

**Ordination of Women in Seventh-day Adventist Theology:  
A Biblical and Theological Analysis and Synthesis of the Debate with  
Special Attention to Hermeneutical Matters**

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## ABSTRACT

The present thesis is the first of its kind in attempting to produce a comprehensive systematic analysis and synthesis of the biblical, theological and hermeneutical aspects of the ongoing debate about the role of women in Adventist theology. While studies have investigated already the sociological aspects of the debate no study has yet systematised and investigated in depth the debate with special attention to hermeneutical matters.

The thesis is divided into four chapters. After an Introduction which defines the basic elements of the study and provides a literature review, Chapter One provides a historical introduction into the topic of women's ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Particularly historical and ecclesial developments are reviewed from the perspective of the early Adventist situation and the modern context. Chapter Two and Chapter Three are two parallel chapters which analyse and synthesise opponents (Chapter Two) respectively proponents' (Chapter Three) biblical, theological and hermeneutical positions. The analysis in both chapters also specifically investigates the hermeneutical rationales of each side by examining their theories of biblical inspiration, interpretative method and functional aspects of their hermeneutics. The last chapter of the dissertation takes the hermeneutical conclusions from the previous two chapters and assesses them on a meta-hermeneutical level from the perspective of modern hermeneutical developments. The thesis ends with a summary and conclusion which summarises all the main findings of the study. Overall, the thesis not only systematises the ongoing ordination of women dispute but in addition provides an insight into the operation of the Adventist hermeneutical mindset by examining and assessing the theoretical bases on which Adventist hermeneutical thinking operates. This research therefore will be primarily valuable in the field of Adventist studies but non-Adventist scholarship intending to know more about Adventist theology and hermeneutics may also find the thesis helpful.

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*Ei autem qui coepit opus bonum at potens est confirmare solo sapienti Deo per Iesum Christum cui honor in saecula saeculorum.*

## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol. The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED: Jan Barna

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Barna', written in a cursive style.

DATE: 8 September 2009

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## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

The current debate about the ordination of women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has more than any other theological debate in the past 50 years shaken the church on both theological and ecclesiological grounds. The continuing discussion has washed up deep theological, cultural and hermeneutical divisions within the Adventist theology. These divisions in effect in recent decades created not only a tangible diversity, but also painfully touched on the sensitive issue of Adventist unity, theological identity and hermeneutical harmony.

The modern roots of the current theological controversy go back to 1960s. At that time the issue of women's ordination was raised at the international level which led to an increased interest in the topic since. However the historical roots of the controversy go back much further into the past. In fact the Adventist church has stumbled across the topic at the same time when other denominations under the general societal and cultural changes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century began to discover the issue and discuss the role of women. There is therefore no doubt that the present debate about the ordination of women in Adventist theology has significant historical dimensions which cannot be overlooked.

However, equally important, if not more important, are the theological and hermeneutical dimensions of the whole controversy. These two aspects, theological and hermeneutical, have proven to be the most divisive and controversial particularly over the past 30 years. While the leadership of the Adventist church has made a huge effort in trying to bring together the various positions on the subject on all its levels - academic, administrative and even lay, the topic of ordination of women still continues to divide Adventist theology in those areas. Theological and hermeneutical differences thus continue to dominate whenever and wherever the subject is reopened or mentioned.

For these reasons, it appears that the ordination of women debate in the Seventh-day Adventist theology could be used as a case study par excellence to investigate deeper theological and hermeneutical questions about the underlying issues that are operative in the mindset of Adventist opponents and proponents of women's ordination.

### Purpose and Justification of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold. In the first place, the research aims at providing a first of its kind comprehensive systematic analysis of biblical, theological and hermeneutical aspects of the ongoing debate about the role of women in Adventist theology. While various studies have emerged in the past that have researched the subject of ordination of women from

mainly sociological perspectives, no study as of now exists that investigates the theological and hermeneutical matters in such a comprehensive way on this level. Systematic synthesis of this sort of the ordination of women debate has been long overdue and therefore the first objective of this study will be to bring analytical and systematic clarity into the debate. This research therefore first pays attention to systematizing the controversy and thus painting a comprehensive picture about the biblical, theological and hermeneutical aspects involved.

The second purpose of this dissertation will be to take the comprehensive analysis of opponents' and proponents' hermeneutical positions<sup>1</sup> and to attempt to investigate deeper their hermeneutical mindset on a meta-hermeneutical level.<sup>2</sup> The dissertation therefore will not only endeavour to expose the inner logic and rationales of both ordination camps and their practical reading methods, but also in the end attempt to provide a theoretical reflective appraisal from the perspective of hermeneutical theory and the wider field of biblical interpretation. This evaluation of opponents' and proponents' methodologies will raise questions about the potential inherent problems or weaknesses of their approaches which may not be immediately apparent to opponents or proponents.

