

EPHESIANS 5:21-33

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will never pass away. Matt. 24:35

To the best of my knowledge there has been no definitive paper on this text to show its relevance to the discussion on Women's Ordination [WO]. This paper is the third in a trilogy on these topics: **The Institution of marriage; the marriage relationship between God as husband and Israel as wife; Christ as head and husband of the church, as His body and the model this is for Christian husbands and wives in their specific roles in their Marriages.**

This paper explores, on the basis of the text above, the true potential of what Christian marriage is and what part or role Christian husbands and wives each are to play and what God originally intended for them and the church [This is used throughout this paper for **the Holy Christian Church**] and still intends for both. Its thesis is that this categorically rejects WO.

A brief paradigm based on all three papers now follows:

A PARADIGM OF THIS THESIS.

1. In the beginning: **GOD.....**
2. Created Adam and Eve, as male and female.
3. This was the first **church** [where two or three are gathered...]
4. He designated their **WORSHIP** – not to eat but to obey in faith and trust and to walk with Him.
5. At the same time this was the institution of **MARRIAGE** and the designated roles of headship and submission both before and after the Fall into sin.
6. God's rescue of Israel from slavery in Egypt was a marriage with Himself as husband and Israel as wife and was consolidated by the covenant of the Passover and the Ten Commandments.
7. He was Himself the model for individual families and the whole nation of Israel for what to believe & do.
8. Finally the promised Saviour came with full blessings claiming the church as His body with Himself as its Head and the Husband of His bride.
9. Thereby He set the model for headship and submission in each Christian family and why and how.
10. The implications from this clearly set the limits of who may and may not be ordained.

A little more fleshing out now follows from the three papers.

There is much more to the institution of marriage than two people living together and producing children. The following points must be taken seriously:

- The creation of man, [this came in two parts, male and female,] was the foundation of being fruitful and multiplying and filling the earth. (Gen. 1:28)
- The creation of Adam and Eve enabled them to be fruitful and multiply because God's creative plan provided that the driving force in the creative act of procreation came from the man. (John 1:13:**a husband's will**) This already reflected the headship of Adam and the submission of Eve as receiver.
- The two were equally provided with a spiritual base by God in the command regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and this gave them an object for their faith and worship. (Gen. 2:16)
- Initially this was known only to Adam as head but either he or God or both made it known to Eve because she knew it when tempted by the devil. (3:2).
- Their relationship with each other was totally governed by their relationship with their Creator and the upholding of it whether they were together or alone.
- In this way not only the Christian family was set up with Adam as husband and head and Eve as wife and being submissive to him and together being church. [Where two or three are gathered.....]
- This clearly indicates that the headship given to Adam by God before the Fall required passing on to their children the knowledge about God and the need to heed and listen to His voice alone even though children came only after the Fall.
- The tree of life has links to Rev. 22:2. Had not the angel blocked Adam and Eve from eating of this tree in their sinful state they would have lived forever in sin and therefore in hell forever. So eating of that fruit of the tree of life is delayed until heaven when there will be no more curse. (Rev. 22:3)
- The Christian home instituted by God has always been recognized by Christians as the basic unit for stability, morality, discipline in society and in any country it is the strength of that country's government and prosperity. [**Righteousness exalts a nation. Prov. 14:34**]

