

Leadership *is male*

What does the Bible say?



DAVID
PAWSON

LEADERSHIP IS MALE

What does the Bible say?

David Pawson

True Potential Publishing
The Power of Purpose

<http://tppress.com>

Copyright © David Pawson, 2007

Published in The United States of America by
True Potential Publishing, Inc.
PO Box 904 Travelers Rest, SC 29690
www.tppress.com

This edition published by special arrangement with Terra Nova Publications International Ltd. PO Box 2400 Bradford on Avon Wiltshire BA15 2YN First edition published in Great Britain by Highland Books, 1988, Reprinted 1989, 1992, Reprinted 2002 by Bethel Books

The right of David Pawson to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the publisher.

Scripture quotations marked NIV taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton, a member of the Hodder Headline Group. All rights reserved.

Leadership is Male and other True Potential Publishing books can be purchased in bulk by churches, ministries and other organizations for evangelical, educational or business promotional use. For information please write Special Markets Department PO Box 904 Travelers Rest, SC 29690 or send your request via e-mail to: info@tppress.com.

ISBN 978-0-9818961-3-7

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008906162

Cover design by Chelsey Corn
Printed in the USA

Contents

| | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-----|
| | FOREWORD | i |
| | INTRODUCTION | iii |
| 1. | AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING.... | 1 |
| 2. | A PATRIARCHAL PEOPLE | 11 |
| 3. | BEHOLD THE MAN | 21 |
| 4. | COME BACK, PETER | 31 |
| 5. | COME BACK, PAUL | 39 |
| 6. | ...AND EVER SHALL BE? | 63 |
| | POSTSCRIPT | 73 |

FOREWORD

What a relief to find a bold book with a bold title on a subject most men won't touch with a barge pole! I don't know Mr. Pawson, but surely he is a bold man. He faced the cost of putting his 'obsolete and offensive' (his own words) viewpoint into print and went ahead and did it anyway – with scholarly care, with grace and courtesy. I hope and pray that people will read and heed what he has written.

The issue of so-called equality of men and women touches the very foundation of Christian faith, for it goes deep into the nature of God and the great mystery of which the much-maligned apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians. For years I have watched with increasing dismay the destruction the feminist movement has wrought in the world, in the church, in Christian homes and marriages, and in personalities. I have studied the tortuous arguments of those who would persuade us that Galatians 3:28 cancels everything the author says elsewhere in his epistles about the vital distinctions between men and women. I have listened to the endless discussions of Paul's rabbinical prejudice and cultural insularity. I have delved into treatises on the meaning of the Greek word *hypotasso*, ('to arrange under',

Leadership is Male

‘to be under obedience’, ‘to put under’, ‘to subdue unto’, ‘to subject to’, ‘to be in subjection to’, ‘to submit self unto’), and I have on a few occasions been asked (as a ‘traditionalist’, whatever that means) to debate those who would rewrite history, literature, psychology and the Bible itself to make them palatable to the woman of the late twentieth century. I have done practically everything but jump up and down and scream about it.

Here is a simple, sane, serious treatment of the subject by a man who loves God, respects women, and takes the inspiration of Scripture and the integrity of the apostles for granted. He deals with all the ‘difficult’ texts. He tells us that his subject is not a clerical issue, nor is it hierarchical, situational, historical, or experimental; it is *biblical*. With that I agree wholeheartedly, but whether it can be settled, as he says, only by ‘scrupulous exegesis’ I am not sure. I think it is even bigger, even deeper than that – a theological mystery representing Christ and the church, bigger than exegesis, deeper than our deepest understanding. And such things will never be ‘settled’.

Read this book. The exegesis points to the mystery. Mysteries are things revealed, not explained. Mysteries are always unsettling.

Elisabeth Elliot

INTRODUCTION

TO THIS EDITION

Many will see this book as an anachronism. Hopelessly out of date. The dying echo of a controversy that has virtually been settled. The vestige of opposition to a trend that must inevitably continue until all objections are silenced.

The 'Free Churches' (Methodist, Baptist, United Reformed, Pentecostal) have had female clergy for years. Women have been steadily climbing the Anglican hierarchy and have now reached the level of bishops; the next but one Archbishop of Canterbury could well be a lady (or is that word unacceptable?). Catholics (Anglo and Roman) are still holding out, but for sacramental and sacerdotal, rather than scriptural, reasons (the priesthood of only some believers), as do the Eastern Orthodox. Many of the new churches have 'leadership teams' of men and their wives (but rarely any single women, a surprising example of discrimination).

