Eve-like" inclinations. Perhaps the enduring prominence of modesty as the woman's quintessential social virtue—defined as such by 1 Tim 2:9-12—has contributed to the continuing authority of these instructions, complete with their negative motive insinuated from the accompanying midrash on Eve's story in Gen 2-3.

However, the motive or circumstance that occasioned these regulatory norms to govern an individual believer's public worship is unwritten and must be inferred from the text. Why does the author instruct a Christian woman to submit in studious silence to the congregation's male magisterium, and in such an expansive way? The reader does not know the answer to this question, and herein lies the rub of the modern critical problem. While I resist rendering this text as a response to a Christian congregation disrupted by ambitious women of social standing—for which I find no textual support in this

2. This is easily the most-commented-upon passage in 1 Timothy since the nineteenth century, and the disagreements between interpreters are wide-ranging. The purpose of the present essay is more narrowly focused on the motive of the particular cast of female-male relations as envisaged by the author's midrash on the Genesis story of Eve; for this reason only a small portion of the vast literature on this passage will be considered in what follows. For a current and representative bibliography, see W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000) 94-102.

3. See ACCS 9:162-67.

letter[4]—I do agree with the critical consensus that locates the motive for a woman's submission to her male teachers in the author's midrash on Scripture's quintessential female typology: Eve's story in Genesis (1 Tim 2:13-15a). In this case, the illative *gar*, which introduces the author's appeal to this biblical narrative (2:13), links it to the prior instruction (2:11-12) as its biblical warrant. But what is left to the exegete to determine is the nature of the motive itself.[5]

The present study will argue that the purpose of the Pastor's appeal to Scripture is not to provide negative reasons that underwrite patriarchal relationships within either the Christian congregation or the Christian household. He rather recalls the relevant moments of Eve's story in Genesis as typological of God's redemptive purpose for all women. In this sense, Eve's creation (2:13; cf. Gen 2), her deception and sin (2:14; cf. Gen 3), and ultimately her restored relationship with God envisaged when bearing her first children (2:15a; cf. Gen 4:1-2) is prospective of every woman's religious experience with God. Viewed from this angle the role Scripture performs in this passage is to insinuate a theological (and missionary) rather than an ontological (and sociological) motive upon the Pastor's prior instructions. The modest woman quietly submits (cf. 2:11) to those men who are authorized to teach others in the congregation (cf. 2:12), not because their female gender is second born (cf. 2:13) or because they are naturally inclined toward spiritual deception (cf. 2:14) or because women are better suited for the domestic chores of raising children (cf. 2:15a); rather, when the Christian woman's modesty is embodied in her public routines--by the clothes she wears (2:9), by the good works she performs (2:10), and by the studious attention she pays to her male teachers (2:11-12)--she proffers a persuasive and powerful articulation of social

4. Against many modern reconstructions of the epistolary setting in which liberated Christian women are creating havoc within the congregation, I find no evidence within the text itself that the author is writing to correct problematic women. Women are not the problem; rather, the various instructions found in the Pastoral Epistles, while certainly shaped by theological beliefs and the practical difficulties of organizing Christian congregations in non-Christian settings, comprise one element of 1 Timothy's ecclesial *paraenesis*. That is, this is instruction that intends to construct human relations of a more conventional and general sort without reference to more specific, local circumstances—for example, problems provoked by Christian women who lack maturity of one kind or another or whose teaching is un-Christian in character if not in content (see below).

5. I find it ironic that those who wish to hold on to this instruction as normative for today tend to locate the author's motive in the morally benign "order of creation" commended by 2:13: that is, the reason that Christian women should follow the lead of their male teachers in the congregation's religious practices is that according to Gen 2 the creation of woman followed the man. While the result is the same, the reason now given is more positive than the negative motive commended by 2:14: women attach themselves to men because according to Gen 3 they are naturally prone to wander!

virtue directed at outsiders who may otherwise think the Christian gospel (cf. 2:3-6) lacks in cultural (and therefore personal) purchase.[6] At some existential level, then, the Pastor's appeal to the Eve typology illustrates God's interest in saving women qua women and toward that end also underwrites the fundamental importance of the choices Christian women make about their public practices.

READING 1 TIMOTHY 2:9-15 IN COMPOSITIONAL CONTEXT

The immediate compositional setting of the set text is an ecclesial *paraenesis* by which the Pastor gives instructions to organize Christian worship within a pagan setting.[7] Two different—often competing—human "households" are in view: the one comprising a secular citizenship, with "kings and those in high positions" (2:2) as head; and the other a sacred communion, with God, the only God (2:5), as head. The Pastor's instruction to pray for all people, including those in political power, is given in part to resolve the tension created by the competing loyalties and values between these sacred and secular congregations in which believers are members. To do so in faith is to live "a quiet and peaceful life"—indicative of the loving relations that are the moral aim of the *oikonomia theou* (1:4b-5a). In the case of 1 Timothy, however, the social stability of congregational life serves a redemptive purpose. If God desires everyone saved (2:4) and initiated into eternal life (1:16), then the practices of God's "household" should aim its common life in the same direction: at the salvation of all people (2:4-6).

This interplay between the Pastor's instruction to pray for all people (2:1-2) and his theological warrant that God wants to save all people (2:3-7) is followed by more specific instructions that extend the congregation's worship practices to individual Christian men (2:8) and women (2:9-15). The opening exhortation, *boulomai . . . proseuchesthai* (2:8a), repeats the opening admonition to pray "for all people" (*hyper pantōn anthrōpōn*; 2:1), thereby presuming the currency of the preceding instructions but now "in every place" (*panti topō*) and with

6. This conclusion agrees in different words with that of Terence Paige's study of 1 Cor 14:33b-36. According to Paige, Paul's injunction of Christian (and married) women in Corinth to remain silent, when considered within its "social matrix," is not a matter of their religious status or sacral speech but concerns nonreligious speech directed to men in public that might be observed and considered "shameful" by others and might thereby bring shame to the gospel; "The Social Matrix of Women's Speech at Corinth," *BBR* 12 (2002) 217-42.

7. See my "1 Timothy 2:1-7," *The Lectionary Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 3.433-37.

regard to the different gender of each communicant. The repetition of *pantas* underwrites the theological subtext of the Pastor's instructions in 1 Timothy: "God our Savior desires *everyone* to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2:4).

Moreover, we should expect that the shape of this chapter's *paraenesis* is predicated on well-known caricatures of competitive men and modest women in the Greco-Roman world, now recast as idealized worshipers and without reference to specific individuals or particular problems. For this reason, I do not think the elliptical reference to women in 2:9 introduces a digression, whether regarding the manners of husbands and wives in worship or related to a specific group of problem women within a particular congregation.[8] The Pastor's instructions are given more generally to middle-class Christian women and, cued by *hōsautōs,* are motivated by the same concerns that prompt his prior instructions to men: the worship practices of individual believers share in Paul's missionary vocation (2:7) to serve the redemptive purpose of God (2:3-6).