- A new unit is formed each time a husband and wife are joined in marriage. This new unit is centred on the husband as head who leaves father and mother to be joined to his wife. Obviously this means that she also leaves father and mother. This new unit has full equality with the two units left behind and with the intention that what was inculcated there would be passed on into the new. (Eph. 5:31)
- A glue of God's initiating joins them, never to be dissolved by anyone including themselves as long as they both shall live. (Matt. 19:6)
- In fact the two will become one flesh. (Eph. 5:31). Two physical bodies will remain functioning separately e.g. in the conception of a child where they are one flesh while still being one unit.
- The Fall into sin did not change this divine requirement of headship/submission. It just makes it much more difficult to fulfill that requirement do it.
- The relationship with God prior to the Fall is severed at once indicated by their foolish belief that they could hide behind a tree and God would walk straight past without seeing them. (Gen. 3:8)
- The severance is further shown by their individual attempts to transfer blame to each other, the serpent and even to God and shows the full consequences of their rebellion and disobedience and their refusal to repent.
- Adam abdicated his headship by allowing Eve to abdicate her submission to his responsibility instead of checking with Adam to see if this was permissible. It was at this point that sin entered. (Rom. 5:12).
- Eve is not thereby exonerated but instead has the headship of Adam reinstated as well as her submission to him. (Gen. 3:16) A Greek word is used here and translated as 'rule' from which the commonly used term LORD comes: Kyrios. (kurios eleison = Lord have mercy)
- We may gauge a little of how successful they were in their instruction of Cain and Abel. Both were taught to worship and did. However it did not take long for sin to rear its ugly head in the story of Cain and Abel. (Gen. 4)
- Husbands have since struggled with the problems brought by sin in themselves, their wives and in their children. The command is plain: (Eph. 6:4) **'Fathers, (not parents, which is a different word in the Greek) do not exasperate your children. Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.**
- It is no accident in Eph. 5 that application of the 4th Commandment follows immediately on the section now to be considered in Eph. 5 verse 21 - 33.
- Out of this commandment comes not only the call to honour father and mother, but also what flows from this basic unit into government (give to Caesar what is Caesar's), slaves, masters etc. (6v5-9)
- From individual family units comes a congregation family made up of many such units each with the 4th commandment and then on into the Synod family, but with no change to the head/submission relationship. Each husband remains 'head' and each wife remains 'in submission'.
- It is the headship of husband and submission of wife that God instituted that makes it impossible and unnecessary to ordain women.
- In fact any denial of, or endeavour to re-interpret the text, will inevitably impact on the headship of Christ and the submission by the church.

Now to the text above: Eph. 5:21 - 33

The issues of headship and submission cannot be considered individually because they are a part of a unit. It is also impossible to use the failure of sinful husbands and wives in the world and its culture as a bench mark when it was God who long ago set that up. The text above does not permit it. The relationship between Christ as husband and the church as bride establishes headship/submission relationship and the relationship between head/body adds even more. In fact, only Christian husbands, Christian wives and Christian children can do this.

The 'shape' of this Scripture is very important in this discussion. First it is possible to see four components in this reference: Christ, church, husband and wife. Then it is also possible to condense them into two pairs: Christ and the church, husband and wife. It is presented as something that happens initially between Christ and the church. This becomes the bench mark for what is to happen between husband and wife and gives the reasons for it. It is therefore impossible to alter, amend or explain away what Paul says without seriously debasing the truth stated here as it refers to Christ and the church as the bench mark. It is further important to note that the comparison is downwards from Christ + church to husband + wife.

There is a textual question about whether verse 21 belongs to what precedes or to what follows. This paper asserts that it is both for the following reasons.

- verse 15 and following verses set the context leading up to headship/submission when it speaks of spiritual life: **Be very careful then how you live.**

- The Greek makes use of a main verb and a number of participles (in grammar these express an important thought but are not the main thought.) Usually in English they have an –ing attached.
- Two main verbs are used in verse 15: **Be very careful** and **how you live**. That sets the tone first of being wise. The reason is given: **the days are evil**. Sounds familiar doesn't it!
- verse 16: Then comes a participle to explain right care and wise living. [εξαγοραζομενοι] This interesting word has the Greek word [αγορα] = a market place. This is the world in which we live and Paul speaks of buying up time in the world because that is where we live. Time here means: **precise and accurate time** which is our allocated life span. This means: to make a wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good; **making the most of every opportunity**. (Luke 16:8 - 9)
- verse 17 Two more main verbs are listed: **Do not be....** There is a choice already mentioned in verse 15: **wise or foolish**. The reason for choosing the wise is so you can **understand** [main verb] **what the Lord's will is**.
- There is a play on words also in verse 18 which speaks of a common sin of the time: **drunk** [main verb] **on wine** or **filled** [main verb] **with the Spirit**.
- verse 19 has the first of four participles that result from being filled with the Spirit. [λαλουντες] **speaking**. Note well that the speaking includes a number of things: **psalms, hymns, spiritual songs**. The next participle [ψαλλοντες] speaks of singing while plucking the strings of a musical instrument.
- Verse 20 [ευχαριστωντες] **giving thanks**. The third participle. The word includes recognizing the many things for which thanks are to be given and then doing it.
- verse 21 [υποτασσομενοι] The fourth participle which by that fact links it back to being filled with the Spirit. Another participle rather than a main verb and means: **subjecting oneself** to others in a mutual manner.
- So the thoughts introduced by the main verbs are followed by a series of participles [secondary thoughts] which includes submitting verse 21 because it does not start a new sentence but continues on from verse 20. So it is part of being **filled with the Spirit**.
- This clearly links verse 21 to what precedes but also with what follows. What follows forms part of the Small Catechism as the Table of Duties. Everyone in whatever station in the life they are, has this duty of submitting to one another. Then comes one very clear and important manner in which this submitting is done and by whom.
- Starting in chap 5:22 the order goes on into chapter 6: **wives, husbands, church, Christ, children, parents, slaves and masters**.
- So verse 21 becomes a bridge between the two and belongs to both. The reason given for this is: **out of reverence for Christ; as to the Lord**. Such respect for Christ includes: **Who He is i.e. His person and work, what He has said i.e. the Scriptures, what He expects from us i.e. what we believe, teach and confess and also what we reject**. Therefore we do it because He **SAYS SO**.