The principal objective and eventually the justification of this thesis, it may therefore be said, is in ultimately providing an original, comprehensive and theoretical-reflective insight into the operation of the Adventist hermeneutical mindset. This is achieved by demonstrating its historical motifs, inner rationales, practical functioning and at the same time by pointing out potential theoretical weaknesses and ways in which they may be recognised. Such a case study of the women's ordination debate with special attention to Adventist hermeneutical thinking, as indicated, has not yet been attempted in Adventist academia. It is therefore hoped that this study will be primarily beneficial for the field of Adventist studies, yet the study may also be useful for anyone outside of Adventism who may want to understand more the theoretical base on which Adventist hermeneutical thinking operates.

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<sup>1</sup> The names "opponents" and "proponents" are used in the thesis as useful terms which refer to the general attitude of representatives who are either against or for ordination of women. There are however methodological and theological differences and variations within each of these groups as chapters II and III will demonstrate. Nonetheless for language simplification it has been felt that using "opponents" and "proponents" as general delineation of the two sides of the ordination of women divide may be useful.

<sup>2</sup> By "meta-hermeneutical" level throughout the thesis I mean the usually "unnoticeable" theoretical level which considers issues which are operative in one's mind even before one begins to read or apply strategies of interpretation; issues of epistemology (here I use in its basic meaning: theory of knowledge), understanding, pre-understanding, function of language, theory of meaning, assumptions about the nature of text and influences arising from historical-philosophical heritage. Sometimes I will instead of "meta-hermeneutical" use "metacritical" which means the same.

## **Methodology and Design of the Study**

Methodologically, the research proceeds by following a historical, analytical, synthesizing and critical-evaluative methodology. The thesis can be classified as primarily systematic-theological belonging to the field of systematic theology.

The study includes four chapters which cover the twofold purpose of the thesis. In the first three chapters a comprehensive systematic analysis and synthesis of the complex ordination debate is provided. The last chapter extends the analysis to critical evaluation of the established theological-interpretative positions from the perspective of their undergirding epistemological assumptions and meta-hermeneutical matters.

Chapter I introduces and describes the historical background of the debate. Every controversy has its historical dimension and this is even more the case for the Adventist debate concerning the ordination of women. Therefore it is necessary in chapter one to introduce the debate within a reasonable space and length and to frame it within its historical and ecclesial frameworks. Chapter One thus presents the historical development of the debate in the Adventist Church from the point of view of: Historical and theological roots of the Adventist movement; early 19<sup>th</sup> century Adventism and later 20<sup>th</sup> century Adventism. The chapter will also look into the earliest theological articles concerning the role of women and will make initial hermeneutical observations.

Chapter II moves deeper into the debate by investigating the biblical, theological and hermeneutical position of opponents of women ordination. The discussion will comprehensively organise, in the first part, the main biblical and theological arguments; and, in the second part, examine the opponents' hermeneutical apparatus. Part two, being the more substantial of the two parts is divided into two subsections which will look into opponents' view of inspiration, their preferred method and the functional aspects of their method of interpretation. The purpose of chapter two will be to systematically synthesise the biblical and theological arguments and to analyse their underlying hermeneutical rationale.

Chapters III, in a parallel manner with Chapter Two, investigates the biblical, theological and hermeneutical position of proponents of women ordination. The discussion as in Chapter II will first systematically analyse the main biblical and theological arguments used by proponents. In the second part the chapter will investigate the proponents' inspiration theory, their preferred methodology and finally the functional aspects of their hermeneutics. The purpose of Chapter Three will be to present the understanding of proponents in a systematic way with special attention to their hermeneutical thought and practice.

Chapter IV is the last chapter of this project. The discussion in this chapter will take the analysed hermeneutical positions of both sides and will further assess their theoretical bases and operation. The last chapter will proceed in two main sections. In the first section the

field of Adventist interpretation will be contextualised within the larger field of biblical interpretation while in the second part the individual meta-hermeneutical aspects of Adventist approaches will be assessed from the perspective of theoretical hermeneutical developments.

The dissertation ends with a comprehensive summary of the main findings of the investigation.

### Limitations

The present study recognises that there are various and different factors influencing the acceptance of the theological positions on the ordination of women. These factors are not exclusively theological or hermeneutical in their nature but also cultural and sociological.<sup>3</sup> The study however pays only limited attention to the analysis of non-theological and non-hermeneutical factors which are influencing the doctrinal decision process. The relationship between theology and hermeneutics in this study is understood to be co-relational rather than causal which means that it is not only hermeneutics as a single factor which causes someone to accept a dogmatic position regarding the issue of ordination. The question of what makes someone choose a certain doctrinal position in the first place is a question deserving unique attention of its own right and it is therefore beyond the scope and purpose of this the research. The methodological limitation of the present study at its heart is based on the view that *once* a certain theological position regarding the ordination of women has been taken, this position at some point must be justified by a corresponding hermeneutical theory. Unless the two are in correspondence in the long run the theological positions will become untenable. Hence the study assumes that a direct co-relational link between the theological positions, which have *already* been taken with regard to ordination of women (for whatever reasons) and hermeneutical practice, exists.

Furthermore, the present thesis is not historical or biblical. This means that the aim of the work is not to investigate historical factors which could be responsible for shaping the two positions and to provide a historical explanation for the theological-interpretative differences. Neither is the work biblical in that the research does not engage in a critical discussion of the textual or theological arguments. In its nature the present thesis is analytical, focusing on the analysis of the functional approaches and underlying rationales and pointing out potential theoretical weaknesses.