In this sense, the initial exhortation, *boulomai . . . proseuchesthai* (2:8a) is directed toward all communicants but in a way that differentiates each in turn by gender.[9] While every communicant is entitled to pray publicly regardless of gender (cf. 1 Cor 11:4-6), this prerogative of divine grace is ordered by two constraints. First, the posture of public worship is checked by common ideas of decency: disgraceful conduct by individual Christians distracts from worshiping God. This caution is rendered by the present text in a gender-specific code: Christian women must guard against ostentatious attire/hairstyle that may distract or disrupt the worshiping community (2:9).[10] Second, the inward affections of a genuine spirituality (1:5) are embodied in acts of public good. In other words, the manner of worship is itself a reflection of scrupulous attention to the individual's relationship with God (cf. 1 Cor 11:27-32). In this case the performance of "good deeds" is the mark of a genuinely religious woman (2:10), whose prayers are no doubt prompted by genuine spirituality. Similarly, I

8. For survey of arguments in favor of *gynē* as "woman" rather than "wife," see Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 112-13; however, see B. Winter, "The 'New' Roman Wife and 1 Timothy 2:19-15: The Search for a *Sitz im Leben*," *TynBul* 51 (2000) 285-94.

9. The importance of middle-class women, who had a measure of freedom and public presence, to Paul's urban church was already an important feature of the narrative world of Acts (cf. Acts 13:50; 16:11-15; 17:4, 12) and is a well-known feature of the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*. One must be careful, however, to distinguish this social class of women from other groups within the congregation—such as the elderly widows and younger single women who are instructed in 1 Tim 5—whose social roles were not as public.

10. I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999) 447-48.

will argue below that the manner of male-female relations within the congregation is yet another public expression of religious life.

These images of the ideal Christian woman are enveloped within a rhetorical unit bracketed by the repeated extolling of "modesty" (*sōphrosunē*; 2:9, 15),[11] which is among the most universally admired virtues of the period.[12] Even though "modesty" carries a peculiar impress for Christian women in this passage, it is subsequently used in 3:2 to characterize any Christian leader (cf. Titus 1:8; 2:2, 5; Acts 26:25). In this sense, then, the modest woman exemplifies the performance of Christian faith. Even though Philo uses *sōphrosunē* in an implicitly sexual way and explains that this is why men and women are divided during worship without seeing and so distracting each other during prayers,[13] this is not the obvious meaning here. Modesty adorns religious existence and is the principal affection of a thoughtful, prudent outlook on all of life.

Significantly, its root meaning as a cardinal virtue of popular Greek philosophy is as the antonym of *hubris* and is an affection expressed in behaviors toward others—in avoiding selfish adornment (2:9), in the good deeds she does (2:10), and in her quiet submission to male authority (2:11-12). Moreover, Plato's use of *sōphrosunē* as characteristic of the person who is able to live competently within the given political order may have bearing on 1 Timothy's use of the *oikonomia theou* (1:4): so that the "religious" woman (2:10) exists in conformity with her place in "God's order of things" (see above).[14] Found within this unit, then, are those practices of female modesty that not only reflect her piety but also lend dignity and public support to the Christian religion.[15] The Pastor's caricature serves an apologetic rather than polemical purpose; the modest woman commends the Christian gospel to outsiders rather than correcting the immodest behaviors of

11. The wide use and evident multivalency of *sōphrosunē* in both Jewish and Roman worlds make its precise meaning difficult to ascertain. Because the author's application of this cardinal virtue to women concerns their clothing, hairstyles, public works, and social (i.e., male-female) relations, I prefer "modesty" as its meaning—a social virtue rather than a psychological or personal disposition, such as "self-control" or "restraint" or "chastity"; or rather than a spiritual attribute, such as "faithfulness."

12. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 2001) 203. Mounce points out that i is used in Titus 2:2 as a spiritual attribute forged in Christ and only because of what he has done (*Pastoral Epistles*, 114. This theological subtext is in keeping with the theological beliefs that shape this passage in 1 Timothy (cf. 2:5-6) and might be in play here as well.

13. So Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letter to Timothy* (Eerdmans Critical Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 195-96.

14. TDNT 7:1098-1100.

15. See Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 182-91, whose close study of the word use in the Pastoral Epistles leads him to conclude that the Pastor has in mind the kind of deportment and dispositions that keep believers concentrated on the gospel and draw favorable attention from outsiders.

certain anonymous women who lurk somewhere behind the text of 1 Timothy.

The social identity of 1 Timothy's Christian woman is defined by two contrasts, both of which are familiar to his social world and which express modesty in the common spheres of mainstream existence—toward self, neighbor, and authority (in particular, for women, male authority). The first is the contrast between the narcissist, who is principally concerned with her own appearance, and the philanthropist, who is concerned with the well-being of her neighbors—Johnson characterizes this as "a life of productive virtue."[16] Such a contrast is also funded by common elements of a well-known topos.[17] A banal existence, lacking in moral scruples and religious devotion, is typified by the trivial pursuit of fastidious personal appearance.[18] In fact, the Pastor's selection of this feature of a female *topos* may well anticipate his exhortation regarding the seductive power of wealth (cf. 6:8-10) and

16. Johnson, *Letters to Timothy,* 200.

17. According to my colleague Owen Ewald, Assistant Professor of Classics at Seattle Pacific University, "The mythology of the modest, virtuous, philanthropic, submissive Hellenistic woman is very much in circulation in the 1st and 2nd centuries. Nevertheless, an important part of this mythology is not being mentioned for good or for ill (see Pericles' funeral oration, 431 B.C., Thucydides Book 2), so we have rather few examples from this period of such ideal women or even of explicit instructions for their behavior. I know a gravestone of a Roman woman, Gavia Marciana of Puteoli, that implies such a behavioral code, but it comes from around A.D. 177—too late for 1 Timothy. In my view, the best non-Jewish, non-Christian parallel for 1 Timothy is Cato's *On Agriculture*, a Roman text from about 150 B.C. which gives explicit instructions for the behavior of slave overseers and their wives on large rural plantations—avoiding luxury, drunkenness, gossip, etc. The parallel is even stronger if the comparison is extended to male *episkopoi* and deacons in 1 Tim 3:1-12. As "slave[s] of Christ Jesus" (Rom 1:1, Jude 1, etc.), Christians, both female and male, would have to behave more like slaves taking care of someone else's property (cf. also the Parable of the Talents, Matt 25:14-30) than like masters carelessly squandering their own property. I think the Pastor has in mind "casserole-level" philanthropy/good deeds, which would strengthen ties among Christians and their neighbors, rather than large-scale charitable foundations like the Imperial *alimenta* for poor children. Such large foundations create political/economic patron-client relationships and invariably increase the donor's political power and influence even if the donor is barred from holding office by gender or citizenship." Perhaps the best known example of the modest Christian woman is the young Roman Perpetua. It was written of her martyrdom that, "when she saw her tunic torn from her side, she drew it over her as a veil for her middle, rather mindful of her modesty than her suffering. Then she bound up her disheveled hair for it was not becoming for a martyr to suffer with disheveled hair, lest she should appear to be mourning in her glory"; *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (Ante-Nicene Christian Library; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1859) 13:290-91.