Fact 1 - Verse 22. There is no question that Paul speaks first to wives and tells them to submit. And to whom they are to submit. It could well be significant that Paul did it that way because Eve went her own way and paid the price. While this cannot conclusively be demonstrated from this text, Paul does say it in 1 Tim. 2:14. The whole thrust of this paper is that the foundation of marriage in the beginning is being re-enforced in the context of Eph. 5. Even after the fall, Eve is told that Adam is to continue to rule over her just as he did in their previous sinless state. We need to note the fact that Paul quotes from Gen. 2:24 and so goes back before the fall (verse 31) and re-enforces again what Jesus had said: It was not like that in the beginning. Now to Eph. 5 in detail.

In verse 22 there is a textual question in this verse in that the Greek text (Nestle) has no verb. That is no problem for the Greek language, because this often happens. Always the context will supply the appropriate verb to use in an English translation, which is 'submit' or better 'submitting'. There is a verb in the footnotes in the Greek text which is the same one as in verse 21. [υποτασσεσθωσαν]. Someone obviously felt there should be a verb and put in the obvious verb. We need to note that wherever verse 21 belongs Paul goes right on in verse 22 on the subject of submission. In fact having said that the Ephesians are to submit to one another, Paul goes right on to say: **Wives submit....** Later on, the point will be made that both husband and wife are church. Also the submission which is **out of reverence to Christ** (verse 21) is now matched in verse 22 with **as to the Lord**. So the two verses are closely related.

Fact 2. Verse 23 The kind of submission referred to (Greek: υποτασσω) has some interesting meanings. Starting with the prefix (something attached [-fix] at the beginning of a word [pre-]) υπο [pronounced: hypo. Shades of diabetes] means something that is under something else as well as someone who is under someone else. The other part of that verb [ασσω] means: to place in a certain order; to assign a place, to appoint. Put them together [υποτασσω] and we get this meaning: to arrange under, subordinate, to subject to, put in subjection. It also comes to mean: submit to another's control. Wives are themselves to do this as a directive from Christ because

this kind of submission is to be done in a state of fear **i.e. respect or reverence for Christ** (verse 21) so it is not negotiable according to society's standards. This indicates that it is not something to be rejected as detrimental either to a woman or to a man.

This verse also makes it quite plain that the headship of a husband over his wife is a fact not demanded by a husband but because it is required by none other than Christ the head of the church. This authority of Christ towards the church is because He **is its Saviour** and it is **His body**. This comparison comes up again later in this text. This decision by God about headship and submission is not negotiable either by the church or by individual husbands and wives. What is required of the church is that it accepts this divine institution, believes it and acts on it. That means by wives and husbands who actually are **church**.

The headship of Christ stated here (verse 23) has already been posited in 2:21: **Christ himself as the chief cornerstone; 4:15-16.: We will ... grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ. From him the whole body joined and held together...** It cannot therefore be understood in any other way here in chapter 5 than what has already been stated there according to the hermeneutical principle that words used in the same context have the same meaning or intent unless a change in meaning is clearly stated. It is precisely the same word used both times. The **headship** of Christ is a given so also the headship of a **husband** is a given.

Understanding what the submission mentioned is, can be understood only from the bench mark of the submission of the church to Christ. The **submission** of the church is also a given, as also the submission of a **wife** is a given. To start from the wife's submission and then working back up from there, can only lead away from the truth. So to do it this way led, for example, to the deletion of the word 'obey' from the marriage vow. It is clear that the kind of submission or obedience required is not of a woman to a man generally because that overturns the parallel of church to Christ. There is of course no denial that in the world men have, and still do dominate and subjugate women, also in the Lutheran Church in Australia (LCA), and as is evident in a worse situation in Islam today. This is due to the presence and power of sin in this world. However that kind of domination can never be justified on the basis of these verses. God did not give it in His delegation of responsibility. It can only be understood correctly in the light of Christ and the church down to Christian husbands and Christian wives.