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<sup>3</sup> This has been for example demonstrated by Olive J. Hemmings, "Sacred Texts and Social Conflict: The Use of Bible in the Debate over Women's Ordination in Seventh-day Adventist Church," (PhD Thesis, The Claremont Graduate University, 2004), 281. Hemmings argued that "The dilemma of Seventh-day Adventism regarding women's ordination is not hermeneutical, but cultural." (Ibid.). Hemmings' study is primarily researching the subject from the perspective of why people choose sides or what is happening *before* they choose. In contrast, the present research investigates what is happening *once people have chosen* their theological position concerning ordination of women.

## Literature Review

On the doctoral level there are several studies that have investigated various aspects of the role of women in Seventh-day Adventism.<sup>4</sup> However, out of these only two studies relate specifically to the subject of ordination of women and only one touches to some degree hermeneutical issues. Laura Vance's published work *Seventh-day Adventism in Crisis: Gender and Sectarian Change in an Emerging Religion* (1999)<sup>5</sup> has been done from the sociological perspective of Max Weber's theory of sectarian development and therefore it does not have a direct relevance for the specific biblical, theological and hermeneutical direction of this thesis. The only study that is presently available which in broad terms relates the issue of the ordination of women in Adventism to hermeneutical matters is Olive J. Hemmings' "Sacred Texts and Social Conflict: The Use of Bible in the Debate over Women's Ordination in Seventh-day Adventist Church" (2004).<sup>6</sup> Hemmings' study mainly investigates the sociological nature of the hermeneutical conflict over women's ordination. It is based in principle on the sociological explanation of Mark Chaves (*Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations [1997]*) who argued that the resistance to women's ordination serves as a symbol of resistance to modernity. Hemmings' thesis shows that similar dynamic operates in Adventist community in which the resistance to women's ordination serves as a symbol of resistance to any threat to Adventist ecclesiological separatist stance. Within this context Hemmings investigates how the opposing groups use whatever sources that may be available to them including the Bible to defend their views. Hemmings' thesis, just like the other studies on the doctoral level, nonetheless does not analyze in depth specific biblical and theological arguments nor the theoretical operation of the hermeneutical approaches of opponents or proponents.

Since the field of Adventist ordination debate as it relates to theological and hermeneutical matters has not been researched comprehensively yet, the thesis had to identify first what literature and materials are available and relevant for the study. While it was not difficult to recognise the main publications and documents relating to the subject of the

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<sup>4</sup> Leslie H. Bumgardner, "Staying in Ministry: A Qualitative Study of Seventh-day Adventist Women Pastors," (PhD Thesis, Andrews University, 2005); Hessel C. Chamoun Ghazal, "Attitudes of Male Administrators towards Hiring and Promoting Female Administrators in the Seventh-day Adventist Educational System in the North American Division," (PhD Thesis, Andrews University, 1989) and Steven G. Daily, "The Irony of Adventism: The Role of Ellen White and Other Adventist Women in the Nineteen Century America," (DMin, School of Theology at Claremont, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> Laura L. Vance, *Seventh-day Adventism in Crisis: Gender and Sectarian Change in an Emerging Religion* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999). Her PhD thesis was submitted under the title: "Adventism in Crisis: A sociological Analysis of Seventh-day Adventism with Emphasis on the Relationship Between Gender and Sectarian Change" at Simon Fraser University in 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Olive J. Hemmings, "Sacred Texts and Social Conflict: The Use of Bible in the Debate over Women's Ordination in Seventh-day Adventist Church," (PhD Thesis, The Claremont Graduate University, 2004).

ordination of women, the study has discovered that there are hundreds of other smaller pieces of materials such as articles and various other studies that needed to be included for gaining a comprehensive picture about the topic.

The emergence of major materials began in 1970s while the most important studies were written in 1980s and 1990s. After 1990s apart from a few smaller items no such study was produced.<sup>7</sup> The first major set of materials came as a result of the ad hoc committee on ordination of women which discussed 29 papers. While the papers were discussed in 1973 and by 1975 were ready for publication the church decided to postpone their publication until 1984. The *Role of Women in the Church* (Camp Mohaven papers) contain 12 studies which cover a range of matters from exegetical, theological, ecclesial to sociological, however mainly from the proponents' perspective since opponents' papers were not included in the publication.<sup>8</sup> In 1974 the church organised several hermeneutical conferences the result of which was a collection of 14 essays that attempted to summarise the Adventist view of interpretation.<sup>9</sup> Another set of important papers and studies on the ordination of women appeared as a result of three conferences which met between 1984 and 1988. The unpublished collection of the *Commission on the Role of Women Paper* contains 32 main studies which are largely exegetical in nature particularly focusing on the divisive Pauline texts. The papers also contain a number of historical-cultural topics and a few comparative studies investigating the situation outside Adventism.