18. The secular literature that condemns this kind of behavior is vast. Some recent interpreters of this admonition have found within it a condemnation of the spirit of independence newly granted (legalized) to middle-class women of the period. The point is not to squelch a woman's freedom in Christ through unthinking subjugation to men but rather to regulate it by the discipline of learning the gospel from qualified teachers; Winter, "The New Roman Wife and 1 Timothy 2:9-15."

its relevance in particular for wealthy families within the congregation (cf. 6:17-19). Its principal motive, however, is not a fear of social divisions within the congregation[19] or even the preoccupation with the self,[20] but is missiological: Christian women should avoid behavior that may be judged by others (especially those of similar social rank) as frivolous and might lead them to disparage the gospel and reject its redemptive claims.[21] On the other hand, a woman's modesty is exemplified (or "adorned") by "good deeds" (*erga agatha*) toward others. While the doing of good works is an important element of how the Pastor generally conceives Christian existence,[22] selfless philanthropy exemplifies the constructive affect Christian faith has on society—a persuasive societal standard for a newly introduced religion (cf. Acts 17:18-31) and is probably reconceived in 1 Timothy as another concrete witness to the transforming power of divine mercy (cf. 1:12-16).

A second contrast (2:11-12) envisages what seems to be the hallmark of female modesty—indicated by its central position within the unit and by the elaborate treatment the Pastor gives to it. Further, this contrast, which concerns the religious discipline of learning the gospel, defines the etiquette of Christian women toward the important men of their congregation in a way that combines public speaking and religious authority in a Hellenistic world that gives high social value to both. While the issue of authority is gender based—women are instructed to submit to men—the construction of this social hierarchy is hardly a matter of mere gender. In fact, the relationship between women and men is introduced in v. 11 with studied neutrality—by asyndeton, in the third person, and without reference to males. Simply put, a woman's modesty is initially cast in more general terms apropos of a good student who shows deference to her teachers by careful listening.[23] Moreover, the initial term used—*en hēsychia* ("in silence")—

19. So Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 451.

20. So John Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Calvin New Testament Commentaries; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 216.

21. I was reminded by my colleague, R. B. Steele, of the concluding verse to Robert Burns's witty poem, "To a Louse," which reads: "O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us/To see oursels as others see us/It wad frae monie a blunder free us/An' foolish notion/What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us/An' ev'n Devotion." The capacity to see ourselves as others do is in part the Pastor's missionary purpose for giving the communicant these instructions: they are a mirror by which Christian women are able to see an image of their ideal selves that might persuade other Roman women of the gospel's merit.

22. See Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 227-31.

23. Some commentators comment that the very idea of a woman student is unusual if not revolutionary, although I doubt this is true for most middle-class urban women in the Greco-Roman world or within Christian circles (see Luke 10:39). See now Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome* (2nd ed.;

repeats the disposition of the entire worshiping congregation described earlier in 2:2b. This intertext implies that the "quiet and submissive" woman personifies the life-style of the entire congregation.

But the studied neutrality of this exhortation begs for greater precision: From whom does the woman learn, and about what? To what or whom is she to submit? While inferences drawn from v. 11 may fairly respond to these practical questions, the Pastor clarifies his intent by a subsequent injunction (2:12) and appeal to Scripture (2:13-15a). In fact, the shift from third to first person in v. 12 and from a general exhortation to personal injunction (*ouk epitrepō*) only sharpens his instruction. Many suppose that this severe shift in tone signals a more direct response to a real problem. Without clear evidence within the text of such a motive, however, it seems imprudent to force the issue. The reader might just as well stipulate the injunction's motive in rhetorical terms: contrasts clarify meaning. A modest woman learns (2:11) but does not teach (2:12); she submits (2:11) but does not lead (2:12). The repetition of *hēsychia* envelops this contrast as well, not only to reinforce the impression of "silence" as the principal quality of good learning (i.e., being quiet rather than speaking) but then again to recall its earlier use in 2:2, which relativizes its force as a per se "female" quality, since "being quiet" is a quality of public life after which the entire congregation aspires.

The particular cast of this female-male relationship envisaged by this instruction is more narrowly conceived of by the practices and protocols of a public education. In this sense, the manner and mode of learning within a Christian congregation are transformed as criteria that measure a woman's modesty. Whatever other affectation the injunction provokes, however anachronistic, its specific focus is on a woman's discretion, whether or not she chooses to learn quietly from the congregation's authorized teachers. The focus must not be the injunction's patriarchalism; in fact, the use of *anēr* in connection with his authority and teaching is not a corrective but, rather, more naturally reflects social convention, since "teaching, culturally, was a role assigned to males, especially in public settings."[24] In 1 Timothy, virtue complies with social convention, otherwise the congregation's social manners, if indiscrete, may well lead to the disparagement of the gospel and away from God's redemptive purpose. Thus, surely the submission of a religious woman to a man is not cued because of her gender, since to learn from the *nomodidaskaloi* who teach *heterodidaskalein* (1:3-4) or who lack the requisite spiritual and moral maturity to do so (cf. 3:2-7) would be considered an immodest act even if they were male.

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992). Cf. Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

24. Johnson, *Letters to Timothy*, 201.

The injunction (2:12) follows the instruction (2:11) to clarify how and from whom the modest woman should quietly learn. There is no indication that the Pastor does so to correct female misbehavior or to guide the object of their submission, as many modern scholars suppose. Rather, the pair of infinitives, *didaskein* and *authentein* are logically related (*ouk . . . oude*) without prejudice and share the common genitive object *andros*; the discretion of the Christian woman's choice of instructor is paramount to her social identity: what doctrine does he teach and does he have ecclesial authority to do so are the two criteria by which her choice is measured.

The first criterion is delineated by the *didaskein*-family of words, which is frequently used in 1 Timothy and most often of *gospel* teaching (1:10; 4:6, 11, 13, 16; 5:17; 6:1, 2; cf. 1:3; 6:3). The argot that concentrates the learning / not teaching contrast, then, is the content of the curriculum taught. In this case, modesty combines with discretion (cf. 2:9) to discern what kind of public speech has real significance for the Christian faith: gospel teaching. The modest woman makes her choice of teachers accordingly.