Some comments are necessary at this point with regard to the significance of the word translated 'as' from the Greek and its importance. This is necessary so that we do not insist that the terms headship and submission apply only to men and women as husbands and wives and so fail to see the connection and reason for that connection with Jesus Himself. We are to see something in Jesus which applies to husbands and wives. The first word translated 'as' (ως) is a simple **comparison**. It is used in verses 22, 23, 24, 28. To summarize: **'as to the Lord'** verse 22; **'as Christ is head of the church'** verse 23; **'as the church submits to Christ'** verse 24; **'as their own bodies'** verse 28. The word 'as' then sets a bench mark which has a direct application to the meaning of headship and submission. Take a long look at Christ and the church as the starting point.

Fact 3: Verse 24. References in Ephesians have already been made to the headship of Christ. This headship is reinforced in Matt. 28:18-20. Therefore the church submits to every claim of Jesus that He has **all authority in heaven and on earth which was given to Him**. There is a clear demand embedded in that for submission to Christ by the church. **Now as the church submits to Christ**. This is stated as a fact to be believed and acted on. The record of this fact is the inspired Scriptures which the LCA says that **it accepts without reservation and the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired written and inerrant Word of God as a whole and in all its parts**. (Article II, LCA constitution) Eph. 5:21 – 33 is one of those parts. That is a fact. If the LCA doesn't accept that, then it ceases to be church!

When Jesus came He clearly stated where He had come from (John 6:29, John 6:38). He was the Son of God from eternity (John 8:58). His Father had sent him (John 7:16). His Father told Him clearly what to say. Jesus states that He came to do the will of His Father (John 7:17). This includes the total sinless life, taking the sins of all upon Himself, going to the cross to suffer and die, be buried, rise again, descend into hell, ascend visibly to heaven. This entire plan of salvation is to be believed. In fact, Jesus states: If you don't believe what I am saying and doing, you will die in your sins. The LCA submits to this. It is the only infallible source which determines doctrine and practice. Let us never forget this. Therefore any tampering with, or causing doubts about the clarity of, the Scriptures as a whole and in all its parts becomes rank disobedience and a rejection of the claimed authority which has been given to and by Jesus no matter who says it or how sincere they may be in what is being proposed.

The church submits to Christ. That is the bench mark. Let Christian wives look at that and they will have no problem finding the application of what they submit to and why. We do not have to discover some brand new doctrine based on the culture of this world or explain away what the 'everything' in this verse means. Jesus in Matt. 28 on the basis of His total authority sends His church into the world to carry out a twofold task: **make**

disciples of all nations and teach them to observe everything that I have commanded. What is this 'everything'? Paul outlines this in verse 25-27. It is the whole plan of salvation that comes from Jesus Christ our Saviour. It has nothing to do with a mandate that therefore only a husband can make decisions on such things as the colour of the carpet, where to go on holidays, what is on the menu tonight etc. and his wife must bow down before him in humble submission. Stick with the 'everything' that Jesus laid down and we have both the right submission and the right headship. In reality, the relationship between Christ and the church is entirely spiritual. It therefore follows that the submission and headship of wife and husband being based on Christ and the church also entirely spiritual.

The husband being head requires him to know what that salvation is, to submit to it by believing it himself, (after all he is also church at this point) insisting on it being taught, believed, and followed by his wife [which is what her submission really is i.e. not to him as male but to the message he brings] and therefore become partner with her husband in the teaching and training of their children. This chain goes on to the congregation family which is made up of many such family units. And the chain goes on into Synod with the same purpose of ensuring that Australian Lutheran College requires its lecturers to adhere to the same principle. The fact is clear: **The church submits to Christ.** It does so in 'everything'. That is what Christ expects. What it submits to is precisely what a Christian husband and a Christian wife do and happily take on board. This is what real headship and submission is all about. Any break in this chain will severely damage the spiritual health of all parts of that chain.

Fact 4. Verse 25. The next 'by way of comparison' is a pair of words which come up in verse 25 and verse 28. [καθως , ουτως] Note that the previous word of comparison is at the end of both these and is therefore an extension of them, and actually intensifies the comparison. The first word also sets **the bench mark** and the second applies it thus giving full authority for this **application**. Here the husband is compared with Christ and not the church. The translation is: 'just as... (verse 25) [bench mark] and 'in the same way' (verse 28). [application] The full authority of Jesus is in both. It is significant that when Paul refers to how husbands are to love their wives, it is these two words which are used. He continues to use both of them in verses 29 and 33: 'just as Christ does the church (verse 29), and 'as he loves himself' (verse 33).