So, why stick my neck out with this re-publication of a book that first appeared in 1988? Even then a top Bible teacher in this country advised me not to 'ruin my ministry by fighting a lost cause' (he agreed with me in principle). My stance has certainly closed doors of ministry, particularly

Leadership is Male

clergy seminars. There has been a price to pay in other ways as well.

The situation may have changed, both inside and outside the church, in the last two decades. But two things have not changed. God's Word, expressed in Scripture, has not. Nor has love for him, expressed in obedience. We are not called to be 'credible to contemporary society' (the basic reason for change presented to the Anglican Synod when ordination of women was discussed) but, rather, model a 'counter-culture' of a truly healthy, holy and happy society in a world that has lost its bearings. And in this life it is never too late to repent, which begins with a change of mind.

The feminization of the church's leadership is already affecting fundamental aspects of her life, notably in matters of doctrine and discipline. Sentimental theology and situational ethics ('unconditional love') are eroding our understanding of a God and a gospel of righteousness, to say nothing of judgement to come. Yet it is only against this backcloth that the beauty and brightness of God's glorious 'agape' love can be truly appreciated. But these implications must be expanded in another book, which I hope to write. Meanwhile, to deal with one symptom of this radical shift is a step in the right direction.

The chapters of this book first appeared as a series of articles in *Renewal* magazine, by the invitation of its editor, Edward England; because I count him as a friend, he must not be held responsible for the contents!

The material was originally prepared for a European convention of 'Women's Aglow' in Germany. One lady

Introduction

said to me afterwards: ‘We *heard* the truth from you, but we *saw* it in your wife.’ That remark will always be a beautiful compliment to the one who has been a better helpmeet than I ever deserved; it could also be a damning indictment of me if my understanding of the Bible has been mistaken! In making my views public, I realize I am swimming against a strong tide. I have faced the cost of doing this—in terms of lost opportunities of ministry (I could still be sound in other directions!), personal aspersions (it is easier to attack a messenger than a message) and, above all, impaired relationships (though ‘real’ friends are those with whom one can agree to differ without loss of affection).

My deepest anxiety is that women readers will take it all personally, dismissing my exposition as an excuse for yet another misogynist put-down. Recognizing what festering wounds there are from immoral exploitation and unjust suppression, I can only say that it is not in my heart to add to those hurts. To have done so unnecessarily would sit heavily on my conscience.

Why, then, raise the issue? Why pursue a viewpoint considered widely as both obsolete and offensive? There are two reasons why I have done this:

First, I happen to believe it is the truth. A skeptical age which views ‘truth’ as subjective, relative and reached by cultural consensus finds it hard to conceive that sincere conviction *can* be based on the revealed mind of God rather than the concealed motives of man. I have already been accused of delighting in provocation, harbouring a secret death-wish in my ministry, compensating for social inadequacy and other variations of subconscious deviation.

Leadership is Male

There may be some truth in any or all of these charges—but that is hardly an adequate criterion by which to judge these pages. Let the reader emulate the Bereans, who tested Paul's words by the touchstone of Scripture, hopefully with the same result (Acts 17:11)!

Second, departure from the truth carries serious danger, both in belief and behavior. I confess that when I began to study this controversy I did not realize how much was at stake. What looks like a simple difference over the *interpretation* of Scripture easily slips over into a subtle debate about its *authority*. And behind it all the very nature of the Godhead is being questioned. I only became fully aware of this after completing the articles—by reading Donald Bloesch's *The Battle for the Trinity*.¹ When an evangelical theologian of his standing speaks of 'an ominous drift toward goddess spirituality' and 'a refurbished form of the old heresy of Gnosticism' in connection with this issue, we must at least take notice. The perils are practical as well as theological. Discipline could be as much affected as doctrine.

We are obviously handling such far-reaching issues that in the *flesh* I would shrink from attempting it. However, I trust the *Holy Spirit* to lead us into all truth. If I have written what he approves, he will confirm this in the reader's spirit and give fruit for my labours. If not, I pray this book will be quickly forgotten before it damages the body of Christ, and that I will be forgiven for my blindness.

Finally, this is not a treatise on marriage or the ministry of women (though there are implications for both); it

¹ Servant Publications, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Introduction

is addressed solely to the question of *leadership* in the redeemed people of God, which I am thus far convinced must be male.

Sample

Chapter One

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING...

The church is trailing the world in opening the ranks of leadership to women, a bad situation from every angle. If the trend is right, the church ought to be *leading* the world. If it is wrong, the church ought not to be *following* the world.