From the mid-1980s the pro and con camps began also publish major books which represent their position. From the opponents' side the major publications include first Bacchiocchi's *Women in the Church*<sup>10</sup> which came out with two forewords from Wayne Grudem and James Hurley, two renowned evangelical scholars. While Bacchiocchi's study contains also exegetical material, the book presents primarily theological arguments against the ordination of women. Bacchiocchi's main theological arguments still form a major part of the opponents' theological case. In 1994 a major study *The Tip of an Iceberg*<sup>11</sup> by Raymond Holmes approached the matter from the perspective of biblical authority and interpretation.

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<sup>7</sup> This partly has to do with the fact that after the second failed attempt to approve ordination of women to Gospel ministry on the highest administrative level in 1995 the leadership of the church has urged both sides of the debate to let the issue cool down. See second part of Chapter I.

<sup>8</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *The Role of Women in the Church* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1984, 1995). See Gordon M. Hyde, "The Mohaven Council-Where It All Began," *Adventist Affirm*, Fall 1989. Hyde, a convener of the conference is acknowledging that opponents' papers have been excluded from the publication.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon M. Hyde, ed., *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1974).

<sup>10</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg: Biblical Authority, Biblical Interpretation and the Ordination of Women in Ministry* (Wakefield, MI: POINTER Publications, 1994).



Holmes argues that the problem with the pro-ordination case is that it in effect undermines biblical authority by adopting historical-critical approaches and feminist hermeneutics. Holmes also provides his own interpretation of the main ordination texts. The two-studies by Samuel Koranteng-Pipim *Searching the Scriptures* (1994) and *Receiving the Word* (1996)<sup>12</sup> further extend Holmes' argument that the underlying problem with the ordination of women issue is related to the matters of hermeneutics and doctrine of Scripture. Especially *Receiving the Word* has received wide circulation in Adventism and became an influential book. Pipim's strong views against certain approaches which he classifies as historical-critical have firmly put the methodological question on the agenda of the ordination debate.<sup>13</sup> The last major study from the opponents' camp appeared as a reaction to the pro-ordination book *Women in Ministry*. The opponents' *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry* (2000)<sup>14</sup> while being written as a reaction can nevertheless be perceived as the latest and clearest voice of the anti-ordination side, not only because it represents the most recent comprehensive study published by them, but primarily because it represents the collective voice of opponents. The book contains 22 major studies by 15 leading opponents. The majority of the essays are theological, sociological and historical in nature, in addition to two biblical-exegetical studies. The book as the nature of the essays indicates approaches the topic of ordination of women comprehensively arguing from those areas against women's ordination.

The publication campaign of the proponents had started with Norskov Olsen's *Myth and Truth about Church, Priesthood and Ordination* (1990).<sup>15</sup> Olsen in the study addressed the larger issue of the controversy, the concept of ordination itself. While the book is largely a historical study of the subject, it also contains a chapter on the New Testament theology of ordination. The book is centrally proposing that historically ordination has taken on a meaning of status which is alien to the New Testament perspective. In 1995 two important books were published which attempted to further advance the case of proponents. *Women and the Church:*

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<sup>12</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures: Ordination of Women and the Call to Biblical Fidelity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 1995) and Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word: How New Approaches to the Bible Impact Our Faith and Lifestyle* (Berrien Springs, MI: Berean Books, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Pipim's trend to argue from the platform of defending biblical authority and traditional stance of Adventism on various issues is also visible in his later works. See Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, ed., *Here We Stand: Evaluating New Trends in the Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2006) and Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent: Issues Dividing Our Church* (Ann Arbor, MI: Berean Books, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> Dyer, Mercedes H. ed. *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Norskov V. Olsen, *Myth and Truth about Church, Priesthood and Ordination* (Riverside, CA: Loma Linda University Press, 1990). In 1990 another pro-women book was published which however is not related to theological and hermeneutical aspects of the ordination of women dispute. The book by Josephine Benton, *Called by God: Stories of Seventh-day Adventist Women Ministers* (Smithsburg, MD: Blackberry Hill Publishers, 1990), is a collection of stories of women who served in the Adventist church.

*The Feminine Perspective*<sup>16</sup> represents the voice of Seventh-day Adventist women proponents. In this sense this publication which is a collection of 12 essays and 14 authors is unique in the debate. The book takes in particular a threefold Scriptural, ecclesial and sociological approach to discuss the role of women in the church. Another compilation of essays representing the proponents' position has appeared in the form of *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*.<sup>17</sup> The book represents the first comprehensive voice of the proponents' side. Its 14 essays were authored by number of top Adventist scholars. The studies argue from historical, hermeneutical, biblical and theological perspectives for the ordination of women. Importantly the largest essay in the book deals with the subject of interpretation which indicates that hermeneutical matters are equally important to proponents as to opponents. The last release from proponents' camp contains 20 mainly biblical, theological and historical essays. *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (1998) is the latest major study representing the proponents' collective voice exemplifying the biblical and theological case of proponents. The book however does not contain a hermeneutical essay that would cogently illustrate their interpretative position which is only briefly introduced at the beginning of the book.

