Chapter 4

Divine Models for Humanity

Introduction

Chapter 3 traced the pattern of interpersonal relationships of generic male and female as they correspond with interpersonal relationships at the divine level (portrayed in the wisdom tradition), as well as the correspondence between the human and the divine-human levels (portrayed in the prophetic tradition). Such correspondences need to be seen in their narrative setting and development, from the original likeness to God, received at creation and retained despite expulsion from the Garden, to the new complexity in the pattern of likeness received in redemption. Chapter 3 noted the prophetic tradition of a reversal of origin and priority between male and female, which is fulfilled, at the divine-human level, in the relationship of Mary and Christ. This chapter focuses on key biblical texts regarding creational origin and priority, as well as the reversal of origin and priority at the dawn of redemption. In particular, the imago Dei is considered in terms of the new significance implied in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16.

While the previous chapter attempted a literary engagement with gendered biblical themes, this chapter is more analytical in flavour in assessing recent exegesis of key passages. Interpretive frameworks colour exegetical conclusions. The feminist assumption that biblical authorship is ‘patriarchal’ and reflects a male bias may lead to doubt about the original gender inclusive nature of the imago Dei, as will be seen. Hill’s discernment that interpersonal human relationships mirror divine relationships is premised on a unity of substance (or equality of nature) that is also diversity of
priority: ‘as the Son is from the Father, so is the woman from the man’. This premise is disputed in various ways in the interpretations of four key feminist writers, Kari Elisabeth Børresen, Phyllis A. Bird, Phyllis Trible and Lone Fatum. This chapter considers their theories in terms of the creational model in the early chapters of Genesis and of the Pauline commentary on the creational model as it is taken up into the new redemptive model.

McFague recommends making human models for God but the biblical writings purport to supply divine models for what it means to be human. God’s models for humanity are inclusive of male and female. They are not stereotyped. They involve change. The original model of the imago Dei given in creation is taken to a new level in redemption. There is a transformational quality to being like God. Development is said to occur ‘from one degree of glory to another’ (2 Corinthians 3:18). The progression to the ‘in Christ’ model of the redeemed does not exclude the symbolic significance of the model given in creation, rather gives it new significance alongside creational significance. Likeness given in redemption, while it accompanies what Lewis calls ‘nearness-of-approach’, is nevertheless distinct from the process of growing more like God.\(^1\)

As noted in Chapter 2, Augustine’s exegetical problem in harmonizing Genesis 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 can be traced in part to his failure to differentiate between likeness to God and openness to God. Chapter 2 outlined Augustine’s proposal that the imago Dei consists in a capacity of the ‘inner man’ to apprehend God. Calvin takes Augustine’s interpretation a step further by positing both spiritual

\(^{1}\) Hill, n. 22 on Augustine, The Trinity, XII, p. 338: see Chapter 2, section C.

\(^{2}\) See Lewis, The Four Loves, p. 4.
equality of the sexes and *temporal* pre-eminence for the man. Lone Fatum attributes
two possible options for women to Pauline thinking, illustrated in a contrast between
Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians 11: 2-11, and goes further than Calvin in discerning
an androcentric character in each. It will be argued, however, that Galatians 3:28
refers to unity in Christ and, unlike the text from 1 Corinthians, is not concerned with
the nature of gendered likeness to God.

This chapter begins with Kari Elisabeth Børresen’s theory that an alleged human
unity on male terms stemming from the ‘patriarchal’ heritage was in conflict with the
new gender inclusive agenda of the early church. Børresen outlines a method of
reinterpreting the early chapters of Genesis, said to be employed by the patristic
writers in accordance with their theological concerns. In the second section, Phyllis A.
Bird detects an original unity on male terms in Genesis 1: 26-28 and proposes a
method of reinterpreting Genesis 1 on feminist terms. Phyllis Trible detects an
original human unity that becomes sexually differentiated, in Genesis 2. Contrary to
the argument of this thesis, both Bird and Trible do not seem to include Genesis 2 in
terms of relevance to the *imago Dei*. Section C engages with the similar concerns of
Galatians and Colossians in contrast with those of 1 Corinthians 11-14 and presents
an extended version of Hill’s proposal for the *imago Dei* based on 1 Corinthians 11:1-
16. Section D assesses Ruether’s theological response to what Børresen discerns as
traditional ‘God-alien femaleness’ and explores what is meant by the woman being the
glory of the man.
This thesis maintains that the Pauline argument about head covering in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 has at its core a symbolic difference between the sexes. The previous chapter indicated that gendered humanity, while pointing symbolically to the Trinitarian God, can also be seen to sacramentally reflect, or bear messages about, God. Chapter 3 attempted a literary exploration of biblical texts as a means to ‘tasting’ parallels between gendered humanity and transcendent realities. While this chapter is largely devoted to argument in the context of alternative theories, the element of tasting the sacramental quality of difference between the sexes is perhaps best apprehended through a literary example. The chapter concludes therefore with an appraisal of the consort role, as presented in Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* and applied by C. S. Lewis to the consort role of the church.

**A. From creation to new covenant**

As ‘a patriarchally inculturated religion,’ writes Kari Elisabeth Børresen, ‘Christianity excludes femaleness at the divine level. It follows that women cannot be God-like *qua* females, with corresponding lack of fully human status, i.e. full religious capacity *qua* women.’3 Nevertheless, she says, patristic reinterpretation has gone some way to redress the defect of a ‘patriarchally inculturated religion’. She claims that patristic thinking about the new covenant brought a new approach to the old covenant, giving rise to an altered status for women.

Børresen presents an appraisal of patristic exegesis of the early chapters of Genesis:

---

Traditional Christian anthropology starts with two contrasting tenets: 1. Androcentric gender hierarchy or female subordination is established by God’s creative order. 2. Human equivalence in the sense of woman’s parity with men is realised though Christ in redemption. The ensuing asymmetry between women’s creational inferiority and their salvational equality is affronted by ‘feminist’ church Fathers, in order to include women in human God-likeness, already from creation, in spite of their God-alien femaleness.

Confronted with a discrepancy between (alleged) creational inequality and (alleged) ‘salvational equality’, Børresen claims that ‘the classic stratagem’, was to backdate ‘women’s redemptive Christ-likeness’ to the creational level. But, she continues, this (alleged) backdating did not affect women’s ‘God-given subservience qua females, a split which has been upheld in theological anthropology until this century’.

Børresen attributes a method to patristic writers, in which interpretation can be ‘backdated’ or reinterpreted. According to this appraisal, the status acquired through salvation was attributed, albeit partially and retrospectively, to creational status. While participating in redemptive Christ-likeness, women are still said to fall short of full religious capacity or full human status as women. Børresen produces an impressive array of patristic writers who allegedly employed this ‘classic stratagem’, among them Augustine who, she says, elaborated it. As noted in Chapter 2, Augustine included women in the imago Dei through an alleged masculinized capacity of mind common to both sexes. In this sense, Børresen’s contention that women as female did not realize their full religious status in Augustine’s interpretation is borne out.

But, as also noted in Chapter 2, Augustine’s interpretation did not arise because he thought that women were inferior by creation or ‘equal’ due to salvation. Rather he had an exegetical problem. As he read it, Genesis 1 said that both male and female were made in the image of God. But some New Testament passages appeared to cast doubt on this
creational status. Augustine therefore resorted to a contemporary philosophical theory in his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 in order to support his belief in the inclusiveness of Genesis 1:26-27 against other church fathers who said that women were not made in the image of God. His ‘feminist’ tendency was fuelled at this point not by the New Testament but by the Old.4

Børresen’s theory presents a creational model at odds with the ‘in Christ’ model, with an alleged patristic solution arising from a reinterpretation of the creation model to bring it in line with the model of redeemed humanity. The method of reinterpretation also appears in Bird’s exegesis of Genesis 1, as is explored in the next section. Despite the alleged patristic reinterpretation, Børresen posits a continuing attribution of ‘God-alien femaleness’ in church tradition. This chapter disputes the premise of an original God-like human unity that does not encompass sexual diversity. An alternative solution to exegetical questions about women’s status as imago Dei is offered in the next two sections.