These chapters are based on the conviction that equality of status does not mean interchangeability of function. As a charismatic evangelical (rather than an evangelical charismatic!), four assumptions are made before the debate begins:

First, *all* Scripture is inspired (2 Tim 3:16 actually says: ‘expired’) by God and, rightly interpreted, has binding authority on Christians at all times and in all places.

Second, the Spirit *never* contradicts Scripture, since he would be contradicting himself.

Third, where Scripture is clear, no *further* revelation is needed from the Spirit.

Fourth, any part of Scripture must be understood in

Leadership is Male

the context of the *whole*, to be truly ‘biblical.’ ‘A text out of context is a pretext.’ The use of Galatians 3:28 and 1 Timothy 2:12 as ‘proof-texts’ for feminism and sexism are classic examples of this abuse of Scripture, as we shall see.

Both Jesus and Paul appeal to the first two chapters of Genesis, particularly the second, when teaching on male/female relationships. God’s original pattern becomes the guideline for redeemed behavior.

There are, as most readers recognize, two accounts of creation. Such duplication (as in Kings/Chronicles and the four Gospels) is the divine method of communicating different aspects of the whole truth. Distortion occurs when these are not held in proper tension, even as a paradox. Feminism overemphasizes Genesis 1 and sexism does the same for chapter 2.

The first account of creation may be called ‘*vertical*’. Its viewpoint is up in the sky, or even out in space. Looking *down* on planet earth from above it is primarily concerned with the creator (‘God’) as the originator of the earth and its inhabitants, particularly mankind (‘Adam’, a generic term covering male and female; see Gen. 5:2).

The second account we shall call the ‘*horizontal*’. Its viewpoint is down on the ground, looking *around*. The primary interest is in the relationships of ‘*the man*,’ now an individual (Adam), with his Creator (now ‘*Yahweh God*,’ with a specific as well as generic name), with plants, animals and, finally, *the woman*.

As it Was in the Beginning

In both accounts, one verse is in poetry (the language of the heart and its feelings), as distinct from prose (the language of the head and its thoughts). Significantly, both coincide with the introduction of sex! God composed the first love-song and man the second.

Sexuality is common to both accounts and fundamental to both relationships: the vertical (between God and man), and the horizontal (between man and woman). There is a precise analogy between the two, on which the whole Bible rests. This is why the roles of men and women are never reversed, in either the Old or New Testaments.

Both chapters emphasise the difference between the sexes as well as their similarity, the variety as well as the unity. Contrast is essential to complementarity.

To resemble himself God created mankind

To reflect in themselves his own heart, will and mind

To relate to each other, male and female entwined

(Genesis 1:27, with apologies to Moses)

There is no need to discuss the meaning of 'image' in Genesis 1:27. (Is it reflection or reproduction? Is it Spiritual, intellectual, moral, emotional or even physical?) The important fact for this debate is that *both* male and female bear the image. Men and women are the same species and radically different from all other species. They are thus equal in value, potential and destiny. This is the first statement about gender in Scripture and is rightly seen as underlying all later revelation.

Leadership is Male

However, we must be careful not to read modern social controversy back into Scripture. While equality of status may be a legitimate *deduction* from this verse, it is doubtful if this message was the main *intention* of the author (human or divine). Taken at face value, the verse emphasizes the similarity of human beings (male and female) to their Creator and their difference from all other creatures.

Why should sexuality be mentioned in the same ‘breath’ as divine image? Is there a connection?

Some would deny any link, taking ‘image’ as a purely spiritual attribute and ‘male and female’ as primarily physical, that part of man more like the animals than God. But ‘male and female’ is never used of fish, animals or birds – only of man! And it occurs in *poetic* verse, not in the prose command to multiply, which follows. Sexuality has spiritual significance.

Others postulate a ‘split image’, in which only man and woman *together* can be the whole representation of God (men showing his justice, women his mercy, etc.). If this were so, Jesus could hardly be the ‘exact representation of God’ (Heb. 1:3) or have the ‘fullness of God dwelling in him bodily’ (Col 1:19).

A third approach emphasized ‘corporate personality’. God is tri-personal, plural (‘Let *us* make man in *our* image’). Man and woman *together* reflect Father, Son and Spirit. If this thinking is valid, there would be subordination as well as equality in ‘manhood,’ as in the Godhead. But the Bible never draws the parallel. One would have to speculate as to why Jesus never married or even why there are not three

sexes!

