



Praise and Headship

Great Stuff



WELL, I AM “wowed” by this current issue [Vol. 42, Issue 2, Spring 2014]. Where do I begin? Olive Hemmings’s piece on hermeneutics and feminism is so insightful!

With all the reading I have been doing on this subject, noting how our hermeneutics has evolved in a defensive manner to protect our doctrines, I missed its development because it associated women’s ordination with radical social agendas that are much too closely tied to a “liberal agenda.” Of course!

Chudleigh—those of us who knew Bacchiocchi at the Seminary knew he was a male chauvinist. So, this was not a surprise, but the fact he borrowed it all from the Calvinist-Gothard movement was news to me!

Butler and Numbers; Haloviaks, all of them. Great stuff!

JIM LONDIS
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Chudleigh on Headship

TODAY I READ WITH INTEREST Gerry Chudleigh’s article, “A Short History of the Headship Doctrine in the Seventh-day Adventist Church” (*Spectrum*, Vol. 42, Issue 2, Spring 2014). While he presents fascinating details about the development of the response to feminism, he is sim-

ply wrong when he asserts that “the modern headship doctrine never appeared in any published book or article written by an Adventist before 1987.” Equally incorrect is his statement: “Headship theology played no part in Adventist thought until the late 20th century.”

The following quotes from early Adventist official publications should serve to correct this misunderstanding. Each statement is from the old *Review*, *Signs*, or a widely used book for Bible workers—all printed on Adventist presses, read by Adventist church members. I do not find any evidence that these ideas were anything other than commonly accepted views among Adventists at the time. The headship principle is not new or alien, as Chudleigh claims.

Most of the emphasis in the statements is mine, unless noted.

1862. James White wrote of the headship principle in a *Review* article:

“Kindred to the text under consideration is 1 Tim. ii, 9–13, which reads, ‘In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety. . . . Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve.’

“Here again we have the idea of subjection. Paul does not suffer a woman to teach, or to usurp authority over the man; and we do not learn from the Scriptures that women were ever ordained apostles, evangelists, or elders; neither do we believe that they should teach as such. Yet they may act an important part in speaking the truth to others. That we are correct we think will appear from the following texts.” [James

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White continued the article by citing examples of women who preached as lay workers, i.e., “the aged women,” “every woman that prayeth or prophesieth,” Aquilla, Philip’s daughters, and Anna.]

—*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Dec. 2, 1862, 6.

1866. *Review* editorial. Uriah Smith teaches headship in an article titled, “Let Your Women Keep Silence in the Churches.” The relevant section is as follows. (Note that the italicized words “under obedience,” “not,” and “usurp authority” were italicized in the original. The other italics are my own emphasis of this verbatim quote.)

“The antithesis of the command, ‘Let your women keep silence in the churches,’ is expressed in these words: ‘But they are commanded to be *under obedience*, as also saith the law.’ This shows that the speaking which is prohibited, is of that kind which would show that they were *not* under obedience. But what is meant by being under obedience? *The Scriptures represent, that a subordinate position, in a certain sense, is assigned to the woman, for the reasons that she was formed from the man, and at a subsequent time, and was first in transgression.* 1 Cor. xi, 8; 1 Tim. ii, 13, 14. *The leadership and authority is vested in the man.* ‘Thy desire

shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.’ Gen. iii, 16. *The order is not to be reversed, and the woman take the position which has been assigned to the man; and every action on her part which shows that she is usurping this authority, is disorderly, and not to be allowed.* Hence Paul says plainly to Timothy, 1 Tim. ii, 12, ‘But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to *usurp authority* over the man, but to be in silence.’ There is no doubt but it was the very same point, the usurping of authority over the man, that the same apostle had in view in 1 Cor. xiv, 34.”

—*The Review and Herald*, June 26, 1866, 28.

1878. *Signs* editorial.

“*The divine arrangement, even from the beginning, is this, that the man is the head of the woman.* Every relation is disregarded or abused in this lawless age. But the Scriptures always maintain this order in the family relation. ‘For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church.’ Eph. 5:23. Man is entitled to certain privileges which are not given to woman; and he is subjected to some duties and burdens from which the woman is exempt. *A woman may pray, prophesy, exhort, and comfort the church, but she cannot occupy the position of a pastor or a ruling elder. This would be looked upon as usurping authority over the man, which is here [1 Timothy 2:12] prohibited.*”