The intent of this injunction "not to teach" often turns on the definition of a hapax legomenon, *authentein*, which some suspect to convey a negative meaning and thereby restrict the class of men to whom the religious woman submits.[25] The current debate over this word is typically anachronistic (and overwrought), casting the issue in gender terms rather than in the pedagogical terms intended by its author. In any case, the meaning of its verbal root form is fluid, nontechnical, and indeterminate, envisaging in general terms the exercise of one's political authority—that is, whether or not someone with power acts responsibly when leading others.[26] What is clear about its use in this case is that a male teacher has it, and a woman student does not. The critical question remains to determine what the "it" is.

Toward this exegetical end, I would agree that the interplay between the two infinitives is instructive, especially in a Hellenistic setting where political authority and one's right to speak publicly are

25. See Marshall's judicious discussion of the recent history of interpreting this word (*Pastoral Epistles,* 456-60).

26. Although several conservative scholars have defined *authentein* as "to dominate another," primarily because they want to particularize the troublesome women to whom the Pastor intends his prohibition, this definition is not well attested in the literature; see H. Baldwin, "*authenteō* in Ancient Greek Literature," in *Women in the Church* (ed. A. J. Köstenberger, T. Schreiner, and H. Baldwin; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995) 269-306; G. W. Knight, *Pastoral Epistles* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) 141-42. Further, while Pauline *paraenesis* is typically shaped by the theological crisis at hand, it rarely if ever responds directly to a particular problem without first identifying it; and there is no reference to troublesome women in this text by which to frame these instructions.

routinely linked. If these two infinitives are logically related and their interplay glosses a modest woman's submission, this may well suggest that "teaching" envisages the congregation's criterion for a proper exercise of authority: in 1 Timothy the noun form of *didaskalein* refers to the teaching of Pauline (or "sound") doctrine, whereas contrary teaching is *heterodidaskelein* and is to be silenced (1:3). While it seems clear from 1 Timothy that religious authority is not measured by *charismata* (although, we note 1:18; 4:14; cf. 2 Tim 1:7) as in 1 Cor 12 or Rom 12, neither is it a function of mere gender but, rather, of the orthodoxy of one's teaching (6:2-3), the manner of its presentation (cf. 1:4, 6-7), and especially by the congregation's regard for his spiritual maturity (cf. 3:2-13). These are the attributes that prompt the modest woman to choose a particular teacher who stands within the received tradition, from whom she then can learn quietly, and to whose gospel teaching she could then submit. Modesty that becomes the excellent learner is properly related to the substance of what is taught

While this injunction would surely exclude any instructor of *heterodidaskalein,* and while female modesty in its various guises coheres to the patterns of the *oikmoinia theou* against these *heterodidaskalein,* these possible subtexts by themselves do not require the reader to posit a malicious referent behind *authentein andros* —a person or persons real or imagined who have abused their spiritual authority and have provoked unwanted chaos within the congregation as a result.[27] After all, the Pastor's construction of male-female relationships within the congregation is hardly shocking and largely agrees with prevailing notions of female virtue: it is just another image of female modesty.

Given this rather benign account of the particular male-female relationship envisaged in 1 Timothy, one may wonder why all the fuss: why do readers consistently problematize the motive of this prohibition as reflected by its recent *Wirkungsgeschichte*? The illative *gar* that introduces the subsequent appeal to Scripture cues the reader to find in the Genesis story of Adam and Eve a motive or good reason for the previous exhortation. The present difficulty cannot easily be posited in this rereading of the biblical story, which captures rather accurately the plotline of Gen 2-3 and agrees in any case with contemporary Jewish interpretations of Eve's complicity in humanity's first

27. Typically some reconstruction of an ancient "women's movement," whether secular or sacred, is inserted into the argument at this point to problematize the biblical text as an attempt to suppress more "liberated" Christian women, specifically the younger widows mentioned in 5:13. What is lacking, however, is a clear statement of motive that the Pastor's anxiety is gender biased rather than based in a more general concern for the formation of Christian character, even though differentiated according to standard caricatures.

transgression.[28] She is the typological Eve who stands for the universal recapitulation of every woman's sin; she shares her tragic experience of hubris with every woman who exists outside of Christ.

While various proposals have been proffered, the history of interpreting this text favors a more negative appraisal of Eve: she has come to illustrate what is inherently inferior about all women and why they need to be subject to their leading men. First of all, the order of creating human life, woman from man, hints at male priority (2:13; cf. 1 Cor 11:8-9).[29] More significantly, contrary to the more compliant Adam who was not initially deceived by the serpent's mischief, Eve chooses an independent course away from God (and presumably Adam), is deceived, and therefore sins (2:14; cf. 2 Cor 11:3). So it is that many congregations have unfortunately silenced their women communicants on ontological grounds: women are by nature morally and religiously inferior (2:14) to men and must silently subordinate themselves to their teaching authority.[30]

To stipulate a motive for the prior *paraenesis* for *Christian* women, however, on the basis of Eve's fall into sin is hardly likely in a book shaped by a Pauline rule of faith, where tradents would not conceive of idealized believers, male or female, as still struggling with spiritual deception and sin while existing "in Christ." In light of Paul's theological summary in Romans, which trumps all other subsequent Pauline constructions of salvation by its canonical location and theological perspicuity, all who now live "in Christ" have been liberated from deception and transgression as the powerful and evident result of divine

28. This extends to the "Adam" argot within his midrash. L. Eslinger points out that, against Paul's rereading of Gen 3 in Romans, the biblical Adam is generally compliant with God's desires and intentions and also with his wife's. He is a nice guy by nature, "who runs on a more even keel throughout his life" ("A Contextual Identification of the *bene ha'elohim* and the *banôth ha'adam* in Genesis 6:1-4," *JSOT* 13 [1979] 68). Eve seems less willing to accept her humanity, especially her subordinate role, whether to God or to Adam, and consistently acts on her native hubris until the birth of Seth in Gen 4, when she "gives up" her semidivine status as "Eve" and becomes simply Adam's anonymous wife.

29. In commenting upon Paul's earlier use of Gen 1-2 in 1 Cor 11:2-16, J. M. Gundry-Volf argues that Paul understands gender differentiation to be a concrete expression of divine will that then must "order" Christian worship of God. Even in this earlier use of Genesis, Paul is concerned with appearances—with hair style in particular (cf. 1 Tim 2:9)—not only as a means of distinguishing gender but as symbols of differentiated obligation, man to God and woman to man. There is no indication in 1 Corinthians that these distinctions result from the fall; in fact, the opposite is the case, and therefore they will remain in the coming age; Gundry-Volf, "Gender and Creation in 1 Cor 11:2-16," in *Evangelium, Schriftauslegung, Kirche: FS Peter Stuhlmacher* (ed. J. Adna, S. Hafemann, and O. Hofius; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 151-71.