These above mentioned resources from the conferences and both camps together form the main reference sources the thesis primarily considers. Besides these, however a large number of smaller documents, studies and articles appeared throughout the years which add important elements to the key publications. These smaller pieces have therefore been also considered with equal attention. Since space concerns do not allow me to review these smaller items it is at least important to mention that the voice of opponents was particularly presented on the pages of *Adventist Affirm*<sup>18</sup> while proponents have voiced their case particularly on the pages of the *Spectrum Magazine*,<sup>19</sup> *Adventist Perspectives*, *Adventist Today* and *Adventist Heritage*. However the church's official *Adventist Review* and *Ministry Magazine*<sup>20</sup> publications alongside with the unofficial *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* have also provided considerable space to representatives from both camps. It is thus the combination of these shorter materials with the key resources that was considered in the analysis of the ordination of women debate by this thesis.

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<sup>16</sup> Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson, ed., *Women and the Church: The Feminine Perspective*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1995).

<sup>17</sup> Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart, eds., *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> In particular *Adventist Affirm* fall 1989 and spring 1995 complete issues are dedicated to the ordination of women subject.

<sup>19</sup> Over the years *Spectrum* has published a number of important articles concerning various aspects of the topic.

<sup>20</sup> Both *Adventist Review* and *Ministry Magazine* are the source of many relevant articles and an evidence of how the debate has developed over the years.

## CHAPTER I

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE DEBATE ABOUT THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST THEOLOGY

### Introduction

Chapter one aims to provide the basic historical introduction to the sensitive topic of women's role in the Adventist church. This historical introduction task is approached from the point of view of the denominational situation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and then 20<sup>th</sup> century modern Adventism. The investigation – apart from providing a descriptive overview of the historical and ecclesial matters shaping the ordination controversy - will also raise questions concerning how much of the historical debate about the role of women in Adventist theology was, from its beginning, a pragmatic debate or a debate arising from a clear hermeneutical-theological base.

The chapter keeps in mind the interpretative nature of history. Historical reconstruction by its nature is always, to a degree, dependent on the a-priory perspectives of researchers. The debate concerning the ordained ministry of women in Adventism has started in 1881<sup>1</sup> and thus the discussion has an undeniable historical dimension. Not surprisingly both proponents and opponents of women's ordination deal with the past issues in their own way, formulate their own conclusions which in the majority of cases only mirror their prior theological convictions.

The historical reconstruction provided in this place is not only based on primary historical material; the contribution of various sources from both sides of the ordination divide is also considered.

### The Ordination of Women in the Early Adventism

#### The Roots of Seventh-day Adventism and the Role of Women

The modern Seventh-day Adventism finds its immediate and major roots in Millerism—the Second Advent movement of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, having its largest impact in North America. While the only doctrine preached by Millerite preachers was the imminent coming of Christ, people who formed the movement came from a variety of Christian

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<sup>1</sup> In this year the question of ordaining women to pastoral ministry work was brought up for the first time at the administrative level.

backgrounds. Everett Dick, who was the first scholar to investigate the Millerite movement of 1840s in depth in the 1920s,<sup>2</sup> has made the only study of the denominational affiliations of Millerite preachers. From a sample of 174 lecturers (whom he was able to identify denominationally) 44% were Methodist, 27% Baptist, 9% Congregational, 8% Christian Connection (Restorationist stream), 7% Presbyterian and several other denominations were represented by one or two lecturers as well.<sup>3</sup>

The three main founders of the Adventist church had their roots in two of these denominations. Joseph Bates and James White were both Christian Connection preachers, whilst Ellen Harmon (from 1846 White) was a Methodist. Beside Restorationist roots (Christian Connection) and Methodist roots the other roots of Seventh-day Adventism are in Anabaptism, Puritanism and Deism. A denominational historian, George Knight implies that it were Restorationist,<sup>4</sup> Methodist and Anabaptist roots, in particular, that mostly shaped the Seventh-day Adventism. He concludes that Adventism is an heir of the Anabaptist/Restorationist wing of Reformation rather than the Lutheran or Calvinistic.<sup>5</sup> What is important to point out right at the beginning is that the Methodist and Christian Connection denominations nurtured a positive and open attitude toward the ministry of females.<sup>6</sup> It is

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<sup>2</sup> Everett Dick pursued a PhD in history at the University of Wisconsin. His dissertation was completed in 1930, but never got published because the administration of Adventist church rejected to publish it in 1930s and later. Ultimately, Gary Land a chair of the history department at Andrews University in Michigan in 1994 persuaded Andrews University Press to publish Dick's dissertation. For more information on the background of Dick's dissertation see the "Foreword" from Gary Land in Everett N. Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis 1831-1844* (Berrien Springs, MI, Andrews University Press, 1994), vii-ix.

<sup>3</sup> Everett N. Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis 1831-1844*, 165-169.

<sup>4</sup> "Restorationism was a vital force in many early 19<sup>th</sup> century American Religious movements. Beginning independently in several sections of United States around 1800, the movement aimed at reforming the churches by restoring all of the New Testament teachings... The task of the Restorationist movement was to complete the unfinished Reformation." George R. Knight, *A Search For Identity: Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 30-31.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter two "Adventism Wasn't Born in a Vacuum" in George R. Knight, *A Search For Identity*, 29-37.