B. The creational model

The creational model of humanity as male and female made in the image of God is best apprehended through reading the early chapters of Genesis as a literary whole. Børresen’s assertion of ‘God-alien femaleness’ arising out of ‘patriarchal’ bias is undermined by Jesus’ endorsement of the primal relationship depicted in Genesis 1 and 2

4 See Chapter 2, section C. At one point Børresen admits that ‘Augustine’s scriptural dilemma [about 1 Cor 11,7] results from his inclusive interpretation of theomorphic humanity, by connecting Gen. 1:26-27a and Gen 1:27b’. See ‘God’s Image, Man’s Image’, p. 199. She writes: ‘Augustine’s holistic effort is hampered by his Neoplatonic spiritualism’. It is not clear to me how she reconciles this with her earlier statement that ‘feminist church Fathers’ (including Augustine) affront the ‘asymmetry between women’s creational inferiority and their salvational equality’, in order to include women in human God-likeness already from creation, in spite of their God-alien femaleness’. 

149
A claim of ‘God-alien femaleness’ is out of keeping with the importance attached to the creation of the woman and the delight of the man in her arrival. Phyllis Bird admits narrative development towards dominance and subordination in the relationship between the sexes from Genesis 2 to Genesis 3. But she contrasts what she discerns as biological concerns of male and female in Genesis 1:27-28 with psycho-social gender roles played out by the man and the woman in Genesis 2–3. Such a sex / gender distinction is not without problems, as will be explored in Chapter 7. Bird’s distinction between creational narratives does not allow Genesis 2-3 to contribute to women’s status as imago Dei. Phyllis Trible also appears to make an unresolved distinction between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2-3.

Genesis 1:26-28 gives the significant information that humanity made in God’s image is both singular and plural: ‘in the image of God he created him’ [‘ōtô i.e.singular]; ‘male and female he created them’ [‘ōtām i.e. plural] (v. 27). Humanity is like God in the sense that God is also presented as both singular and plural.5 God says, ‘Let us make [na’āseh i.e. plural] ’ādām in our image [bešalmēnū i.e. plural] (v. 26); ‘so God created ’et-hā’ādām in his image [bešalmō i.e. singular] (v. 27). Humanity as singular is termed ’ādām or hā’ādām. Humanity as plural is termed ‘male and female’ [zākār wnēqēbā]. The blessing and the task of being fruitful and multiplying and having dominion are given to them [‘ōtām], i.e. humanity as plural. Genesis 2 describes how hā’ādām [singular] becomes man and woman or husband and wife [iš and ’īssā i.e. plural]. But Genesis 2

5 Cf. Sherlock, Doctrine of Humanity, pp. 34 ff., Karl Barth Church Dogmatics, III/1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958) p. 196 who notes that the LXX and the Vulgate translated Genesis 2:18, ‘I will make him a helpmeet’ as ‘we will make him a helpmeet’. He comments, ‘So strongly was the parallel to Gen 1:26 felt even at this early time that it was thought necessary to introduce here too that mysterious plural.’ (p.324).
concludes not with the plural but with the singular. ‘Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one [‘ehādh i.e. singular] flesh.’

Despite the similar play on singular and plural, the phrase ‘image of God’ does not occur in Genesis 2. But Genesis 3 gives an ironic twist to the idea of humanity being made in God’s likeness, ironic that is if humanity is already in the likeness of God.6 The serpent tells the woman [‘īśṣā] that if she eats the fruit she will become ‘like God’. This is a different kind of likeness, not a given likeness but an acquired likeness (since the woman must first eat the fruit), and yet the story of Genesis 3 reveals that this acquired likeness is not ‘nearness-of-approach’ but the reverse. God admits that ‘the man’ [hā’ādām] has become ‘like one of us’ in one respect (knowing good and evil). In consequence, God drives out ‘the man’ and guards the way to the tree of life, in order that ‘the man’ should not become like God, it can be inferred, in the other respect of living forever. There is a bar in the way of nearness-of-approach, an angel with a flaming sword.

In spite of this setback, the creational model is still intact, according to Genesis 9:6: ‘Whoever sheds the blood of a human [hā’ādām], by a human shall that person’s blood be shed; in his own image God made humankind.’ Genesis 5: 1-2 makes it clear that ‘ādām is to be understood as male and female [zākār wnēqēbā], and God is even said to name male and female ‘ādām. The early chapters of Genesis thus reveal a high degree of literary development of what it means for humanity to be like God, yet the picture has overarching consistency. The unauthorized attempt to acquire likeness to

---

God leads to a loss of access to God. Nevertheless, the creational status of being like God as gendered unity in diversity remains.

Bird, however, discerns the likeness of humanity to God in terms of humanity’s representative task as outlined in the second command of Genesis 1:28, ‘to have dominion over other creatures’.7 She claims that the first command, ‘to be fruitful and multiply’ underscores the unlikeness of humanity to God:

The parallel clauses of vs 27 ... form a bridging couplet between the primary ... statement concerning the divine likeness, introduced in the Wortbericht (26) and repeated as the lead sentence of the Tatbericht ... and the pronouncement of the blessing of fertility (vs 28) – a new theme found only in the Tatbericht ... The two parallel cola contain two essential and distinct statements about the nature of humanity: *adam* is created like (i.e. resembling) God, but as creature – and hence male and female. The parallelism of the two cola is progressive, not synonymous. The second statement adds to the first; it does not explicate it.8

Bird understands Genesis 1 to say that humanity is like God in carrying the representative function as a species. She argues that the mention of ‘male and female’ belongs to a different theme, distinct from consideration of the *imago Dei* and related to the biological function of procreation. This is not an understanding of the *imago Dei* as an original unity in diversity: ‘Though the Priestly writer speaks of the species, he thinks of the male, just as the author of Psalm 8’.9 Nevertheless, she maintains, the presentation of the *imago Dei* ‘permits an egalitarian reading’ even though this was

---

not envisaged by the ‘Priestly writer’.\textsuperscript{10} This reading of Genesis 1 contrasts with her ‘psycho-social’ or relational reading of Genesis 2 – 3.\textsuperscript{11}

Bird draws a distinction between ‘humanity by nature or constitution’ and ‘by position or function’ and argues against the possibility that the \textit{imago Dei} is connected with sexual differentiation on the ground that God is the defining term of the \textit{imago Dei}:

The idea that God (‘ělōhîm) might possess any form of sexuality, or any differentiation analogous to it, would have been for P an utterly foreign and repugnant notion. For this author/editor, above all others in the Pentateuch, guards the distance between God and humanity, avoiding anthropomorphic description and employing specialized terminology (e.g. bārā’) to distinguish divine activity from analogous human action.\textsuperscript{12}

In reply it can be observed that, by Bird’s representation, the Priestly author allows for human action to be in some sense analogous to God’s act of creation, unlike the surmised author’s alleged objection to human sexual differentiation being in any sense analogous to a differentiation in God. While it is true that God would not have been understood to be like humanity in terms of biological gender, the reciprocal notion (that male and female reflect something of what God is like) is not ruled out, even on the assumption of a strong intention on the part of the author of Genesis 1 to guard the distance between God and humanity. Again, sharing a function with the animals does not rule out the possibility that the reproductive function in humans operates as part of what it means to be the \textit{imago Dei}. While the representational task is of key importance, the command ‘to be fruitful and multiply’ is related to it since this is immediately followed in verse 28 by the purpose of filling the earth \textit{in order to

\textsuperscript{10} Bird, ‘Sexual Differentiation and Divine Image’, p. 24, n. 22.
\textsuperscript{11} Bird, ‘Sexual Differentiation and Divine Image’, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{12} Bird, ‘Sexual Differentiation and Divine Image in the Genesis Creation Texts’, p. 11.
have dominion over it. There is an added dimension of purpose to human procreation that is not given to other creatures. In further distinction from earlier acts of creation, this is also the first time that God communicates with a named third party. Significantly, God said to them, ‘be fruitful and multiply’.