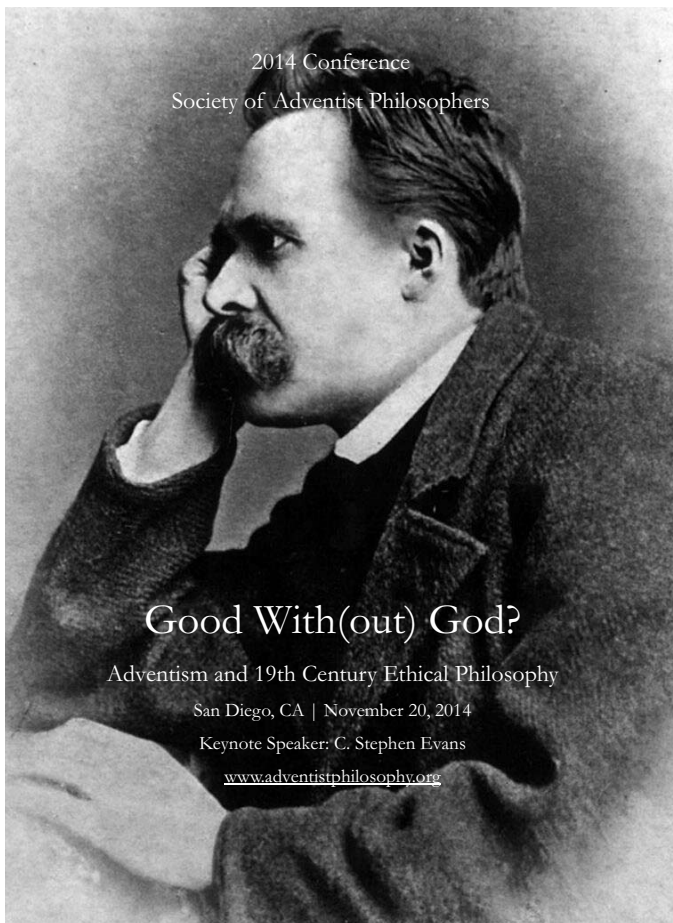
—*The Signs of the Times*, Dec. 19, 1878; emphasis mine.

1895. *Signs* Q/A. The following statement regarding biblical headship is found in an answer to a question.

“No. 176. Who Should Be Church Officers? Should women be elected to offices in the church when there are enough brethren? V. A.

“If by this is meant the office of elder, we should say at once, No. But there are offices in the church which women can fill acceptably, and oftentimes there are found sisters in the church who are better qualified for this than brethren, such offices, for instance as church clerk, treasurer, librarian of the tract society, etc., as well as the office of deaconess, assisting the deacons in looking after the poor, and in doing such other duties as would naturally fall to their lot. The qualifications for church elder are set forth in 1 Tim. 3:1–7 and in Titus 1:7–9.

“*We do not believe that it is in God’s plan to give to women the ordained offices of the church. By this we do not mean to depreciate their labors, service, or devotion. The sphere of woman is equal to that of man. She was made a help meet, or fit, for man, but that does not mean that her sphere is identical to that of man’s. The interests of*



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the church and the world generally would be better served if the distinctions given in God's word were regarded."

—*Signs of the Times*, Jan. 24, 1895.

1919. *Bible Handbook*, by S. N. Haskell (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1919). Under the heading, "Bible Etiquette," Haskell lists several text references with brief summaries. The relevant comment: "1 Tim. 2:12, 13. *Women should not be forward and take the place of men, but should recognize men as occupying the first place*" (179).

I trust these primary source quotes will serve to set the record straight.

BARRY KIMBROUGH
Auburn, Massachusetts

Chudleigh responds:

SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO believe that in "A Short History of the Headship Doctrine" I tried to establish that no Adventists believed women should be submissive to men until the 1980s, when Samuele Bacchiocchi introduced that idea to the church. Such an absurd argument could, of course, be easily disproved.

As late as the 1950s, almost everyone in North America, whether Christian or not, assumed that certain roles should be filled only by men. To name a few: minister, physician, soldier, military officer, lawyer, judge, police officer, college president, hospital president, truck driver, bus driver, airplane pilot, race car driver, construction worker, mayor, governor, president, corporate CEO, or corporate department head. Women who entered, or tried to enter, those occupations were considered abrasive and disruptive, and sometimes a bit comical. Some Christians condemned them for "usurping male authority." When society changed and women began to fill virtually all the roles that culture had previously reserved for men, Adventists who wanted to maintain the status quo discovered that they were missing something very important: a convincing biblical argument, or "theology," that would bar women from ministry.

It is clear that Bacchiocchi already believed a woman should not be a pastor when he went looking for new and stronger arguments to prove that point. He did not return from his research with a new opinion but with a new set of arguments, a detailed theological framework, that had recently been developed by a few Evangelical theologians.