The simplest explanation is probably the best. The verse is emphasizing no more and no less than that *both* sexes bear the same divine image. Whenever this basic truth is overlooked, humans will exploit, abuse and slander one another.

But equality does not mean interchangeability. A cylinder-head and a crank-case may be of the same material, size, weight and cost – but cannot be exchanged!

Some have seen grounds for identity of function in the following verse (v. 28), where God tells male and female to ‘rule and subdue’ the earth. But he is telling them *both* to do it together, not *either* of them to do it separately. Within the shared task, their particular roles may be quite different, as is certainly the case with the command to ‘multiply and fill’ the earth, in the same verse.

If Genesis 1 highlights those features common to the sexes, Genesis 2 emphasizes those not shared. And God created woman... from a different material, for a different purpose and at a different time. These three dissimilarities are all mentioned in the New Testament as significant for the roles of men and women.

Woman was made *from* man, not dust. This might be thought to indicate the incompleteness of the man (and the ‘reason’ he seeks union with a wife rather than parents in v. 24); but Paul uses this to support the *headship* of the man (1 Cor. 11:8), possibly recalling that she came from his ‘side’.

Leadership is Male

Woman was made *for* man; the reverse is not true (1 Cor. 11:9). Her primary function is in relation to him; his was already established without reference to her (v. 15). The word ‘help’ in no way implies *inferiority*, since it is often used of God’s assistance. Neither does it imply *identity*, since God’s ‘help’ is in terms of support, sympathy and strength – rather than substituting for man in his task.

Woman was made *after* man. His priority in time has other implications. The ‘firstborn’ carries responsibility for and authority over later arrivals, as Paul indicates in 1 Timothy 2:13.

While any one of these three aspects of woman’s creation would not conclusively establish her subordination to man, the cumulative effect of all three points in this direction, especially in the light of their application in the ‘apostles’ doctrine’. That Adam himself understood them in this way is indicated by his calling her ‘woman’.

Naming in Scripture is an expression of authority. God names ‘man’ (Gen. 5:2) and the stars (Is 40:26; astrology began when man did!). ‘Man’ names the animals when God ‘brought’ them to him. He is not rebuked for taking this authority. Nor is it valid to object that ‘woman’ is not a ‘name’ since it is generic rather than specific (as is claimed by those who see such authority as the result of the Fall, when Adam called her ‘Eve’); the ‘names’ which Adam ‘called’ the animals (v. 19) were also of this category (‘rhinoceros’ rather than ‘Rodney’!). Incidentally, a legacy of his action is to be found in a wife taking her husband’s surname after marriage.

As it Was in the Beginning

Genesis 1 and 2, then, present us with truth in the form of paradox. Men and women are the same, only different. They are both like God, but unlike each other. They are equal, yet unequal.

Such paradoxes in Scripture (of which predestination and free-will is the most obvious) can be experienced in life, but not explained in logic. Rationalized systems of doctrine can only do justice to one side of the coin (hence *Calvinism* and *Arminianism*; in this debate, *sexism* and *feminism*). Nor is there a 'balance' to be found midway between the two poles. Only by emphasizing *both* apparent opposites can the whole truth be preached and practiced.

The paradox of gender is fundamental to the whole Bible, where the male/female relationship is seen as the best analogy for the divine/human relationship. *Both* relationships are characterized by equal and unequal factors. God and man can relate face-to-face because they bear the same image, yet man is subordinate to God. The same dual aspect applies to men and women.

The analogy is specifically sexual. The male represents the divine side of the partnership, the female represents the human. Both Jews and Christians have seen this analogy in the Song of Solomon (which never mentions God, like that other romance, Esther). As well as affirming sensual love (its primary message), the book may be validly expounded as an analogy for spiritual love. This is quite different from treating it as an allegory, finding esoteric meanings in erotic details (the 'two breasts' are the Old and New Testaments! Presumably 'between my breasts' refers to the Apocrypha!).

Leadership is Male

The analogy recurs many times in Scripture. See, for example, Ezekiel 16, where Jerusalem is variously described as an abandoned baby girl, developing in puberty, courted and married, enthroned as queen and finally turning to prostitution.

The New Testament follows the Old. Jesus uses the feminine word for his church (Mt. 16:18); he loves *her* and gives himself for *her* (Eph. 5:25; note that here the analogy is inverted: the divine/human relationship becomes the pattern for husband/wife relationships).

The fundamental feature in the analogy is the correspondence between the male and the divine, the female and the human. The parallel is non-reversible. Husband and wife are no more interchangeable than God and man!