It is quite clear from what Paul has written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that the starting point is not what the world or human beings are saying today but what God has stated and it remains stated and then working down from there. The world's approach is a sociological one and to follow that means we will drown in a turbulent mix of our making. The deep divisions amongst pastors, congregations, the LCA Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, and General Conventions of Synod are ample proof of this turbulence. The situation is not helped by the claim that WO is an adiapharon (a teaching neither forbidden nor commanded by God and therefore open to loving dialogue and consensus and resolution by a democratic majority decision of Synod. An example: whether we stand or sit for the hymns) and so we need to get on with the real business of preaching the Gospel and using all the human resources we can muster.

Fact 5: Verse 25. We now come to what is the real meaning and practice of headship and submission. The first part of this spiritual relationship is love. There are two doing this loving. **Husbands love your wives and as Christ loved the church.** Because of the comparative 'as' this makes this love the same kind of love because it is the same word that is used.

There are several words for love in Greek where English has just one. Three of these will be eliminated first of all. There is eros [ερος] from which we get the word: erotic. It is closely related to such activities as free love, pornography, paedophilia. There is a second word philay [φιλη] from which we get the word: philanthropy = love (friendship) for human beings shown in supporting charities to help the needy. A third one is storgay [στοργη] which relates to parental love. None of these is the word used here and translated as 'love' mentioned in the previous paragraph.

In a marriage there may well be something of all the other three. A man says: I love you. Will you marry me? The sexual relationship between husband and wife contains something of the erotic. The closest friend that a husband and wife can have is each other. They certainly can have a true parental love for their children as they care and provide for them. Even unbelievers are capable of these three to some degree because sin will always show some element of selfishness about them.

The command given by Paul to Christian husbands here is to love their wives ahgarpaytea (αγαπατε) with the same kind of love which Christ showed and still shows to the church. This love is first of all **an attribute of God** (1 John 4:8). It is a totally self-giving love seeking solely the well-being spiritually and also physically for the person loved. John 3:16 springs to mind at once. God's attribute of love prompted His action to provide salvation for all those who did not deserve it and Himself provided the Saviour to carry it out. This is the action of Jesus who loved the church [ηγαπησεν]. As a result of receiving this love from God first of all, we can now

do that kind of loving. This is the situation with every believer whether male or female. Here it is applied to the Christian husband for only a Christian husband can do that kind of loving.

That verb shows the completed action which came in the shape of a cross. How did Jesus love the church? He actually **gave Himself up...** [παρέδωκεν] This word describes the action of police in arresting a person for some crime, charging that person with the offence and then handing that person over to a court, for sentencing. That is the same word used when the Chief Priests handed Jesus over to Pilate for crucifixion.

It was a voluntary act on the part of Jesus: **Himself**. In fact Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem. He deliberately went forward to meet those sent to arrest Him. He declared that no one would take His life from Him but He would give it up. He had the power to give it up and the power to take it back again. It had to remain voluntary and Peter must put his sword back in its place. This brief verse (John 3:16) summarizes the whole plan of salvation in prophecy and fulfillment which stands forever. This really is love.

Having first stated that He gave Himself up, Paul goes on to say: **for her**, i.e. the church and on her behalf, for her good, for her salvation. What is stated in verse 25 is sometimes called Objective Justification. Objective means an object or objective action outside and apart from us. In fact it was 2000 years or so before we were even born and so we could not possibly have had any input whatsoever. It is a 'done' deal. All that Jesus has done in love is ready like the banquet prepared by the King for His Son, the bridegroom to which all are invited.

Fact 6. Verses 26-27. Let us see how this happened to the church as Paul describes it. It happened according to God's divine purpose and was shown with a: **so that**. (ὡς in order that):

1. The church is **made holy**;
2. **cleansed by water and the Spirit (baptism)**;
3. **the final divine formal presentation** at the end of all time **of the church to himself**;
4. Sin will be gone forever as the church is presented **without stain, wrinkle, or any other blemish but instead, as holy and blameless**.

So the entire plan of salvation from eternity, into time, back to eternity is summed up in a few brief sentences. Shades of Rev. 21:2 where it is the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, being presented as a **bride beautifully dressed for her husband**. Again the marriage theme. This is the purpose for making of disciples in Matt. 28:18-20. The word mentioned is what is said and done in the **Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**.