30. See G. Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 99-116.

grace (cf. Rom 5:12-6:23). From Pauline perspective, "the woman (who) was deceived and became a transgressor" but who is then saved from her sin through Christ Jesus can no longer be characterized in terms of the "fallen" Eve. Christian existence is, rather, characterized by the reversal from sin to a life characterized by the concluding conditional: "if she continues to live modestly in faith and love and holiness" (2:15b).[31] Significantly, Rom 5:12 pins the blame on Adam for the very indiscretion that 1 Tim 2:14 blames on Eve. Moreover, Rom 7:11 sounds an echo of Gen 3 and the same "deception" used in 1 Tim 2:14 to preface Paul's theological essay on the moral and spiritual frustration of the sinner in Rom 7:13-8:2, in which the rhetorical "I" probably stands for the universal recapitulation of Adam's sin.[32]

My point is simply this: the tragic experience of a fallen Eve—"the woman" of 2:14—is most assuredly no longer applicable to the Christian woman addressed by 2:9-12. The deep logic of the Pastor's motive is *not* to encourage a Christian woman's modesty, including her silent submission to male authority, in order to check her natural propensity toward deception and sin. Rather, it is in her liberation from sin that she can now aspire to live "with modesty" in its various Christian guises (so 2:15b). If viewed from this more positive angle, the Pastor's interest in the pair of pedagogical contrasts drawn in 2:11-12—learning but not teaching, submitting but not leading—shifts toward a rather more-benign purpose, obtaining to a particular account of female modesty in the Pastor's public square and so to a particular account of a woman's salvation. In fact, to grant religious authority to the wrong teacher (or not to submit to the teaching of one who is) is as telling of spiritual immaturity as the trivial pursuit of costly and pretentious attire.

Perhaps the interpretive problem is at day's end a grammatical matter: where does the Pastor's appeal to Eve's story conclude? If the reader takes the Pastor's appeal to Scripture to consist of the stark contrast between Adam's priority in creation (2:13) and Eve's deception and sin (2:14), then it is more likely that a negative gloss on the prior injunction could be inferred: women must not follow the anti-example of Eve and submit silently to their male teachers in order to

31. Some commentators object to this conditional as a non-Pauline gloss. However, such an objection is itself non-Pauline, since in other writings the manner of Christian living supplies proof of t le presence of divine grace and therefore of a persons salvation. In this sense, the conditional symbolizes a kind of moral barometer that measures the hard evidence of salvation rather than stipulating it as a condition of salvation.

32. The logic of Eve's sin expressed in 2:14b from deception to transgression is anticipated in 1:13-15, here the Pastor remembers Paul's conversion from a former life of "blasphemy and persecution and insult" to the salvation of "the foremost of sinners."

prevent their deception and sin. The patriarchal assumption of this motive, whether considered ontologically or existentially, is simply erroneous. My larger claim, however, is that it also misreads the rhetorical design of the Eve *typos* and therefore its role within this ecclesial *paraenesis*. That is, the retelling of her biblical story does not conclude with 2:14's negative echo but climaxes with 2:15a and Eve's salvation. To extend the appeal and so to conclude her typology on this positive note alters what motive the reader insinuates on the Pastor's prior exhortation to Christian women. More likely, in my view, his midrash on Gen 2-3 is another example of a "Pauline" way of rereading Scripture's witness back into the letter's argument to lend support to its theological subtext that God's redemptive purpose is to save all women;[33] according to Paul, God's final word to the sinner is a "yes," not a "no" (2 Cor 1:15-22).

Although Marshall, for example, offers an unequivocal verdict that "the subject (of *sōzō*) is clearly no longer Eve . . . (and) the implied subject of the verb is the *gunaiki* of v. 12,"[34] many others read the phrase as a continuation and qualification of 2:14b: while Eve (= "the woman") sins, she then will be saved.[35] This consensus follows the grammatical prompts of the text itself so that the most natural antecedent of 2:15a's singular verb (*sōthēsetai*) is "the woman" (= Eve) of 2:14b. The shift to a plural verb in 2:15b would seem to lend support to this grammar as well.

Not only does the grammar of 2:15a suggest that Eve's story continues there from 2:14b, more significantly the reference to "childbearing" echoes the conclusion to the biblical narrative of Eve in LXX Gen 4:1, where the name "Eve" is mentioned a second and final time (cf. Gen 3:20), when at the birth of her first child she exclaims her partnership with God (see below). If so, then the midrashist uses echo diction to follow the crucial stages of Eve's *entire* story in Gen 1-3. The first two echoes are most familiar to us: the verbal idea of the initial phrase, "For Adam was formed (*plassō*) first" (2:13), echoes the central verb in the Genesis account of God "forming" man (Gen 2:7-8 LXX); and the sparse, *eita Eva*, "then Eve," is added to recall the cre-

33. See R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), esp. 178-92.

34. Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles,* 467. After listing the various possible interpretations of 2:15a that have been proffered by other commentators, ancient and modern, Marshall opts for a meaning that has in mind God's end-time salvation, in which women will participate if they fulfill their domestic responsibilities (the "bearing and nurture of children") as mature Christians (p. 470).

35. So, for example, Mounce (*Pastoral Epistles*, 143), who also finds here an allusion to an argument of the anti-Pauline opponents (cf. 1:4-11) who invite women to abandon their domestic duties in favor of exclusively religious ones; see Johnson (*Letters to Timothy*, 202-11) for the best case in favor of this argument.

ation of woman from man from Gen 2:18-25 (but esp. 2:22). The next critical moment of Eve's biblical story is cued by the verbal idea of 2:14, *apataō/exapataō,* "to deceive," which echoes the climactic verb in the story of the fall (Gen 3:13 LXX) and in particular the leading role performed by Eve. According to this reading, the climactic moment of Eve's story, which for the Pastor integrates the raison d'être of her natural and spiritual histories by his puzzling phrase *sōthēsetai de dia tēs teknogonias,* "but she will be saved through childbearing" (2:15a). Significantly, a fallen Eve apprehends that her relationship with God remains intact when giving birth to her first child (*sullabousa eteken*, LXX Gen 4:1).

Surely 2:15a is "one of the strangest verses in the NT";[36] but the primary exegetical problem remains theological: how does this specie of a woman's salvation mediated "through childbearing" square with the prior references to God's universal salvation in 1 Timothy (1:12-17; 2:3-6) that stipulate that salvation from sin and unbelief is mediated through "the man Christ Jesus" (1:15; 2:5-6)? This theological problem is compounded by various lexical and syntactical ambiguities that are routinely chronicled and settled in different ways by different commentators.[37] In my opinion, however, the phrase's awkward Greek more simply indicates the use of "a Jewish Christian source that reflects an interaction with the Septuagintal narrative about Eve"[38]: namely, her story in LXX Genesis and in particular the note of spoken praise at the birth of her children (*syllabousa eteken*, LXX Gen 4:1a).[39] It is precisely this shift in Eve's LXX narrative from judgment to celebration that is picked up by the *de* of 1 Tim 2:15a to monitor a similar shift in the Pastor's commentary on the biblical Eve from sinner to saved. While the popular reading of this phrase, which takes the implied subject to be Mary and her unnamed child Christ Jesus, does

36. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles,* 143.