<sup>6</sup> In the Methodist tradition, it was for example John Wesley who was positive toward the role of women in Christian ministry. He was giving women public responsibilities in small groups at first. He "welcomed their public speaking as it took the forms of prayers, personal testimony, exhortation and exposition on religious literature." Barbara J. MacHaffie, *Her Story: Women in Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 84. In the Restorationist tradition, the visible example of a positive attitude toward females was embodied in the position of the well-known evangelist and revivalist at his times Charles Finney: "The Christian Connection, in particular, had a strong tradition of women preachers. And during the 1830s female participation in public religion received encouragement from the revivalism of Charles Finney, while the ministry of Phoebe Palmer (Methodist preacher) was renewing the acceptability of women leading out public worship in the Methodist tradition." George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993), 119. Haloviak, the director of the Archives and Statistics at the church's headquarters, has also emphasized the positive perception of women's ministry in the Christian Connection Church. See Bert Haloviak, "Some Great Connections: Our Seventh-day Adventist Heritage from the Christian Connection Church," General Conference Archives, unpublished paper, May 1994 and Bert Haloviak "A Heritage of Freedom: "The Christian Connection Roots to

therefore notable that all three founders of Adventism came from these two denominational backgrounds.

Moreover in Millerism, from where Adventism emerged, women played important public roles in contrast to most of society in those days. As Catharine Rayburn put it, “women were important to the Millerite movement and the Millerite movement was important for women.”<sup>7</sup>

However, in addition to the Millerite, Christian Connection (Restorationist) and Methodist roots of Adventism, it can be generally argued that *the Radical Reformation* (Revivalist, Shakers, Abolitionists and Quakers<sup>8</sup>, but not necessarily Anabaptist<sup>9</sup>) stream was far more favourable toward the public ministry of females than the Lutheran/Calvinistic traditional mainstream Protestantism. In the mainstream Protestant denominations, “women were denied ordination... they could not preach... and serve in the governing bodies of churches.”<sup>10</sup> On the other hand most of the active female religious leaders in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century “dependent largely on their being ‘outside the mainstream,’ where the divine could be

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Seventh-day Adventism (Some Pertinent Documents),” General Conference Archives, unpublished paper, November 1995. For additional information about the support of women in Methodism or in Restorationism see for example: Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 85-98; or in Elizabeth A. Clark and Herbert Richardson, *Women and Religion: The Original Sourcebook of Women in Christian Thought*, (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1996), 237-263; And also “Women in Radical Protestantism” in Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1998), 135-177.

<sup>7</sup> Catharine Rayburn, “Women Heralds of ‘The Advent Near’,” *Adventist Heritage*, 17/2 (1997): 20. Rayburn in this well documented article about the influence of Millerism to female public service presents 21 women preachers, teachers and missionaries who were either part of the Millerite movement or were influenced by it. (Ibid., 11-21). See also George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World*, 117-21.

<sup>8</sup> For the discussion about the role of women inside the Quakers, Shakers, Abolitionists see Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women and Redemption*, 135-177.

<sup>9</sup> Anabaptist churches like their Reformation counterparts understood “that the Bible prohibited women from taking leadership roles. Moreover, in the writings of Anabaptist men, women were often subjected to the extreme portrayals of prior centuries as weak and unmanageable, or as (alternatively) as chaste and modest.” Elizabeth A. Clark and Herbert Richardson, *Women and Religion*, 149. See also Ruth Gouldbourne’s published dissertation on the situation in Radical Reformation and Anabaptism: Ruth Mary Boyd Gouldbourne, *The Flesh and the Feminine: Gender and Theology in the Writings of Caspar Schwenckfeld* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2006). First published as Ruth Mary Boyd Gouldbourne, *Theology and Gender in the Writings of Caspar Schwenckfeld* (London: University of London, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth A. Clark and Herbert Richardson, *Women and Religion*, 148. On the other hand, Protestant Reformation at least partially opened possibilities for public influence of women especially through the new roles of ministers’ wives. A good example is Katherine Zell, wife of the Reformer Matthew Zell. She wrote and spoke publicly in favor of the Reformation, despite the criticism that women should keep silent in public. See Roland H. Bainton, *Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg, 1971), 55-76. One of the most recent studies on the role of women in the Reformation is by Kirsti Stjerna, *Women and the Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2009).

constructed differently and traditional clergy roles could either be deemphasized or abandoned."<sup>11</sup>

The first historical angle from which the debate about women in the Adventist Church could be viewed is the perspective of the denominational roots and their impact on early Adventism. This perspective may also partially explain why it took the Adventist church only 18 years to begin to discuss administratively the possibility of women's ordination.

### The Situation in the Early Adventism

It was as early as in 1881 when the first official proposal to ordain women into the pastoral ministry appeared at the administrative level of the church.<sup>12</sup> The text of the resolution discussed in this year was: "Resolved, that females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry."<sup>13</sup> The Adventist church took 18 years to come to this resolution. Although the church had existed in the form of a movement since 1844, the church was only officially

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<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth A. Clark and Herbert Richardson, *Women and Religion*, 257- 258. See also Mary F. Bednarowski, "Outside the Mainstream: Women's Religion and Women Religious Leaders in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 48 (1980): 207-231.