Bird’s reading of Genesis 1 would imply that the purpose of sexual differentiation is primarily procreation, in contrast with her reading of Genesis 2: ‘although the help which the woman is meant to give is undoubtedly help in procreation, the account in Genesis 2 subordinates function to passion ... the sexual drive whose consummation is conceived as a reunion’. Bird links the distinction between biological and psycho-social gender roles with linguistic usage. The use, in Genesis 1, of ādām (which she translates ‘humankind’) is contrasted with the use, in Genesis 2, of hā’ādām (which she translates ‘the human’). Such a linguistic contrast between Genesis 1 and 2 cannot be sustained because the term hā’ādām appears in Genesis 1:27.

Bird makes a distinction between the ‘culturally captive language’ of Genesis 1 and what may be read into the text, allowing for reinterpretation in a way similar to that attributed by Børresen to patristic exegesis. The method of reinterpretation contrasts with her method of interpreting Genesis 2-3. Here her argument is based on ‘explicit narrative qualification’ within the text itself: ‘although the woman is taken from the man, he cleaves to her, acknowledging her power over him; and although he is destined to become her master, that domination is presented as the consequence of sin,

---

14 Bird, ‘Sexual Differentiation and Divine Image’, p. 15. Apparently Bird agrees with Augustine’s exegesis about the kind of help the woman is supposed to supply! (Cf. Børresen, ‘God’s Image, Man’s Image, p. 202. Børresen cites *De Genesi ad litteram*, 9.5.) It may be observed that Jesus’ endorsement of the primal relationship depicted in Genesis 1 and 2 (Matthew 19:3-5; Mark 10:5-9) does not refer to procreation.
not as design in creation’. By contrast, her interpretation of Genesis 1 is not based on a narrative qualification within the text.

Bird concludes that Genesis 1 ‘may serve as a foundation text for a feminist egalitarian anthropology’ on the basis of what is not said. She writes:

[T]he text itself permits an egalitarian reading, I would argue, despite the fact that it must be viewed as unintended and unforeseen by the ancient author. It not only permits such a reading, it encourages it, by the ‘emptiness’ of its key terms, the structure of its pronouncements, and its restraint from specifying social roles and responsibilities. An egalitarian reading, however, belongs to a new context of interpretation, in answer to a new question beyond the horizon of the ancient author - but no less valid for its novelty.

To make Genesis 1 a foundation text for feminist egalitarian anthropology, however, would seem not merely to answer a new question beyond the horizon of the ancient author but to override what Bird sees as authorial intention to exclude sexual differentiation from the imago Dei. A method of reinterpretation confines the imago Dei to the horizon of the interpreter, whether ancient or modernist. It does not acknowledge the mystical function of gendered humanity, pointing beyond a human horizon to the actuality of the Godhead.

Phyllis Trible focuses on equality of male and female as the clue pointing to the image of God, as noted in Chapter 3. In her discussion of Genesis 1, Trible admits her ‘hermeneutical clue’ of ‘feminism as a critique of culture’, stating that this clue is in accord with ‘the image of God male and female … as the Bible … wanders through

---

16 Bird, ‘Sexual Differentiation and Divine Image’, p. 19. She states that Genesis 1 ‘contributes to [renewed reflection on ... the meaning of God–likeness (image)] ... by its silences as well as its assertions’.
18 Trible, Rhetoric of Sexuality, p. 22.
history’. But her discussion of Genesis 2-3 does not allude to the *imago Dei*. She sees *hāʾādām*, the creature from *hāʾādāmā* (the earth), as sexually undifferentiated until the creation of ‘the woman’. Trible writes:

Elsewhere I have proposed an interpretation of *hāʾādām* as androgynous until the differentiation of female and male in Gen 2:21–24 ... I now consider that description incorrect because the word *androgyny* assumes sexuality, whereas the earth creature is sexually undifferentiated. To understand the earth creature as either humanity or proto-humanity is, I think, legitimate.

Trible makes a distinction between ‘derivation’ and ‘differentiation’:

[T]he woman is not derived from man, even as the earth creature is not derived from the earth ... Dust of the earth and rib of the earth creature are but raw materials for God’s creative activity ... Differentiation from the earth, on the other hand, and from the man, on the other, implies neither derivation from them nor subordination to them.

Trible’s interpretation presents an original humanity or proto-humanity as a unity that becomes differentiated. This is different from the idea put forward by Hill that interpersonal human relationships mirror the divine relationships in their *unity* of substance (or equality of nature) that is also *diversity* of priority. The prior period in which it is ‘not good’ for ‘*hāʾādām*’ to be alone (Genesis 2:18) allows for the diversity of priority. Hence his proposal emphasizes unity in diversity in a similar way to Genesis 1:26-27. Trible, on the other hand, proposes an original unity that becomes diversity and does not connect Genesis 2 with Genesis 1:26-27.

---

Nevertheless, Trible points out that the purpose of the relationship in Genesis 2 is a harmony of unity and that ‘the man’ does not name ‘the woman’ in the sense of exercising power over her until after the fall from grace. The oneness of ‘this at last is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh’ is prior to sexual union and procreation. At this point diversity becomes unity.

It is difficult to sustain Trible’s tracing of the development of unity to diversity, and back to unity, in terms of Hebrew usage. When, in Genesis 2:22, God brings īššâ (‘the woman’) to ‘the man’, he brings her not to īš as might be expected after (alleged) differentiation but to hā’ādām (supposedly sexually undifferentiated). And in the man’s poetic greeting in verse 23, it is hā’ādām who speaks and who makes the confusing announcement that īššâ was taken out of (the supposedly sexually differentiated) īš. It should be noted that īš and īššâ, while they can be translated ‘man’ and ‘woman’, can also mean ‘husband’ and ‘wife’. Usage of the term īš may simply refer to the fact that ‘the man’ is now ‘the husband’, rather than implying that he was not previously male.

In summary, it is argued here that the creation stories present the status of the imago Dei as applying to ‘man’ who is also male and female, a unity in diversity. The God-given task of stewardship arises out of this status, but failure in respect of the task does not result in the loss of the status. Genesis 1 emphasizes the joint task of humanity male and female, while Genesis 2 supplies detail about diversity. Alternative interpretations of the creation stories are supplied by Bird and Trible. Bird makes a distinction between a biological presentation of male and female and a

---

Cf. Trible, Rhetoric of Sexuality, p. 98: ‘the basic word, hā’ādām, for humanity before sexual differentiation, now becomes a sexual reference so that it is used frequently, though not exclusively, for the male’.
‘psycho-social’ presentation, with an egalitarian reading of the *imago Dei* possible only through a feminist reinterpretation. By contrast, Trible assumes an egalitarian reading of the *imago Dei* as her hermeneutical clue, and interprets Genesis 2 as presenting biological sexual differentiation without derivation. Her ‘hermeneutical clue’ from feminism is not said to supplant the original meaning of the text: she argues against God-given subservience for women qua females being present in the original text. For Bird women are not relevant to the *imago Dei* (except by reinterpretation). For Trible the original proto-humanity or ‘earth creature’ does not seem to be relevant to her basic metaphor of ‘an equality in the image of God male and female’.

Neither Bird’s perceived need for a feminist reinterpretation of Genesis 1 nor Trible’s rejection of the notion of derivation in Genesis 2 is compatible with Hill’s reading of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. The next section considers the text from 1 Corinthians in the light of other New Testament passages.