37. See Marshall's fine summary, *Pastoral Epistles*, 467-70; also Quinn and Wacker's exhaustive treatment, *Letters to Timothy,* 230-39.

38. Ibid., 231.

39. There are two important wordplays in the Hebrew text, both of which are lost in the Pastor's LXX translation. The first is that the verbal idea, which is translated "produced" in the NRSV, is *qānâ*, from which the name "Cain" derives. The second wordplay is more curious: the unusual Hebrew word for "a man" used here is *'îš*, which repeats Adam's exclamation that woman's creation is "from out of a man (*'îš*)" (Gen 2:23). In this sense, Eve suggests that God's role in the woman's procreative process of childbearing bears a family resemblance to God's role in creating woman in the first place—a point pain seems to make in 1 Cor 11:11-12. In this sense, God's motive for creating woman is not only to provide man with a partner but a partnership whose principal expression is childbearing. Although the interpreter should not expect to find such subtlety behind 1 Tim 2:15a's allusion to Gen 4:1, this creational sense of male-female relations certainly coheres with the Pastor's notion of the *oikouomia theou;* cf. Johnson, *1-2 Timothy,* 149.

make sense of the articular *dia tēs eknogonias* —Mary's child is the definitive source of God's salvation according to 2:5-6—and could allude to Gen 3:15's vague prediction of Eve's ultimate triumph over the Deceiver,[40] it nonetheless breaks continuity with the antecedent of *sōzō*, which is "the woman" of 2:14b, who "was deceived and became a transgressor." This woman surely could not be Mary; rather, she must be "the woman" who sinned (= Eve), whose prospective salvation is through the act of bearing her child. The presence of the article in this altogether peculiar phrase is best understood as generic and as thereby referring to the physical act of giving birth to a child.[41]

But how is the act of childbearing redemptive for the sinful woman? The full meaning of *sōzō* in 1 Timothy is an important consideration in this regard. The initial creedal formulations of Pauline soteriology in 1 Timothy (see 1:15; 2:3-6) supply the theological subtext for the Pastor's entire ecclesial *paraenesis* (see above), including the full meaning of salvation in this phrase. While surely the sinner's pardon from sin through Christ is central to this definition, the earlier formula qualifies the realization of God's redemptive purpose in two important ways. First, God's chief desire is that all people are saved (*pantas anthrōpoi . . . sōthēnai*), evidently inclusive of the woman who "was deceived and became a transgressor" (2:14b): Eve is a sinner in need of a Savior (cf. 1:12-15). On this basis, any nonsoteriological meaning about women (e.g., the modest/faithful woman will survive childbirth) could hardly be intended here. Further, any soteriological meaning that defines salvation as something other than from the woman's "transgression" (e.g., serpent/Satan, eschatological judgment) or the means of her salvation other than through Christ Jesus (e.g., woman's domestic duties) could hardly be intended here.

A second layer of meaning is acquired from the prior creedal formulation of God's salvation (2:3-6), which seems to condition the realization of salvation upon the sinner's prior recognition of gospel truth (2:4b, *epignōsis alētheias*). That is, the prospect that "the woman," who "was deceived and became a transgressor," will ever be converted

40. Cf. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles,* 144-49. The images of Rev 12:1-5 that envisage "the woman" who "brings forth a male child . . . to rule the nations" seem to suggest that this idea was "in the air" around the date (mid-90s C.E.) and provenance (Ephesus) of 1 Timothy—according to most scholarly constructions.

41. Among the reasons that 2:15a cannot be a cryptic reference to Mary's delivery of Jesus, the Savior, is that the verbal idea itself refers to the woman's act of giving birth. The article, then, is generic of the act itself rather than of "the" child who is born to save. Moreover, the emphasis of the verbal idea is on the woman who has acted in giving birth, rather than on the child. Unless the theological subtext is a nascent Mariology, then, this ancient reading, held by many contemporary scholars, is simply wrong. On the other hand, if Eve is still in view, then my reading of Gen 4:1 obtains to the grammar and idiom of the phrase.

to exist in a righted relationship with God is conditioned upon her apprehension that God desires to save even her. With this in mind, then, the reader of Eve's Genesis story interprets that what she recognizes when giving birth to her first child is a God who has not abandoned her, even though her hubris had led her to sin. *Her exclamation that she had created a child in partnership with God (cf. Gen 1:27-28) comes precisely at the climactic moment she discovers the truth about God's mercy*.

In fact, the interpreter of Eve's story might wonder what lingering effect her deception and transgression have on her relationship with her Creator, whether God's relationship with her can ever be restored.[42] And so, when the "fallen" Eve exclaims with her last words in the biblical narrative, "*Ektēsanen anthrōpon dia tou theou*" (LXX Gen 4:1b), not only does she recognize God's presence with her in childbearing, but the reader is made to realize that God has not abandoned her and that she is someone with whom God can do business. The absence of any mention of increased pain in childbearing predicted earlier (cf. 3:16[43]) underwrites this more-positive apprehension that God has chosen to fulfill the creational promise of Gen 1:28 in partnership with Eve.[44] It is this implied note of praise that glosses

42. Paul's allusion to Eve's story in 1 Cor 11:11-12, which gives expression to a reversal of creation's order—the natural order of procreation—(11:11-12), reminds his readers that the natural world points to the interdependency between males and females within Christian worship (11:6) that results from divine grace. (The use of *plēn* to introduce this parenthetical commentary suggests that procreation qualifies the male priority of creation to balance things out as a matter of divine will.) In any case, in this earlier appeal to Eve's story, Paul's interest is not to aim the public practices of believers at the salvation of all women, as in 1 Timothy, but at the complementarity of different gender in accomplishing the purposes of the Lord.

43. The word *teknogonia* not only picks up the reference to *texēi tekna* in LXX Gen 3:16 but more critically the repetition of *tiktō* in LXX Gen 4:1. Not only does life continue beyond "the fall," but Eve recognizes that it does so in full partnership with God.