<sup>12</sup> At this point it may be useful to introduce the basic vocabulary on ordination used in Adventism. Adventist theology recognizes three different types of ordinations: (a) ordination of *deacons*, (b) ordination of *local elders* and (c) ordination of church *pastors/ministers* to the gospel/pastoral ministry. While the first two types of ordinations have local validity (with some exceptions), the third one has a worldwide transferability. It is also important to note that ordination of deacons and local elders can be performed only by an ordained minister/pastor who currently holds valid *credentials*. Seventh-day Adventist ordination practice also recognizes *licensed* ministers – "prospective candidates" for ordination to the gospel/pastoral ministry. "The granting of such licenses confers the opportunity and the right to develop the ministerial gift." To learn more about the Adventist ordination vocabulary and practices see especially General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual: Revised 2005, 17<sup>th</sup> Edition* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005), 50-52 (on ordination of elders), 51 and 146 (on ordination of ministers), 56-57 (on ordination of deacons), and 147 (on licensed ministers). Ordination of *deaconesses* (female deacons) and *women elders* was approved by the governing body of the church in 1975 and affirmed in 1984 (see the discussion on pages 24-25). The current *Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual*, which serves as an authoritative guide to the present ministerial praxis for the whole Seventh-day Adventist community, reflects this fact only as far as women elders are concerned. The *Manual* is silent concerning ordination of deaconesses. Recently however there have been moves to rectify this situation. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, 58-59 and Mark A. Kellner, "Adventist Church Manual Revisions Move Forward," Adventist News Network, 15 October 2009; accessible at <http://news.adventist.org/2009/10/adventist-church-man.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Bernoi, "Nineteenth-Century Women in Adventist Ministry Against the Backdrop of Their Times," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 224. The original report about the resolution appeared in official church magazine *Review and Herald* on 20 December 1881. *The Review* article is very brief and only mentions that the "resolution was discussed ... and referred to the General Conference Committee" (Ibid.).

organised in 1863. It was a brave beginning for the young church, particularly in light of general attitudes towards women in the society.<sup>14</sup>

What led the delegates of the 1881 General Conference Session to propose the resolution? First, when the Adventist movement started in 1844 the majority of its adherents were against everything that was not explicitly stated in the Bible. "The church has wrestled with the question of scriptural authority and church policy early in its history."<sup>15</sup> Examples of this struggle included the issue of church organization and the issue of discussing appropriateness of having a name. In both cases the Adventist believers opposed the idea of having a name or being officially organised because there was no Scriptural indication that they should do so. On the contrary, they were afraid that if they organised and accepted a name they would in turn become Babylon.<sup>16</sup> It was only 10 years after 1844 when Ellen White, as one of the leaders of the church, for the first time, addressed the issue of organization.<sup>17</sup> From this time the attitude of a direct "thus says the Lord" on church matters started to change to the attitude of "everything Scripture does not prohibit explicitly is allowed" and should be used for the progression of the work. James White, another founder of Adventism, has expressed this changing attitude in the following way: "All means which, according to sound judgement, will advance the cause of truth, and are not forbidden by plain scripture declarations, should be employed."<sup>18</sup> The visible result of the changed attitude can be seen in the establishment of the church structure above local church level and in the accepting of a name for the movement.

In the 1860s, the church began to struggle with financial problems despite organizational and structural progress. Because the church was driven mainly by an eschatological theology regarding the soon return of Christ, no financial system existed until 1860s. This situation resulted in tension among the ministers and many of them left the full-

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<sup>14</sup> See for example Jane Lewis, "Introduction: Reconstructing Women's Experience of Home and Family," in *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family 1850-1940*, ed. Jane Lewis (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986), 21; GS Misc 337, The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood; *A DIGEST of the Second Report by the House of Bishops (GS 829)* (London: Church House Publishing, 1990), 34 or Catherine Clinton, *The Other Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), 41 and Philippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism 1850-1900* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 82.

<sup>15</sup> Bert Haloviak, "A Place at the Table: Women and the Early Years," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 29.

<sup>16</sup> The issue of accepting a name and organization development is well documented for example in Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers: A History of Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1995), 83-94; in George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-Day Adventists* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 51-67 or in Godfrey T. Anderson, "Sectarianism and Organization 1846-1864," in *Adventism in America: A History, Revised*, ed. Gary Land (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1998), 37-41, 46-52.

<sup>17</sup> Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers*, 83.

<sup>18</sup> James White, *Review and Herald*, April 26, 1860; cited in Bert Haloviak, "A Place at the Table: Women and the Early Years," in *The Welcome Table*, 29.

time ministry. On the other hand there was one positive result of the crisis. The doors to ministry opened for gifted Adventist women.<sup>19</sup> One of the indications of “opening of doors” for women is the price of membership in the Minister’s Lecture Association which was \$5 for men and \$3 for women.<sup>20</sup> This fact may well suggest that the church tried to encourage women to enter the ministry in that turbulent time.

At this stage it is important to note that this is the first official burgeoning of opportunities for females; and, furthermore, the reason the church started to be open toward women was not theological but rather practical. The financial circumstances mentioned and the idea of mission in the context of Christ’s soon coming were the main motives and key reasons for opening the doors of ministry to Adventist females.