For God reveals himself in *male* terms. He *is* our father, not our mother; our king, not our queen; our husband, not our wife. God incarnate had to be a *man*. An androgynous Christ, much less an effeminate one, would be a distorted image (Holman Hunt's painting, 'The Light of the World', is unfortunate, the hair, face and figure taken from female models).

Christian feminists constantly refer to some statements in the Bible applying feminine terminology to both God and Jesus, implying that in some mysterious way they are bi-sexual and would be thought of more accurately as such. The most frequently quoted texts are Deuteronomy 32:18; Isaiah 42:14; 49:15; Matthew 23:37 and Luke 15:8.

The first thing to say about these is that they are of

As it Was in the Beginning

the nature of simile rather than definition. (God, in some respects, is *like* a mother; God is *unlike* the best mother!); but this does not mean he is a mother. Secondly, the proportion of these ‘feminine’ references is *infinitesimal*, compared to the male. What really neutralizes any attempt to find theological significance in these statements is the fact that the same tiny percentage of feminine metaphors is applied to Moses (Num. 11:12), the twelve apostles (Jn. 16:21) and Paul (Gal 4:19; 1 Thes. 2:7). No one in their right mind would take this to mean they were bi-sexual!

Men can ‘give birth’ to a project, by cooperating with ‘bosom’ friends, ‘nursing’ it in its infant stages, finally ‘aborting’ the mission, because it does not work out as originally ‘conceived’ – and all this without their sexual orientation being called into question! To claim, as one recent writer, that: ‘Deity was *as much* able to be spoken of in female as in male symbols’ is not even statistically accurate.

C.S. Lewis was nearer the biblical mark when he pointed out that: ‘Goddesses have, of course, been worshipped: many religions have had priestesses. But they are religions quite different from Christianity ... a child who had been taught to pray to a mother in heaven would have a religious life radically different from that of a Christian child.’ (*God in the Dock*, Collins.)

This comment indicates just how much is at stake. We are in danger of changing the image of God into a reflection of the sexual confusion of our secular society, a deity who has more in common with Hermaphrodite (the son of Hermes and Aphrodite in Greek mythology, who became joined in

Leadership is Male

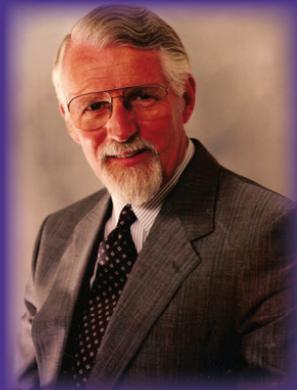
one body with the nymph Salmacis) than with Yahweh, the father of Jesus. The biblical word for this is idolatry.

Sample

We hope you've enjoyed this free sample of *Leadership is Male*. For more information on purchasing *Leadership is Male*, please visit

<http://www.truepotentialmedia.com/product/leadership-is-male/>

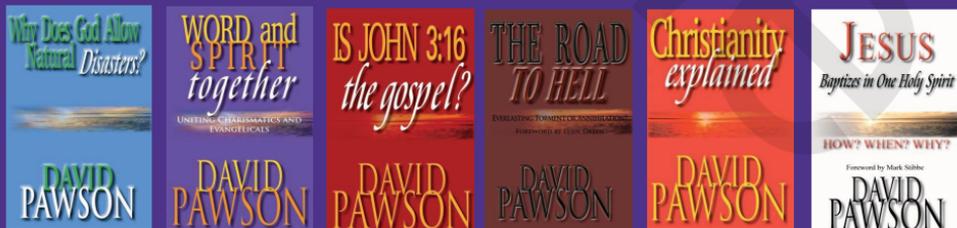
Leadership *is male*



Elisabeth Elliot writes in the Foreword:

“Here is a simple, sane, serious treatment of the subject by a man who loves God, respects women, and takes the inspiration of Scripture and the integrity of the apostles for granted. He deals with all the ‘difficult’ texts. He tells us that his subject is not a clerical issue, nor is it hierarchical, situational, historical, or experimental; it is *biblical*. Read this book. The exegesis points to the mystery. Mysteries are things revealed, not explained. Mysteries are always unsettling.”

David Pawson is well known to countless Christians as an outstanding Bible teacher and author. His teaching on television and in other media is received by millions around the world. Pawson explains the Bible clearly, encouraging Christians to go back to Scripture and to consider its teaching for themselves. His books are available at <http://pawsonbooks.com>



True Potential Publishing
The Power of Purpose

<http://tppress.com>

US \$11.99
ISBN 13: 978-0-9818961-3-7



9 780981 896137