**C. Creation model updated**

The real challenge to the idea that women are made in the image of God comes not from the Old Testament but from the New. No New Testament author affirms that women are made in the image of God. 1 Corinthians 11:7 states, ‘For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and glory [δόξα] of God; but woman is the glory of man.’ Colossians teaches that Jesus ‘is the image of the invisible God’ (1:15) and later that the new nature in Christ ‘is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator’ (Colossians 3:10). The new nature (applying to both males and females) is in Christ, the visible risen *man* who is the image of the

---

invisible God. Why, one may ask, is there such an emphasis on the masculine, with no corresponding emphasis on the feminine in terms of the *imago Dei*?

There is undoubtedly a shift of interest in the New Testament from being created in the image of God, to being ‘conformed to the image of [God’s] Son’ (Romans 8:29). But although the focus is different, the creational theme of plurality in unity resurfaces in a new way: instead of two becoming one, many become one in Christ. This new oneness in Christ appears to override old differentiations: ‘there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free, but Christ is all and in all’ (Colossians 3:11). And yet old distinctions still seem to apply: ‘slaves obey your earthly masters’ (verse 22).

The letter to the Colossians, in many ways reminiscent of that to the Galatians, offers a very strong sense of eschatological reality: ‘So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above.’ (Colossians 3:1). At this level there are apparently no distinctions. It appears that although slaves must obey their earthly masters, the new eschatological reality gives this obedience a new dimension: ‘Whatever your task, put yourselves into it as done for the Lord’ (Colossians 3:23).\footnote{Cf. R. C. Lucas *Fullness and Freedom* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980) p.167: ‘[Paul] wishes [believing slaves] to understand that, in a very real sense, *they are now not serving men at all*’ (italics in the original).} In the light of this eschatological reality the categories are in a sense exploded. There are no slaves, but only servants of the Lord. There are no free men either. ‘Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven’ (Colossians 4:1). Masters are also servants or slaves. There is no sense in Colossians (or elsewhere in the New Testament) that serving has the effect of disqualifying anyone from being part of
this new community in Christ: rather, serving is of the essence of being part of this new community. Status is given to all, slave and master alike. All are ‘called in the one body’ (Colossians 3:15).

Unlike Galatians, ‘male and female’ does not appear in the list of exploded categories in Colossians, but the eschatological reality plays a part here also. Wives are told to ‘be subject’ to husbands within a context: ‘as is fitting in the Lord’ (Colossians 3:18). One could read this in the sense that submission per se is ‘fitting in the Lord’, or in the sense that submission is qualified by what is ‘fitting in the Lord’. Both senses probably apply. In any case there is something reciprocal about submission. Husbands are told to ‘love [their] wives and never treat them harshly’.26 As Charles Sherlock points out, no one is ever told to force anyone else into subjection in the New Testament.27 Husbands are not told to ensure that wives submit to them, nor are wives told to ensure that their husbands love them. But, despite the similarity to the ‘master and slave’ exploded category, if we did not possess the letter to the Galatians we would probably conclude that ‘male and female’ was not an exploded category in the same sense. But we do have Galatians. What are we to make of Galatians 3:28?

Both Galatians and Colossians make much of the oneness we have in Christ. ‘And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in the one body’ (Colossians 3:15). ‘There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus

27 Sherlock, Doctrine of Humanity, p. 203.
(Galatians 3:28). Both letters make use of the image of ‘putting on’ Christ (Galatians 3:27; Colossians 3:10). As we are clothed in Christ, we become one. And this being clothed in Christ apparently includes such things as slaves obeying their masters and wives obeying their husbands and the reciprocal commands to masters and husbands (although so-called ‘house tables’ do not appear in Galatians). But does the diversity continue to exist under the clothing of oneness?

It may again be useful to look at the other categories of Galatians 3:28 before making a decision about ‘male and female’. The distinction between Jew and Greek did not simply stem from racial antagonism due to human divisiveness but was established by the God-given Jewish law. Christ’s death and resurrection broke down the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile: in that sense ‘neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything’ (Galatians 6:15). The old categories of slave and free, subject to God’s ordering in the old covenant, are blown apart: all are servants of Christ who sets all free. In terms of male and female, there were physical reasons under the old covenant for women’s exclusion from the tabernacle as there were for men (as in Leviticus 15) but these are not repeated in the New Testament. In this sense there is no distinction between male and female but all are ‘heirs according to the promise’ (Galatians 3:29). Yet the matter does not end there, because the deeper symbolic distinctions of masculine and feminine come to the fore and once again the categories are blown apart. The new situation in this regard is spelled out in Ephesians 5 and in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16.

---

28 See Ridderbos, *Galatians*, p. 149: ‘This is not to maintain that the natural and social distinction is in no respect relevant any more … From the point of view of the redemption in Christ, however … there is no preference of Jew to Greek, master to slave, man to woman’.
A recurring image in Ephesians 5: 21 – 33 is that of ‘body’. ‘For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour’ (verse 23). ‘In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies’ (verse 28). ‘For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body.’ Genesis 2:24 is recalled in verse 31 with reference to the two becoming one flesh, and the notion of washing and cleansing the church, and making the church without ‘a spot or wrinkle’, has a fleshly ring to it. Symbolically, the wife is one flesh with the husband (and no one ever hates his own flesh). Symbolically, the church is one flesh with Christ. Marriage takes on a new symbolic role. ‘This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church’ (verse 32). In marriage the husband plays the typological Christ role. He is adjured to love his wife ‘as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her’ (verse 25).

In 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 the dominant theme is ‘head’ and ‘head covering’. The topic under consideration is appropriate dress for men and women who ‘prophesy’ (i.e. preach in contemporary terms) and ‘pray’ (i.e. lead worship). The New Revised Standard Version translates 1 Corinthians 11:3, ‘But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband (ἀνήρ) is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ.’ Otherwise ἀνήρ is translated as ‘man’ in the passage. (As with the Hebrew, the Greek words for ‘man’ and ‘woman’ can also mean ‘husband’ and ‘wife’.) But the topic is not marriage but ministry. Men and women have the same ministerial function (i.e. preaching and leading worship). Nevertheless a symbolic distinction is made in the leadership roles, a distinction which reflects the fact that, in

29 Cf. the footnote to the texts in the New Revised Standard Version.
creational terms, the man is ‘the head’ or source of the woman. The man is already ‘the head’ therefore he does not need a further covering. The woman is not ‘the head’ therefore she needs a covering on the head as her authority or badge of office (verse 10). This distinction between male and female church leadership is symbolic of the derivation of Christ from God and ‘the man’ (new humanity or church) from Christ.  
But to offset the line of derivation, we are reminded that ‘as woman came from man, so man comes through woman, but all things are from God’ (verse 12), with implications at the divine-human level as noted in Chapter 3.

1 Corinthians 11:7 states: ‘For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man’. The context is pivotal: ‘man’ is the image of God in the sense of symbolically representing ‘God’, the head of Christ (verse 3). In the Godhead, God (the Father) is the head or source. In humanity, ‘the man’ is the head or source. ‘The man’ as head can thus be taken here to be a type of God the Father in a sense that is not true of ‘the woman’. But it is already clear from verse 3 that ‘the woman’ is like God in another sense: ‘the woman’ plays the same role in humanity that Christ plays in the Godhead. (What it might mean for woman to be the glory of man is explored in section D below.)

There remains the question of why, if ‘male and female’ is an exploded category in Christ, the church must carefully reflect symbolic gender distinctions in marriage and

---

30 1 Corinthians 11:3 states that Christ is the head of every man (παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ) which could be meant inclusively as every human being, cf. Acts 17:34 in which τινὲς δὲ ἄνδρες is said to include a woman named Damaris. In one sense it could refer to ‘the head of everyone’ (in the church since the context is a letter to a church cf. Ephesians 5:23). It is possible that the passage envisages the creative role of the pre-incarnate Word-Wisdom, or that this is in view alongside the meaning of Christ as the source of the new humanity, as in the church.