44. So T. E. Fretheim, *Genesis* (NIB; Nashville: Abingdon, 1994) 1:372. Rabbinical readings of this passage seem alert to the problem. Rashi, for example, considers 4:1 a flashback to a time prior for to Eve's transgression, presumably because the new post-Eden era seems to begin at 4:3a with the formula "in the course of time." Eslinger's close reading of Gen 4:1, however, problematizes Eve's response to the birth of her child. By comparing the etymologies of 4:1 and 4:25 (birth of Seth), Eslinger contends that the Eve of 4:1 "exults in her own abilities to create a man and places herself ahead of Yahweh in the creation of the man Cain" ("Contextual Identification," 68). He goes on to suggest that the story's final use of the God-given name "Eve" signifies that she had not yet accepted her "God-given role" as Adam's wife but performs the role of a mother-goddess similar to Mami in the Atrahasis epic—I. Kikawada's argument in "Two Notes on Eve," *JBL* 91 (1972) 33-37. In fact, Eslinger goes on to contrast Adam's apparent willingness to accept his fate (cf. 3:17-19) to Eve's continuing hubris, as indicated by 4:1. While it is doubtful that the Pauline midrashist of 1 Tim 2:15 has such a close reading in mind his reading of Eve's story seems right that the exclamation of the more liberated Eve f Gen 4:1 in "childbearing" is true to woman's prospective salvation. But now see F. Spina, whose close reading of Gen 1-11 within its narrative

the Pastor's meaning of salvation: "childbearing" understood in the context of Eve's biblical story becomes a metaphor of divine favor granted to a woman who was deceived and had sinned. One should note that the biblical Eve does not mention Adam's role in her childbearing; that is, this above all else is an experience that distinguishes women from men and thus defines the prospect of a woman's experience of partnership with the Creator.

Read in the wider context of biblical narrative, the act of "childbearing" cues God's redemptive purpose with respect to women; and the perplexing combination of salvation with childbearing intends to echo this point, and its evocative use here may very well be rhetorically strategic to his theological motive: women may view the experience of "childbearing" as an epiphany of partnering "with God" *as only a woman can*. In this sense, "childbearing" becomes a metaphor of being female. When the phrase "saved through childbearing" (*dia tēs teknogonias*) is glossed by the Septuagint's "with God" (*dia tou theou*), an intriguing interplay is formed between these two "*dia* + genitives" to underscore the relevance of the Christian gospel for women: God saves Eve as "the woman," without Adam's complicity! In this regard, Eve's exclamation of partnership with God is profoundly personal. Even though the narrator mentions her sexual relations with Adam, her commentary on "childbearing" is that *she* (not "they") had created a man "with God" (not "with [the help of] Adam"). This idea of salvation that is experienced in a distinctively female manner will come to trump the teaching of later Gnostic Christian female myths (e.g., *Gospel of Thomas*) that claimed that redeemed women will finally be repristinated as Adam/male.[45]

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setting concludes that the actual experience of God's "curse" of the *ădāmâ,* "ground" (and so extended by wordplay to *adam's* toil; cf. 3:17-19) is initially only minimal and has completely waned by Gen 9; "The 'Ground' for Cain's Rejection (Gen 4): 'adamah' in the Context of Gen 1-11," *ZAW* 104 (1992) 319-32. One might also conclude from Spina's study that the same is true of the woman's "curse" related to her childbearing. In fact, the only "curse" that seems to take hold pertains to the serpent, who as deceiver is the story's principal personification of evil and so remains on its belly with dust as its food (cf. Gen 3:14) even in Isaiah's vision of the "new creation" (cf. Isa 65:25)!

45. See P. Perkins, "Gospel of Thomas," in *Searching the Scriptures* (ed. E. Schüssler Fiorenza; 2 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1993-94) 2:558-60. The theological role performed by "childbearing," then, is roughly analogous to Paul's argument that Gentiles will be saved from their deception and sin as Gentiles, without first becoming Jewish proselytes. Of course, it is doubtful that 1 Timothy responds to a fully developed Gnostic idea, even though certain Gnostic movements made considerable use of the Genesis Eve story—even, some speculate, to sponsor quasiliberation movements among female communicants; see R. C. Kroger and C. C. Kroger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992); cf. E. Pagels, "Paul and Women" *JAAR* 42 (1974) 538-49.

Finally, then, I am prepared to suggest another motive for female modesty that is faithful to the theological subtext and rhetorical design of 1 Timothy: modesty becomes the gospel; and when embodied in the social manners of Christian women, it has the persuasive power to evoke within non-Christian woman a recognition of the gospel's truth, which is that God desires to save every woman from deception and sin.

A HERMENEUTICAL POSTSCRIPT: READING 1 TIMOTHY 2:9-15 AS SCRIPTURE

1 Timothy 2:9-15 continues to be rendered in diverse ways for competing ends. The purpose of this final section is to reflect on what manner of ends logically follows from my exegesis of this text. In fact, the "logic" that orders the following reflection is predicated on a particular assumption about a biblical text: 1 Tim 2:9-15 is Scripture and therefore is formative of Christian beliefs and behaviors. Any interpretation of the biblical text even when regulated by the rules of critical exegesis, which then fails to instantiate the core theological beliefs of Christian faith or to cultivate the distinctive social behaviors of Christian existence, should hold little currency for believers. Accepting this approach, the interpreter's chief task is to render a text in ways that are formative of the church's Christian theological understanding of life.

For many, however, the hermeneutical optimism of the above claim does not square with the evident particularity of 1 Timothy, which rubs raw the presumption of its continuing authority for all believers. In fact, typically, the meaning that is retrieved from its ancient setting or made up by its current readers underwrites its anachronistic cast, thereby effectively decanonizing its teaching for today's Christians. Even more problematic, some continue to use this passage to marginalize the status of Christian women by taking the "facts" of Eve's fall as typological of every woman. Perhaps the rehabilitation of this text as Scripture is now made possible by a different consideration of what role Eve's story actually performs in 1 Tim 2:9-15: rather than providing a set of "negative" warrants that oblige Christian woman to submit silently to their male teachers, her biblical story underwrites God's redemptive intention of living in a right relationship with all women.

In any case and however drawn, the portrait of Christian women sponsored by this passage is further relativized when considered with other biblical texts that repeat its themes. What good reason is there that the modest woman of 1 Timothy should trump the teaching of

any other biblical text that may portray an "ideal" woman differently? If, as I have argued elsewhere, the church formed the NT to be read sequentially from fourfold Gospel to the book of Revelation as the most effective articulation of God's word for Christian formation,[46] then the Bible's reader will have already read and reflected upon several other stories (e.g., Matt 27:55-28:1-10/Luke 24:1-11; John 4; Acts 2:17; 18) and epistolary texts (e.g., 1 Cor 11:2-16; Gal 3:28) before ever picking up 1 Tim 2:9-15 to render it as God's word. These earlier texts must somehow gloss the meaning of the present one. In particular, given the programmatic importance of the book of Acts within the NT for introducing the letters that follow,[47] the story of Priscilla in Acts 18—where she is portrayed as a Spirit-inspired prophet-like-Jesus and a leading teacher within the Pauline church—problematizes the reductionism that privileges the portrait of the Christian woman in 1 Tim 2.[48] At the very least the interpreter is obliged to consider the implications of reading these two texts together, since the Priscilla of Acts reverses the instructions of 1 Timothy concerning the public role of Christian women within the congregation. Even within the Pauline epistolary collection of the NT, 1 Cor 11:4-5 presumes that women pray and prophesy alongside men as a normative worship practice, and Gal 3:27-28 commends female communicants as equal members of the congregation that dwells "in Christ." This more-balanced reading of the Pauline canon also helps to retrieve the creational agenda for mutuality set forth in Gen 1:26-31, which sometimes is suppressed under the weight of the Pastor's midrash of Eve's story in Gen 2-3.