Modern headship theology builds on a new founda-

tion and ends with new and far more radical conclusions than those expressed by Adventists before Bacchiocchi. First, instead of trying to create modern applications for Paul's counsels about women—that they should wear head coverings, not teach men, be silent in church, etc.—modern headship advocates build their theology on a new and creative understanding of the Creation story. They assert that before sin Adam was created to be head over Eve, thereby establishing a fundamental and eternal principle of patriarchy. They support this view with (disputed) arguments that only Adam was created directly by God (Eve's creation utilized Adam), that only Adam was given charge over the garden, that Adam named Eve, that God instructed only Adam in regard to not eating from the forbidden tree, that after sin God called to Adam alone, that God did not make Adam and Eve naked until after Adam sinned, and that Eve followed Adam out of the garden. To drive home the point of Adam's original authority over Eve, they argue that Eve's sin was not in trying to be like God but in trying to be like Adam, and that Adam's sin was primarily in failing to exercise his authority over Eve and abdicating his responsibility for her behavior. They go on to argue that God's post-sin announcement that Eve would be ruled by Adam was only a "distortion" of the rulership that God had previously assigned to Adam at creation.

These arguments had not previously been made by Adventists.

Second, if accepted as biblical, this new version of the story of Creation and original sin transformed the submission of women from an interesting topic over which good Adventists friends might disagree to a testing truth, dividing those who were obedient to God from those who were in rebellion against God. Restoring male "headship" and rejecting female spiritual leadership became as important to the restoration of God's true church as restoration of the Sabbath.

These new arguments from the Creation story and these radical new "shaking time" conclusions are not found in the statements that Pastor Kimbrough presents. Rather, those statements reflect the culture of their time, often called the "cult of domesticity."

In his 1862 statement, James White illustrates the weakness of Adventist arguments before modern headship theology. He asserts that Paul's counsel in 1 Tim. 2,

that women should not teach men or usurp authority over men, means that women today should not be ordained as apostles, evangelists, or elders. He does not say why he believes this, and he never mentions “headship” or Adam being created to exercise authority over Eve. But evidently he still believed that in some way God saw him as spiritual leader in his home and church. Was he right? His wife, Ellen, did not seem to believe he was: “I hope God has not left me to receive my duty through my husband,” she remarked to Lucinda Hall in 1876. “He [God] will teach me if I trust in Him” (letter to Lucinda Hall, May 10, 1876, quoted in *Daughters of God* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005], 267).

Bizarre

IN AN ARTICLE TITLED “The Hedgehog, the Fox, and Ellen G. White,” Butler and Numbers try to undermine the new *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* by dismissing the mathematics used in my book *Acquired or Inspired*. They use words such as “bizarre” and “abandoned from all connections with reality” when I quantify the probability that the health writings of Ellen White statistically could not have been a random copy from the other health writers of her time. It is not me they are denigrating, but a top mathematician from Melbourne University. He is cited in a note at the end of my book. To make judgment on probability needs a mathematician and not an historian.

I got my example of wheat from a fable about the invention of chess. It is found in Wikipedia. Just type in “wheat and chessboard problem.” It was taught to me by my math teacher to show how a sequence of calculations can lead to unbelievably large numbers well beyond what we intuitively expect. A similar, but greater number occurs with the sequence of calculations to assess probability that Ellen White got her health writings from 19th century knowledge. You have to multiply each step with a factor starting from a number greater than 2, which then progressively increases with each calculation.

Butler and Numbers state, “If every distinct health reform teaching were represented by a grain of wheat, together they wouldn’t even fill a tea cup.” This may be so, but in my analogy the grains of wheat represent probability and not the health principles. For their analogy to work the cup must contain two grains mixed together, say wheat and rice. Repeatedly half a cup is tipped out and refilled. The probability is how many times you have to do this

until in a single tip all the wheat is tipped out and all the rice remains in the cup. The number of tips represents the probability for this to occur. Intuitively one would say it’s impossible. Yes, it is close to impossible, but mathematics is an exact science, and it can come up with a figure. It will be 10 to the power of a very large number. This mimics what Ellen White achieved.

If the mathematics is beyond reproach then the words used by Butler and Numbers of “bizarre and “abandoned from all connections with reality” make little sense. What is “bizarre and “abandoned from all connections with reality” is how Ellen White got her information, as it is so improbable that she got it from the writers of her time.

DON MCMAHON

via email

Butler and Numbers respond:

DR. MCMAHON CLAIMS THAT the probability of Ellen White’s selecting so many correct principles of health reform was analogous to a chicken’s plucking one grain of rice out of a pile of wheat covering the United States or Australia to a depth of fifty miles. This calculation, however, is not a historical assertion at all.

In other words, to apply mathematics here is for the birds. The accuracy of her health teachings has less to do with mathematics than with an informed reading in the history of science or medicine. How many health ideas there were for her to choose from is a matter of historical fact, not mathematical probability.

And how right she “needs” to be to be a prophet cannot be calculated, either by a mathematician or a historian. We should leave that to the theologians.

Correction

The photographs in “Progress or Regress: Adventist Women in Ministry” (*Spectrum*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Spring 2014) should have been identified as follows:



Norma Osborn



Lulu Wightman



Anna Knight