31 Compare Hill’s suggestion outlined in Chapter 2, section C.
leadership. The answer, it is argued here, is that in Galatians 3:28, as with the similar passage in Colossians, Paul is talking about ‘nearness-of-approach’.\(^{32}\) In terms of our access to God in Christ there is no distinction between male and female, Jew, Greek, slave, free etc. But when we come to symbolic distinctions, the issue is not ‘nearness-of-approach’ but ‘nearness-by-likeness’. Here the distinction remains and even gains new currency in the sense that ‘husband and wife’ reflect ‘Christ and the church’. As the \textit{imago Dei} was not lost in spite of humanity’s exile from Eden, the \textit{imago Dei} is not materially changed but given deeper significance by the restoration of ‘nearness-of-approach’ in Christ.

‘Nearness-by-likeness’ has to do with what is given, not acquired. Diversity is a given, unity is something to be acquired. In the creational model, the two become one, i.e. acquire unity. It may be noted that the lengthy section on order in the church, from 1 Corinthians 11 –14, commences with the exhortation, ‘be imitators of me [Paul] as I am of Christ’. Imitation in terms of Christ-like behaviour means acquiring a unified approach, whether in common access to the ‘love feast’ (1 Corinthians 11:17 –33) or in the way of love itself (1 Corinthians 13). But the gifts given to the church, while manifesting the one Spirit, allow for diversity (1 Corinthians 12, 14). Gender which is also a given, allows for imitation of a different kind, reflecting our diversity in Christ.

Lone Fatum’s interesting, but I think mistaken, suggestions about women in the Pauline congregations highlight current confusion about the \textit{imago Dei}. Parting company with fellow feminists, Fatum critiques the attempt to ‘harmonize’ Galatians 3:28 and 1 Corinthians 11: 2-16 as a demonstration of theory versus practice:

\(^{32}\) See Chapter 2, Section C on Lewis’ distinction between nearness-by-likeness and nearness-of-approach.
Apart from being the justification for a theological neutralization of 1 Cor 11,3-9 by means of Gal 3,28 this reduction leads to an overall distorted and diffused approach to 1 Cor 11,2-16 ... 1 Cor 11,2-16 consists of both theory and practice and vv. 3-9 are, theologically assessed, as much fundamental theory as Gal 3,28. Only theological prejudice can decide that one theory should be accorded greater normative importance than the other or that one fundamental saying on the relationship between man and woman ... should take precedence of another and be accepted at face value as the eschatological idea par excellence.33

Fatum argues that ‘Paul is not divided against himself’34 but was offering two alternatives for women, either annulment of sexuality in the eschatological reality of Christ (as exemplified by Galatians 3:28) or marriage and domination by males according to what she terms ‘creation theology and pre-christology’ (as exemplified by 1 Corinthians 11:2-16):35

Seeing married women in dependence of their husbands in [1 Corinthians] 11,2-16 and not of Christ, Paul is merely maintaining his view from [1 Corinthians] 7,32-35 in coherence with his point in 7,1-7, establishing marriage as a concession, secondary in charismatic value compared to the ideal asceticism.36

Fatum sees ‘male and female’ in Galatians 3:28 as referring back to Genesis 1:27b.37 Somewhat similarly to Bird, Fatum sees the ‘man’ of Genesis 1:27a as a non-inclusive term, an understanding that affects her interpretation of the redeemed model:

The sexual characterization in male and female adding female as a secondary component to the man of creation is thus ... not only an addition to the idea of man created in God’s image, it is also a breach with the idea of man as a human entity and,

---

36 Fatum, ‘Image of God and Glory of Man’, p. 108, n. 76. Given Paul’s advice about marriage and celibacy in 1 Corinthians 7, is it probable that the women at issue in 1 Corinthians 11 were all married?
37 I am not convinced that the break in the grammatical pattern in the Greek (καὶ instead of οὐδὲ for ‘male and female’) is significant (cf. the use of καὶ in Colossians 3:11), but if it is, it does not affect the argument made here.
as such, at one with God’s creation. Thus, when Gal 3,28c speaks of the annulment of sexual differentiation, it must be taken to mean both that the addition has been annulled, and the breach healed; through Christ man has again become what he originally was, a unity and an entity in God’s image.  

For a woman to become a ‘son of God’, according to Fatum, she must give up her sexuality and reproductive functions and become male, hence joining in with the original idea of the image of God. But this freedom in Christ ‘does not allow Christian women any opportunity of being affirmed as women, but fixes them in a state of asexuality dependent on the androcentric concept of human normality’.  

Several problems arise from this view. First, asceticism as a qualification for being a son of God only applies to women in Fatum’s theory. Christian husbands still qualify as being in the image of God. This is not easily reconciled with her theology of creation. Additionally, it is not clear how her view of married Christian women accords with Paul’s statement that all who are baptised are ‘one in Christ’ and ‘heirs according to promise’, unless Christian wives were not baptised. Secondly, there is a dichotomy between creation theology and Christology, as if there were such a thing as pre-Christology, and Christology were not to be seen in the light of Colossians 1:15-17 for example. The reference to Christ in 1 Corinthians 11 (verse 3 and verse 11) is judged to carry ‘no christological impact’ and is ‘no basis on which to establish an eschatological coherence’ with Galatians 3:28. Fatum finds 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 to be out of keeping with 1 Corinthians in general, ‘attesting to the presupposition that matters of gender and sexuality are in themselves a contradiction of Christ, belonging

38 Fatum, ‘Image of God and Glory of Man’, p. 62. The ideal of man as a unity is at odds with ‘the man’ of Genesis 2 for whom ‘it was not good to be alone’.
40 Fatum, ‘Image of God and Glory of Man’, p. 122, n. 96. Disallowing the Christological import of ‘Christ’ in verse 3 is somewhat at odds with Fatum’s insistence that vv. 3-9 are as theologically fundamental in theory as Galatians 3:28.
to this world of pre-christological order’. But if this is so, it seems odd that the passage should be introduced by verse 1 (which she omits from consideration) ‘be imitators of me as I am of Christ’ and that 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 should be the lead passage for consideration of order in the church. The symbolic import of gender as a reflection of Christ and the church is absent from her thinking.

Fatum concludes that both female asceticism and female sexuality are ‘subjected to androcentric control and administration ... theologically institutionalised as the suppression of women’. She disagrees with the feminist theory that ascetic women experienced a ‘golden age’ of freedom in Pauline congregations (detected in Galatians 3:28) that was later lost (as evidenced, for example, in 1 Timothy 2) on the grounds that this was from the first ‘a freedom on androcentrically dualistic terms’. Nevertheless, she appears to hold a feminist understanding in which ideal freedom is seen as freedom from androcentric control rather than as freedom for life in Christ.

In supposing that Paul held up asceticism as an ideal for women, Lone Fatum appears misled by her understanding of 1 Corinthians 7. While it is true that Paul expressed a personal preference for celibacy, his reasons were positive (to focus ‘on things of the Lord’, verses 32 – 34) and specific to the current situation (‘the present distress’, verse

---

41 Fatum, ‘Image of God and Glory of Man’, p. 119, n. 91. Fatum seems to suggest that Paul was at liberty either to restate ‘pre-christological’ norms or to reinterpret those norms ‘christologically’: in this latter sense the method that she attributes to Paul is similar to the methodology Børresen attributes to the church fathers.

42 Cf. Calvin’s commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. He writes regarding verse 1: ‘This shows how badly the chapters have been divided, because this sentence has been separated from the preceding sentences, to which it belongs by right, and joined to those which follow, to which it is quite irrelevant’: Calvin’s Commentaries: The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, trans. John F. Fraser (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960) p. 226.