More significantly, I have argued that 1 Tim 2 is a considered application of a Pauline notion of divine intentionality. While the instructions given to women are shaped by the social currents of his day, they primarily help to illustrate the manner and scope of God's redemptive purpose. Viewed from this angle, the congregation's social identity comes to embody its own theological commitments. The congregation's worship practices envisage in a concrete, public manner God's desire to save everyone from death (2:4a). Readers of the instructions found in 1 Tim 2 may even understand that their vocation in the world follows Paul, who was "a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth" (2:7b), especially since knowledge of the truth about God is the precondition of a sinner's conversion (2:4b). This more precise articulation of a Pauline pattern of salvation adds an additional layer

46. See in particular R. W. Wall and E. E. Lemcio, *New Testament as Canon* (JSNTSup 76; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).

47. R. W. Wall, *Acts* (NIB 10; Nashville: Abingdon, 2002) 26-32.

48. Ibid., 263.

of meaning to the unwritten motive of the Pastor's instructions to Christian women: not only is God's desire the conversion of women but this should also fuel, therefore, the church's sense of its divine vocation. The instructions are given to the congregation not as a social code for domesticating unruly Christian women but as a missional exhortation to save non-Christian women; and it is this religious motive and not its current social expression that remains normative for readers of 1 Timothy.

Such a distinction seems consistent with the Pastor's own "midrashic" hermeneutics—not necessarily in the manner of the Pastor's commentary on Gen 2-3 but as typical of a theological method by which authoritative traditions (e.g., biblical narrative, Pauline creeds/writings/biography) are "contemporized" for ever-changing social settings in order to clarify their claim upon new readers. Indeed, the perspicuity of a religious legacy is whether the "faith and truth" of its teaching is easily recognized as relevant for both resident and prospective tradents. That is, a "new" use of an "old" biblical tradition is not the per se result of textual analysis but is made necessary whenever pressures exerted by new exigencies bring to light layers of meaning hitherto hidden from the interpreter's view. The Pastor's instructions to Christian women are an example of a faithful interpreter's creative adaptation of Pauline traditions to an urban, pagan setting, in which the worship practices of a Christian congregation are pivotal to its public witness in a Greco-Roman/pagan surrounding.

Following the author's own interpretive cues, then, this same interplay between normative religious tradition and an ever-changing social location can guide interpreters who seek to update this text's meaning for today's church. For example, his instructions to women illustrate a theological purpose of far greater merit. Sharply put, the prevailing myths of today's "ideal woman," especially for urban mainstream North Americans, are no longer concentrated by the cardinal virtue of modesty. The feminizing of modern culture has made the teaching of 1 Tim 2:9-15 literally irrelevant for most Christian women. In particular, the social manners of women in the life of a Christian congregation, forged by current definitions of male-female relationships, can no longer be arranged by patriarchal assumptions—especially if such relationships are motivated by a primary concern for a positive public response to the gospel. The disparagement of Christian faith in recent years provoked by the history of patriarchy within the church, to say nothing about its dehumanizing effect on many Christian women, cannot be underestimated nor any longer ignored when reading this text. Yet neither can the church fail to read this troubling text as Scripture; the interpretive task is to determine how to do so.

In concluding her seminal work *In a Different Voice*, Carol Gilligan envisions the character of the "mature" (or ideal) woman in terms of developmental psychology.[49] Using first-person narratives of women's experiences, Gilligan proposed to complement extant constructions of adult development built largely with the raw materials of male experiences and dispositions. She found that mature women approach moral dilemmas differently from men. They seek to maintain the sometimes uneasy alliance between personal integrity (being true to one's self) and an ethic of care (sacrificing self for the good of others). The female sense of self, even of self-enhancement, is organized around the maintenance of intimate friendships and interested affiliations. In fact, a woman's sense of social relations, typically different from a man's, is constructed by her experiences of separation from friends or attachment to them. This growing, developing, maturing sense of knowing oneself and being true to oneself is inseparable from a maternal ethic of caring for others; that is, "the underlying epistemology correspondingly sifts from the Greek ideal of knowledge as a correspondence between mind and form to the Biblical conception of knowing as a process of human relationship."[50] Learning about one's self as a function of living in and caring for relations with others forges a generous respect for life's ambiguities and awareness of a differentiated social reality. The result is a much more complicated articulation of the sometimes messy interplay between personal responsibilities and individual rights, which is typically settled by a woman in the courageous cession of her individual rights for the good of her significant others.

This "ideal of self-sacrifice" is central to a morality of caring for and empowering others but is never at the expense of a woman's self-worth or contentment. For this reason, the principle of equity, which integrates justice and love, is preferred over mere equality, which is primarily concerned with fairness and "equal rights," or matriarchy, which replaces one form of social privilege with another. That is, a woman's independence, which pursues equal power with men, or her dependence, which expends her talent on behalf of the important men in her life, are equally bankrupt vocations. Finally, what is most satisfying is a woman's interdependence in a ever-widening circle of friends, male and female, for whose destinies she assumes responsibility, even as they respond to her in equally responsible ways. As Gilligan puts it, "In a different voice of women lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility, and the origins

49. C. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), esp. 151-74.

50. Ibid., 173.

of aggression in the failure of connection."[51] Although careful to note that family life differs across ethnic, national, and socioeconomic lines, Gilligan makes the important observation that typically a woman's awakening sense of the profound depth of this truth is in her experience of "childbearing." From her social-psychological perspective, then, the phrase in 1 Tim 2:15a, "yet the woman will be saved through childbearing," is an apt description of the climactic moment in a woman's moral formation when she is saved from anti-social "aggression in the failure of connection" and begins to assume the responsibility of caring for herself and then for another.[52] While the Pastor's Pauline thought world is theological rather than psychological, the truth of Gilligan's insight is pertinent in informing the church how this phrase continues to be formative of a Christian reading of life. Perhaps in the woman's Eve-like experience of mothering children, a grand truth about the performance of God's grace is learned: that the work of salvation is finally cooperative, relational, and rooted in a profound care for and alliance with others, most especially with God.

51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., 76.