Fact 7. Verse 28. So what is the bench mark for a husband to love his wife? ... **just as Christ loved the church and ... In this same way, husbands out to love their wives...** The final words of this verse will be taken up in a moment. So how does a husband love his wife? The heart of this love which gives, is the salvation, the whole completed plan of it. The husband is part of the church because he has himself received through baptism all the benefits just mentioned. His role as head is to ensure that this message of salvation is first believed by himself, then shared and passed on to his wife and children, in keeping with everything Jesus has commanded (Matt. 28:20). He will give himself entirely to this task. She encourages him to fulfill this role knowing its benefit for her and their children. Her submission is of the same kind that the church gives to Christ and His salvation. The church needs and accepts this salvation and so does a Christian wife. Christ wants to give it to the church and a Christian husband does the same for his Christian wife. In other words the Christian husband wants to ensure that the Word and Sacrament by which he came to believe is passed on and both the husband and the wife recognize his responsibility of doing this. In other words the eternal salvation of the entire family is at stake! Unless we see and understand this clearly, our thinking on the whole issue will be fuzzy.

Luther, in preparing the Small Catechism, has this to say on the subject in his introduction: **As the Head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household**. As Jesus in love died with the full intention of providing full redemption for all human beings and provided the way in which this would be passed on to all believers so Paul now says that Christian husbands in love will do everything they can to ensure that this message is passed on and shared with their Christian wives and children. There is a hymn verse which states this most plainly, LH 588 verse 3:

O blest the parents who give heed
Unto their children's foremost need,
And weary not of care or cost,
That none to them and heav'n be lost.

It is therefore quite false to see this headship and submission as being that of males over females and females under males. When we see and understand it in the light of what God revealed and instituted, the Christian family becomes a beautiful 'church in miniature' as Christ as head teaches the church and a husband using that as his model, teaches his family. As well we will see by looking at the church submitting to Christ as the model for a Christian wife submitting to this responsibility of her husband as head that we have a joyful 'church in

miniature in the home'. We will gladly and willingly submit to the teaching of the Word with the church as model because both husband and wife are also church. They both do so that the final line of the hymn may be realized.

What Paul presents in this comparison of roles does not require debate. The starting point is this bench mark: Christ is the head of the church; the church submits to him. [υποτασσω]. If there really *is* such a lack of clarity in the kind of submission of a Christian wife to her Christian husband's role then it is unavoidable that there must equally be a lack of clarity over the kind of submission that the church gives to Christ in the love He showed it in making it happen. If there really *is* such a lack of clarity in the kind of headship of a Christian husband to his Christian wife, then it is also unavoidable that there must equally be a lack of clarity over the kind of headship that Christ exercises over the church. The point of comparison is plain and clear and simply cannot be denied. What the Spirit breathed into Paul is a unit. Tampering with any part breaks this unity. While this might be vigorously denied, the conclusion is nevertheless unavoidable.

Paul now picks up on another model: the connection between Christ and the church as being His body and the relevance for husbands and wives (verse 23). A new thought or bench mark is now added in verse 28. The creative act by God in Genesis is brought into play again. First of all husbands **ought to love their wives as their own bodies**. The word 'ought' does not leave husbands to choose whether they will do so or not. It simply states a non-negotiable fact. They have an obligation because just as Christ was under obligation as He loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so also husbands are to love their wives. A wife who is loved in that way has nothing to fear from a so-called 'dominating' husband.' If she does she is saying that the church has plenty to fear in its relationship with Christ. Self-evidently a non-believing husband simply does not know or understand what the love of Jesus is all about and how that therefore affects him. He will come to understand only by becoming a Christian. The choice of marrying a believing spouse is crucial.

What does it mean that a husband then does this: **He who loves his wife loves himself?** That on first glance seems to suggest something selfish but it cannot be because the word used again is agapay love which is totally selfless in its loving. So how does he love himself? Well after all **no one ever hated his own body but he feeds and cares for it**. You can rule that out as not likely to happen unless he has a medical problem. And here again we have a point of comparison leading back to Christ: **'...just as Christ does the church.'** We will come back to this body 'picture'.

Fact 8. Verse 29-30. We now come to caring. Once again the pattern is Christ and the church. [καθως]. If we want to see what and how a person cares for his own body, then look at Christ: **...just as Christ does the church.'** It soon becomes apparent that this is more than providing physical food and drink. Christ does not hate His body, the church, but lovingly provides all the spiritual blessings needed via Word and Sacrament and as well provides for its health and healing and daily bread. After all He is the Head and the church is His body. So in a real sense Jesus by loving the church is loving Himself too. It is interesting how the institution of marriage comes back into play. The reason for all this is that **we are members of His body**. It is so simple and clear.