There is no sense here or elsewhere in the New Testament that the purpose of asceticism is to restore the original unity on male terms, of created humanity.\textsuperscript{44}

In considering traditional interpretations of key texts, concepts about gender, marriage and celibacy have to be carefully distinguished. As noted in section A above, Børresen appears to underestimate the influence of Genesis 1:26-27 on patristic thinking about women. Jane Dempsey Douglass’s remarks about Calvin are relevant here:

> Calvin specifically asks whether there is a contradiction between Paul’s argument in 1 Cor. 11:7 and Gal 3:28. He decides that the difference is the context. The Galatians text with its insistence that there is no male nor female has to do with the spiritual kingdom of God ... But he says about 1 Cor 11:7 “... both sexes were created according to the image of God, and Paul urges women, as much as men, to be re-formed according to the image. But when he [Paul] is speaking about image here, he is referring to the conjugal order. Accordingly it has to do with this present life”.\textsuperscript{45}

Contrary to Fatum, Calvin states that both sexes were created in God’s image. The difficulty comes with the New Testament passages.

Regarding 1 Corinthians 11:3, Calvin writes: ‘Here, the man is placed in an intermediate position between Christ and the woman, so that Christ is not the Head of the woman’. But in terms of Galatians 3:28, he adds:

\textsuperscript{44} If women are included in the category of ‘sons of God’, men are included in the category of the body or bride of Christ. These inclusive categories are not good evidence of the annulment of either sex.

\textsuperscript{45} Jane Dempsey Douglass, ‘The Image of God in Women as seen by Luther and Calvin’ in Kari Elisabeth Børresen (ed.), \textit{The Image of God: Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition} (Minneapolis: Fortress press, 1995) p. 265. Douglass quotes from Com 1 Cor., \textit{Calvini opera quae supersant omnia}, ed. G. Baum, E. Cunitz, E. Reuss, in \textit{Corpus reformatorum}, 49,474, cf. Serm. Gal., 50, 567-8. Unlike Hill, Calvin does not interpret verse 3 as indicating that human interpersonal relationships to some extent mirror the divine interpersonal relationships, because Calvin interprets ‘Christ’ as referring to Christ in his humanity and consequently as inferior to God. (See \textit{Calvin’s Commentaries: The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians}, p. 229.) But if woman is to man as Christ in his humanity is to God, the gap between man and woman, albeit in this present life, is wider than in Hill’s interpretation; compare also Barth’s interpretation below.
When Paul says that there is no difference between man and woman, he is speaking about the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, where the outward characteristics … count for nothing, and are not taken into consideration, for it has nothing to do with the body, nothing to do with men’s physical relationships with each other … but is concerned wholly with the spirit.\(^\text{46}\)

In Calvin’s resolution, either physical difference is not the issue (as in Galatians 3:28) or the reference to the man as the image of God (as in 1 Corinthians 11:7) is in connection with the conjugal order, which is temporary.\(^\text{47}\) Calvin’s understanding has the effect of making the sexually differentiated image of God relevant only ‘to this present life’. In this sense the imago Dei is channelled through males.\(^\text{48}\) In broad terms, there is a dichotomy between spiritual equality and the inequality of the gendered imago Dei. Fatum would appear to detect a similar dichotomy in the biblical texts but would go further than Calvin in what she discerns as alternatives for women and the androcentric nature of both.

In summary, this section argues that Galatians 3:28 emphasizes the unity acquired in Christ, while 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 spells out how given creational unity in diversity

\(^{46}\) *Calvin’s Commentaries: The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, p. 229.

\(^{47}\) Even though male and female will still exist in the resurrection, cf. Luke 20:27-36. Calvin’s exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 does not specify any ongoing significance for sexual diversity. Cf. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, p. 181, who writes: ‘One of the ways in which the Christian women at Corinth had felt it would be appropriate to dramatize the new dignity given to them in Christ was the gesture of throwing off, in the course of the worship service, the … head covering which was … standard … for a woman appearing in public … Thus the retention of the veil when a woman would rise to … “pray or prophesy” … became a symbol of that double movement: first of the enfranchising impact of the gospel upon women … and second of her acceptance of the order of society within which her role is to be lived out.’ As for Calvin, subordination, in Yoder’s view, has to do with this present life.

\(^{48}\) Calvin deals with the objection that the imago Dei of the conjugal order only applies to Christian husbands: ‘Someone asks if Paul is speaking of married women only. It is true that some restrict what Paul teaches here to married women, because subjection to the authority of a husband does not apply in the case of virgins. But these people are only showing their ignorance; for Paul looks higher, via. to the eternal law of God, which has made the female sex subject to the authority of men … If that were not so, the principle which Paul has derived from nature would be beside the point, viz, his saying that it is just as improper for a woman to have her head uncovered as to have it shaved, because this applies to virgins as well.’ See *Calvin’s Commentaries: The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, pp. 232-233.
mirrors divine-human and divine unity in diversity, with particular emphasis on the symbolic significance of diversity as it is presented in male and female church leadership. At the same time the reversal of priority in verses 11-12 can be understood to point to a similar reversal at the divine-human level. By contrast, Fatum’s interpretation of the two passages proposes two Pauline options for women: either ‘pre-Christological’ subservience in marriage or a return to an alleged human unity in male terms through an ascetic life-style. In either case the emphasis would appear to veer towards unity on male terms rather than unity in diversity. Calvin’s interpretation of the imago Dei makes a distinction between ‘this present life’ and ‘the spiritual kingdom of Christ’. His emphasis on spiritual equality beyond ‘this present life’ does not address the ongoing significance of humanity in embodied diversity.

The diagrams below attempt to illustrate and expand Edmund Hill’s suggestion with regard to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3 cf. verse 8 (see Chapter 2, Section C) with the addition of a further implication, outlined in Chapter 3, about the reassignment of sexual roles in terms of origin and priority at the divine-human level.
**Diagram 1** – see 1 Corinthians 11:3 cf. verse 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DERIVATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divine level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOD / THE FATHER</td>
<td>←------------------------→ CHRIST/WORD-WISDOM/SON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divine – human level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHRIST</td>
<td>←------→ ‘every man’ (i.e. new humanity / CHURCH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAN (Adam)</td>
<td>←------------------------→ WOMAN (Eve)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Diagram 2** – see 1 Corinthians 11:11-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>DERIVATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divine-human level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOMAN (Mary)</td>
<td>←------------------------→ CHRIST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOMAN</td>
<td>←------------------------→ MAN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. Unity in Diversity

In terms of what the *imago Dei* might mean for women, Ruether critiques Barth for making the male-female relationship analogous to the God-creature relationship.\(^49\) She writes:

This suggests that women by themselves do not image God. For Barth, of course, this is a false way of putting the matter, since neither man nor woman can exist by themselves, but only as the inseparable human dyad. But, within this dyad, the man images God in relation to the creature, and the woman images the creature in relation to the Creator. Barth has here re-established the patriarchal concept of corporate personality in which the male possesses the image of God for himself and the woman. She, in turn, images the creaturely in relation to God for the whole human dyad. Together the human pair images the God-man and the man-God relationship.\(^50\)

Ruether prefers ‘an expanded unitary view of human nature, possessed fully and equally by both men and women’: ‘most feminism today favours some version of an expanded unitary view of human nature, rejecting both a male-identified unitary anthropology and a dichotomous complementarity.’\(^51\)

But if Barth’s understanding does not do justice to biblical nuances, an expanded unitary anthropology, if it were seen to be in the image of God, would not cast any light on the *imago Dei* question for women qua women either. In fact neither men nor women by themselves would image God. Ruether is not concerned about this because she regards the whole question of the *imago Dei* as a non-question. As noted in Chapter 2, Ruether claims: ‘it is not “man” who is made in God’s image, but God who has been made in

---

\(^49\) Ruether, ‘*Imago Dei, Christian Tradition and Feminist Hermeneutics*, p. 280 ff.