Verse 31: **'And the two shall become one flesh'**. Back to Genesis and the marriage theme again. The same bench mark of head and body just mentioned has various applications for the marriage of one man and one woman. The bench mark is Christ and the church. The glue which bonds them together as one in marriage is this: **Therefore what God has joined together let man not separate** (Matt. 19:5). It is indeed two who come together to form one flesh. Divorce never comes in reality to be two whole people going their separate ways. One divided by two becomes ½. This is a major cause of unhappiness when divorce takes place.

Jesus adds further to this union with this: **So they are no longer two, but one** (Matt. 19:6). The practical application of this is in the process of conceiving a child. The woman provides the egg which the man fertilizes in the most intimate relationship possible for two people. But that is the way God created them and in effect actually becoming a part of further creation. That is where the **one flesh** aspect comes into play. But the sexual relationship is not simply limited to actual procreation but as a delightful celebration of their love for each other in the **one flesh** relationship.

There is another facet to this two = one in verse 31: **For this reason....** Two separate units of a father, a mother and either a man or a woman, have the makings of a new unit to be form. This new unit centers on the husband who leaves his family to set up a new unit with himself as head. His wife leaves her family and is glued to her husband and so this union and unit becomes his body and submits to her husband as God intends. It is because of this glue by which the husband loves his wife as his own body.

Now there is another glue involved which shows in Christ as head and the church as His body. We are in union with Him by the glue of love which results in rebirth, forgiveness, faith with nothing to part us. There is never meant to be divorce by way of unbelief. In this union of marriage the husband is head and wife is body. While

they both remain two separate bodies and function separately in many ways, e.g. you have to wash and dress your own body and mostly differently and it is possible for one to laugh and the other to cry, and when one dies the other remains to grieve. Yet the glue is there all the time. Again the word for love is as above [*αγαπᾶν*]. It emphasizes the spiritual nature of this love. In fact the same word is used again twice more: **'He who loves his own wife loves himself.'** This is the same word for love as before. The husband has experienced the pattern of Christ being head and the church as His body so that in effect Christ loves Himself when He loves the church. By God's divine intention, the husband was created as head and being one with his wife, she was created to be his body. Now as a head and body belong to each human being so the husband can and does love himself because she is part of him now as his body. Simple really. It is not surprising that the one who is head and the one who submits are and can be one. This is not just a physical union. After all this simply reflects the Lord Jesus as Head of his body the church which submits.

Which brings us back to this question: **What is this feeding and caring** (verse 29)? In the light of the spiritual nature of all that has been said above, this is predominantly spiritual rather than physical, but without rejecting the physical for we are invited to pray: 'Give us this day our daily bread'. We confess in the 1st Article that God the Father provides all we need for body and soul. In the light of this spiritual feeding and caring, a Christian husband feeds on Word and Sacrament himself, and then being joined in worship as one with his Christian wife, and this involves her being fed as well. They kneel together with their children at the same table to feed on the body and blood of Jesus. For a husband to fail to carry out this responsibility to feed his 'body' would be hatred towards himself and the one to whom he is glued. In fact it would be a contradictory action for a husband to hate himself by not taking spiritual nourishment himself and at the same time seeing his glued other half taking it. After all, being one with Jesus our Saviour first of all guarantees all our spiritual needs and also the daily provision of all our physical needs.

Fact 9: Verse 32. It is therefore not surprising that Paul says: **This is a profound mystery.—but I am talking about Christ and the church.** The world maintains a number of attitudes regarding marriage which contradict what God has said about it. While none of the following in a manner of speaking involves WO, they still indicate a way of thinking which is of the world and not of God. This relationship having a mystery element about it becomes just a little clearer. On the one hand a husband has the role of modeling Christ as head to his wife and a wife has the role of modelling the church as body and submitting to her husband. The mystery is that while each has a separate role to fulfill, at the same time the husband with wife attached actually are the church together and submissive to Christ (Verses 21, 29-30). It is only where both husband and wife forsake their roles that problems develop in fulfilling what God initiated and endangering the spiritual nature of it all..