\(^50\) Ruether, ‘*Imago Dei, Christian Tradition and Feminist Hermeneutics*, p. 283. Barth’s interpretation is considered in Chapter 5.

\(^51\) Ruether, ‘*Imago Dei, Christian Tradition and Feminist Hermeneutics*, p. 286.
man’s image ... A feminist reconstruction ... constructs images of God, that will better manifest and promote the full realization of human potential for women and men.\textsuperscript{52}

Unitary anthropology is not a new idea. Ruether herself draws attention to Plato’s notion of souls transmigrating from one body to another, if judged unworthy to return, as souls, to their ‘native star’. Such souls would be without a specific sex, allowing for a male to be reincarnated as female, if unable to subdue his passions in a previous life.\textsuperscript{53} For Plato, says Ruether, embodiment is secondary: women are associated with the lower principle of bodily life. But unitary anthropology, whether expanded or not, carries the difficulty of separating body and soul, however strongly feminists inveigh against such ‘dualism’. It might be supposed that the construct to promote the full realization of human potential for women and men would be asexual in keeping with unitary anthropology. Johnson’s SHE WHO IS, however, demonstrates the contrary. Ruether claims to speak for most feminism today, but Johnson asserts that feminists do not speak with one voice.\textsuperscript{54} Johnson protests (with some truth, I believe) against stereotyping ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ traits, going on to state, ‘This is not to say that there are no differences between women and men.’\textsuperscript{55} But if there are differences between women and men, beyond the strictly biological, what are they?

This thesis contends that the \textit{sacramental} signification of difference is paramount. Rather than a unitary anthropology, it is argued that both Genesis 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 11:1-
16 present the anthropological model of unity in diversity, with the latter text offering more
detail about, as well as a new depth to, the manner in which humanity as male and female is
in the image of the Godhead. Contrary to Calvin’s interpretation outlined above, 1
Corinthians 11:1-16 is not primarily about the conjugal order, but about church leadership.
Male and female church leaders are argued to reflect the significance of creational unity in
diversity taken to a new level. Given that women leaders are asked to play the (symbolic)
feminine role within the church\textsuperscript{56} (as wives play the symbolic feminine role in marriage)\textsuperscript{57} it
is necessary to ask what this means and in what sense woman is the glory of man.

It can be said quite definitely what being the glory of man is not. The Enlightenment era
asserted the ‘primacy of subjectivity and freedom’, with freedom understood as freedom
from the domination of ready-made norms and external givens. In this kind of thinking

\textsuperscript{56} I have written elsewhere about practical implications of the symbolic ‘consort role’ of women
as church leaders. Such implications are not in conflict with female leadership in the church
though they may work themselves out differently in different Christian traditions. See
Flags: Reflections on the Basis of Union} (Bendigo: Middle Earth Press, 2002).

\textsuperscript{57} For a traditional depiction of marriage as a unity in diversity, the interaction of mutual
submission and male leadership is described by Theodor Fliedner (who together with his wife
Friederike founded the modern deaconess movement in Kaiserswerth, Germany in the 1830s).
He expresses, in his punctilious but revealing proposal of marriage to his future wife, how
these two principles might work themselves out in practice:

I am accustomed to firmly maintain the man’s right to be head of the household. This sounds forbidding
so I must explain more precisely. I also regard it as the Christian duty of both partners to each anticipate
the other in subservience, gentleness, kindness and readiness to serve and for each to do the will of the
other in preference to his own. Nevertheless, in the closeness of life together there may be cases, and such
occur in those contentious earthly things, in which each partner believes to have right on his side ... and
yet only one of the two differing wills can be fulfilled ... in such cases I lay stress on the man’s right,
naturally only as long as I am not convinced by something better.

See Anna Sticker, \textit{Friederike Fliedner und die Anfänge der Frauendiakonie} (Frankfurt am Main:
Neukirchener Verlag, 1963) p.15. My translation from the German. Stephen Seamands addresses
similar questions in \textit{Ministry in the Image of God: The Trinitarian Shape of Christian Service}
(Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervasity Press, 2005): ‘In the deep body and soul intimacy of
marriage, we experience, as nowhere else, the mutual indwelling of human persons in each other
... God created them for each other so that they would fit together as a unity in diversity …’(p.
155); ‘Although roles may vary and power is not always distributed equally ... the husband may
have more power than the wife, or vice versa, depending on the particular decision being made,
still there is a desire that … power is shared’ (p.49).
‘objectivity is an accomplishment of transcendental subjectivity’.

In the Enlightenment era the perception of women seems to have become an accomplishment of transcendental subjectivity from the male point of view. Rousseau, supposedly a free thinker, could write that education of females should be geared towards the purpose of nurturing and succouring the male. This attitude drew the fire of feminist writer, Mary Wollstonecraft, who wrote fifteen pages to refute it. Feminist thinking has continued to refute such an attitude. Because of this history, ‘the glory of man’ is likely to be perceived as an accomplishment of (male) transcendental subjectivity. In other words the glory would be understood as deriving from the man and relative to the man in the sense of being his projection, an extension of himself.

This is not the picture presented in 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. In creational terms ‘the woman’ is derived from ‘the man’ but this is not ‘the man’s’ doing, but rather God’s. As Paul reminds readers, ‘all things are from God’ (1 Corinthians 11:12). Something of what Paul might mean by the phrase ‘the glory of man’ is evident in what he calls ‘a little foolishness’. ‘I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband’ (2 Corinthians 11:2). In this ‘foolishness’ Paul is claiming to present the bride to the husband. The ‘glory’ or ‘purity’ of the bride is something separate that is

---

presented to Christ. The language of the picture in Ephesians is also the language of presenting to, although admittedly Christ presents the church to himself:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water with the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5: 25-27).

That Christ must first sanctify and cleanse the church before presenting her to himself indicates that the church is separate from Christ, not a mere extension of himself. Even in the case of Christ, though portrayed as his body, the church is separate from him, and the splendour or glory of the church is presented to him. Perhaps the distinction between a subjective projection and a true derivation or birth-giving may be made clearer if birth is considered in the ordinary biological sense. Though man is now born from woman, this does not mean that man is an extension of woman. The grammar of 1 Corinthians 11:7 could allow the ‘of’ in the phrase ‘the glory of man’ to be understood as ‘intrinsic to’ the man, since it is a simple genitive: γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρὸς ἐστιν. But this would mean that the ‘of’ in the phrase ‘the man subsisting as the image and glory of God: εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων’ would also imply that man was merely an extension of God.62

Some sense of Jewish thinking behind the phrase ‘the glory of man’ may be gained from a comparison between the description of the bride in Psalm 45 and the description of the Bride in Revelations 21, 22. The future queen in the psalm comes with her own retinue and adornment:

62 The New Revised Standard Version, however, translates δόξα, as it occurs in the passage from 1 Corinthians 11, as ‘reflection’ (and puts ‘glory’ as an alternative). The idea of ‘reflection’ is more compatible with ‘intrinsic to’. But the same objection applies to this translation.
The princess is decked in her chamber with gold-woven robes; in many-coloured robes she is led to the king, behind her the virgins, her companions, follow. With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king.\textsuperscript{63}

Revelation 21:2 also depicts the Bride as adorned \textbf{for not by} her husband: ‘And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.’ In both the wedding psalm and in Revelation chapters 21 and 22 the bride shares her husband’s authority: ‘at [the king’s] right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir’ (Psalm 45:9b); ‘and they (collectively the Bride) shall reign for ever and ever’ (Revelation 22:5c). As a unity, the bride and bridegroom share a joint reign; in their diversity, however, the bride bows to the bridegroom. ‘Since he is your lord, bow to him’ (Psalm 45:11b); ‘his servants (collectively the Bride) shall worship him (the Lamb)’ (Revelation 22:3b). Yet even this hierarchy in diversity is qualified, in the New Testament, by the understanding that ‘whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave’ (Matthew 20:27).