Fact 10: Verse 33. But in spite of the mystery factor, this God-given directive remains: **However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself and the wife must respect her husband.** Only then can the full potential of marriage be fulfilled as God intended and models it Himself with Israel as wife and Christ models it with the church as bride and the fulfillment of this in heaven itself in the marriage feast of the Lamb.

IN CONCLUSION

Clearly then for women to be ordained, there has to be a reversal of the God-given role of submission for wives with the God-given role of headship for husbands. This would mean in that case that a wife has to become the head and the husband has to submit to her. This would mean that the model of Christ and the church has to be reversed as well.

A wife has in turn to become the one first created. This presentation in Ephesians clearly states the proposition that in every Christian marriage the Christian woman has been given the privileged role of being like the church to Christ in her relationship with her Christian husband. The same applies for the Christian husband who has been given the privileged role of being like Christ in his relationship with his Christian wife. This principle remains whether a woman or a man marries or not.

Every congregation is made up of any number of such families. This situation of head and body of each such family does not change the roles of each husband and wife just because they are now a wider 'family' in Christ. Therefore a woman cannot assume the role of headship by way of WO any more than she has this role of headship within marriage.

The argument that women are being discriminated against by being denied WO just does not hold water. If this were so then it is God, not the LCA, which is doing the discriminating. That is dangerous ground to be standing on. In fact the same could be said about the 95% or so of men who are also excluded on the basis of unsuitability and conditions as laid down in 1Tim 3:1-7. As well, two of the conditions there that exclude women are: **Being the husband of but one wife.** And **He must manage his own family well...**

The suggestion that women are being deprived of their opportunity to proclaim the Gospel is simply untrue as well. The Great Commission was issued by the Lord of the church, which most definitely includes every Christian woman as well as every Christian man, whether ordained or not. The making of disciples, by baptizing and teaching all that Christ has commanded, is just plain pure gospel. The ball is in the court of women too as sisters in the Lord: The world is your oyster. Go for it. After all what have women been doing for years in Guilds that is not promoting the Gospel? If women feel deprived could it perhaps be that they are not doing it?

Likewise the Priesthood of all Believers (1 Peter 2:9-10) is a second oyster. The word translated 'you' *ὑμεῖς* [υμεις] is plural. That clearly includes both men and women, Christians all, with the titles they have: **chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, people belonging to God.** It is a blanket mantle, a fits-all definition. It expresses a reality of life. This is what all Christians are by virtue of this fact: **church.** Their task is plain: **that you may declare the praises of Him....** Now that is Gospel proclamation if ever there was. What has that Gospel done to them? **He called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.** And who was it who called Himself the light of the world to break the darkness of sin and death? The one who is the centre of the Gospel, Jesus Christ your Lord and Saviour.

It is important to remember that the Office of the Ministry, as also the Old Testament Priesthood, do not derive the previous two paragraphs but from the direct institution of the Lord of the church and He decides who will hold it.

Be assured that those who are so eager to be ordained and are supported even by men demanding that they be permitted to do so, can right now (as always) start proclaiming this Gospel: **once not a people but now the people of God; once not receiving mercy but now having received mercy** (verse 10). That permission has always been there for all Christian men and women. The only deprivation happens if you do not do it.

The basic thesis of this paper is that true submission of Christian women coupled with the true headship of Christian husbands is clearly established by this Scripture under the three main headings of the trilogy: **The institution of marriage; God's relationship as husband with His people Israel as His wife; Christ's relationship as husband of the church and with the church's submission as wife.** The feminist position recognizes that this demolishes its position and it has consistently endeavoured to cast doubt on it as being untenable because of the current culture of the world or even just plain irrelevant.

This paper charges that this rejection together with supporting arguments has done enormous disservice to Christian husbands and more particularly so to Christian wives by holding out to women what they may NOT have and actually taking away from them what they *do* have. It becomes in effect 'Eden re-visited'. It is precisely what the devil offered Eve: progress. It turned out to be the very opposite.

At the same time what Paul says in Eph. 5 is also 'Eden re-visited' as we see once again the roles given to God-fearing husbands and wives and the harmonious working of our heavenly Bridegroom with His Bride the church as the pattern those husbands and wives have to guide their marriages and their spiritual and Christian lives. Their homes as a little church become a beacon light to a world in darkness and ignorance of what Christ's relationship with the church is really like. It is the hope of the author of this paper that it may stimulate further study and then also a bold confession of the truth in the LCA. If we fail to act now, may God have mercy on the LCA, if it is not already too late.

THE WORD OF THE LORD STANDS FOR EVER. 1 Pet. 1:25

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