Diversity in terms of source and derivation is not a one way process, as has been noted in chapter 3 sections C and D. This is evident in the presentation of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. At the divine level God [the Father] is the head (or source) of Christ. This is mirrored at the human level in two ways. ‘The man’ (in a creational sense) is the head (or source) of ‘the woman’. But Christ as the God-man is also the head (or source) of ‘the man’ (the new humanity of the church). In relational terms, ‘the man’ and ‘the woman’ mirror ‘Christ’ and ‘the new humanity or church’, which in turn mirror the divine pair, God the Father and Christ. Verses 11 and 12, however, reverse the lines of source and derivation: as God [the Father] is the head (or source)\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{63} Psalm 45:13b-15 cf. Hebrews 1:8-9 in which the bridegroom of Psalm 45:6-7 is said to be Christ.
of Christ, woman is the head (or source) of man. By inference this reversal occurs not only on the human but also on the divine-human level. Understood in terms of relationship, ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ explode the categories of male and female. The category of ‘head’ or source applies in different ways to both: being a woman is more than being feminine while being a man is not always being masculine. The significance of this in church practice will be considered further in Chapter 7.

**Conclusion**

The assumption that the biblical writings reflect the male bias of their human authorship can lead, it seems, not only to the perception that human likeness to God was originally seen as male but also to the claim that the ‘in Christ’ model of Galatians 3:28 restores the alleged maleness of the *imago Dei*. Sexual differentiation appears problematic for the *imago Dei* in this context. But the ‘patriarchal’ authors of the biblical writings are not alone in allegedly considering that a unitary perception of human nature is desirable. Ruether goes so far as to say that most feminism today favours a unitary view, albeit expanded to include women.

Against the male-only view of the image of God, Børresen contends that patristic writers reinterpreted Genesis 1: 26-27 in order to include women in the *imago Dei*. But, she adds, this reinterpretation did not affect women qua women. Women were included, according to Børresen, but not ‘their God-alien femaleness’. She suggests that God-alien femaleness and God-given subservience qua females are linked and that it is due to their perceived non-likeness to God that women are, traditionally, made to be subservient. Calvin’s interpretation of the *imago Dei* is more complex than this: either
embodiment is not the issue (as in his interpretation of Galatians 3:28) or women are subservient to men (but still in God's image via men) in the conjugal order. Calvin’s interpretation of Galatians 3:28 would emphasize spiritual equality rather than spiritual unity in Christ.

None of these ways of thinking accord with the imago Dei as presented in this thesis. Traditional thinking may not do justice to women’s inclusion in the imago Dei, but some more recent proposals considered in this thesis do not appear to assist in this regard either. The suggestion that femaleness is ‘God-alien’ has led to a loss of a sense of identity for women. The response, in some quarters, is a search for what Sallie McFague calls a ‘sense of self’ in relation to the cosmos. This response is considered in the Chapters 5 and 6.

The proposal, argued in this thesis, that the imago Dei is characterised by unity in diversity runs counter to thinking since the Enlightenment. By either exaggerating difference between the sexes (as in parallel to the Creator-creature dualism attributed above to Barth) or ignoring difference while concentrating on equality, such thinking has tended to lose a sense of perichoresis or dance. This chapter concludes with a postscript on the relationship of delight as dance. This is based on a remark by C. S. Lewis with reference to Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice:

Postscript: women, men and the dance

Lewis, in likening the church to a ballroom, questions whether gender distinctions (in marriage and church leadership) should be ignored. ‘That would, of course, be
eminently sensible, civilized and enlightened, but ... “not near so much like a ball” (or, in Lewis’ analogy, the church in relation to Christ).  

Lewis takes his analogy from Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. Austen wrote at the dawn of feminism, with a keen satirical eye for what was going on in the society of her day. It is Caroline Bingley who declares that ‘it would surely be much more rational if conversation instead of dancing made the order of the day,’ to which her brother replies, ‘Much more rational ... but it would not be near so much like a ball.’

Caroline Bingley is in one sense a product of the Enlightenment, given her preference for what is rational. If conversation takes the place of dancing, everyone will be equally rational and there will be no need for distinctions of male and female. But Caroline Bingley also supplies a startling list of qualifications for the ‘really accomplished’ woman.

A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half deserved.

These qualifications may sound quaint today but they have their counterpart in modern expectations and idealizations. The simultaneous demand for androgynous activity and the idealization of woman as ‘an accomplishment of transcendent subjectivity’ resonate with modern feminist ideas.

But, it might be objected, it is Mr Darcy who inspires the demand for conversation rather than dancing at balls, and who promotes the discussion about what constitutes ‘the accomplished woman’. Unlike Rousseau, Darcy appears to want women to be

---

64 Lewis, ‘Priestesses in the Church?’, p. 93.
66 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, chapter VIII, p. 28. Caroline Bingley’s ‘accomplished’ woman excels at dancing, even though dancing is not required in a rational world. Austen, a meticulous writer, would not have included such contradictory detail without intent.
educated in a way that would have been recognised by Mary Wollstonecraft, and contributes a further requirement to Caroline Bingley’s list of achievements: ‘and to all this [the really accomplished woman] must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading.’

Elizabeth Johnson writes:

As Rosemary Ruether astutely formulates the question: is it not the case that the very concept of the ‘feminine’ is a patriarchal invention, an ideal projected onto women by men and vigorously defended because it functions so well to keep men in positions of power and women in positions of service to them?  

But Darcy, in spite of being accused of pride, does not show much interest in keeping women in service to him. Elizabeth Bennett later observes: ‘you were sick of civility, of deference, of officious attention. You were disgusted with the women who were always speaking and looking and thinking for your approbation alone. I roused and interested you, because I was so unlike them.’ Darcy appears to have a high view of women and even suggests that his view is higher than Elizabeth’s. When Elizabeth is sceptical about the existence of a ‘really accomplished’ woman, Darcy remarks: ‘Are you so severe on your own sex as to doubt the possibility of all this?’ On this evidence, we might conclude that Austen meant to portray Darcy as a ‘feminist’.

---

But the Darcy who prefers conversation to dancing persists in asking Elizabeth to dance. The Darcy who seems to have such high expectations of women is later satisfied with a woman who makes no attempt to fulfil such credentials. The ‘feminist’ Darcy changes by the end of the book and most people prefer the change. He does not end up with a lower opinion of women, but rather a more realistic and human appreciation of Elizabeth. It would be ironic if present-day feminists allied their perceptions of women, as Caroline Bingley does, with the unreformed Darcy.

Elizabeth Bennett is a very different character from Caroline Bingley. She does not pretend to be anything she is not. She plays the piano but not particularly well; unlike her sister Mary, Elizabeth plays for enjoyment, not in order to show off her ‘accomplishment’. On the other hand she is not easily intimidated, by Lady Catherine or anyone else. Elizabeth is not a servile figure either to idealized expectation or to force majeure. It is not servility that allows her to play the consort role. Her father, who shares the general prejudice against Darcy, advises her against marrying him:

I know your disposition, Lizzy. I know that you could be neither happy nor respectable, unless you truly esteemed your husband; unless you looked up to him as a superior. Your lively talents would place you in the greatest danger in an unequal marriage. You could scarcely escape discredit and misery.

Elizabeth does not dispute her father’s idea about marriage but only his opinion of Darcy. She is a woman for whom not looking up to her husband as a superior would be an unequal marriage. This is a new slant on equality.

---

71 Cf. Johnson, SHE WHO IS, p. 64. Johnson draws attention to fear and timidity as ‘women’s primordial temptation’. Cf. also 1 Peter 3: 6b.

72 Austen, Pride and Prejudice, chapter LIX, p. 280.