Another important factor that affected the attitude of openness toward women is the role of Mrs. Ellen White. Ellen White was one of the founders of the church and “she was probably the most influential ‘minister’ ever to serve the Adventist Church.”<sup>21</sup> Her leadership asset and influence is acknowledged also in non-Adventist books.<sup>22</sup> It will be her statement from the year 1895 that will cause the church to start to ordain deaconesses.<sup>23</sup>

What is important for the purpose of this chapter is to note that in the early 1860s, women began to work publicly in the name of the church and their involvement was gradually increasing. Thus, we find that, by the 1870s, women are already serving in leadership positions. The appendix section of the pro-ordination book *The Welcome Table* mentions 8 females other than Mrs. White, who held either ministerial or leadership positions.<sup>24</sup> The number of women serving in the early years of the Adventist Church could however be higher as Bert Haloviak the director of archives and statistics department at the church’s headquarters indicates.<sup>25</sup>

It is probably not an accident that during the first 18 years of the existence of Adventism when the doors opened to women the most important articles addressing the role of

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<sup>19</sup> George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-Day Adventists*, 60.

<sup>20</sup> James White, J. N. Andrews, J. H. Waggoner, G. H. Bell and Uriah Smith, “Course of Study for Ministers,” *Review and Herald*, January 10, 1870; cited in Bert Haloviak, “A Place at the Table: Women and the Early Years,” in *The Welcome Table*, 30.

<sup>21</sup> George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-Day Adventists*, 105.

<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth A. Clark and Herbert Richardson, *Women and Religion*, 261.

<sup>23</sup> I will explore the “1895 statement” (as her statement is known in the ordination debate) and its meaning for the historical development of the women’s case later. Also I will touch on to the role and writings of Ellen White later in this chapter, because her role is one of the most controversial issues debated in the current discussion.

<sup>24</sup> Kit Watts, “Appendix 6: Selected List of 150 Adventist Women in Ministry, 1844-1944,” in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 360. For example Mrs. Adelia Patten Van Horn is mentioned serving in 1871-1873 as a General Conference treasurer.

<sup>25</sup> Bert Haloviak, “Longing for the Pastorate: Ministry in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Adventism,” General Conference Archives, Unpublished Paper, 1988, 8. The paper can be found on the Adventist official web page in the section of Archives and Statistics. See [www.adventist.org](http://www.adventist.org).



women were written. Their aim seems to be to encourage women to use their gifts. On the other hand, the church probably was aware of the general attitude toward women in the society and the articles thus had an apologetic purpose as well.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, it was not just the case of the shortage of male full-time ministers or the role of Ellen White that caused the church to open possibilities to women, but also the issue of official publications and articles that promoted and encouraged women to be involved more in the ministry of the church.

All this leads to the 1881 and the resolution discussed at the level of General Conference. The resolution stated: "Resolved, That females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry."<sup>27</sup>

Although there is a lack of documentation concerning the actual discussions and especially about the decision of the General Conference Committee where the proposal was referred to, the conclusion seems obvious and as Haloviak says, "it obviously did not pass."<sup>28</sup>

From the point of view of future discussion, the important fact is that what was discussed was not the qualifications of women but the "'perfect propriety', the wisdom of ordaining women."<sup>29</sup> In other words, the question discussed seems to relate to whether such a move in given circumstances (social context) would be reasonable and whether it would not cause more problems than bring benefits.

Despite the negative decision by the General Conference Committee in 1881, women themselves did not stop being involved in the ministerial work and their presence even increased in leadership positions. From 1881 until 1895, ten additional names of women appear in historical records as holding important leadership roles. They were licensed ministers, missionaries or leaders in different places.<sup>30</sup>

With the year 1895, the discussion about the female roles in Adventism enters into a crucial stage. The act of female ordination had not occurred prior to that time, which retrospectively may confirm how the church understood the statement that came from the pen

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<sup>26</sup> Early Adventist publications about the role of women: *Review and Herald*, July 30 1861 (Uriah Smith); *Review and Herald*, August 18, 1868 (M. H. Howard); *Review and Herald*, January 2, 1879 (J. N. Andrews); *Review and Herald*, May 29, 1879 (James White); *Review and Herald*, May 24, 1892 (reprinted on June 5 1894) (G. C. Tenney).

<sup>27</sup> Josephine Benton, *Called by God: Stories of Seventh-day Adventist Women Ministers* (Smithsburg, MD: Blackberry Hill Publishers, 1990), 235. The Appendix C contains the complete report of the business proceedings. The report is rather short and besides the actual resolution contains only the names of delegates who were discussing the resolution with the conclusion: "and referred (the resolution) to the General Conference Committee". The General conference Committee however never reported back their conclusions on the resolution.

<sup>28</sup> Bert Haloviak, "A Place at the Table: Women and the Early Years," in *The Welcome Table*, 43.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 361 and 362.

of Ellen White in that year. Ellen White made her statement against the 14-year-old General Conference Committee decision.

Women who are willing to consecrate some of their time to the service of the Lord should be appointed to visit the sick, look after the young, and minister to the necessities of the poor. They should be set apart to this work by prayer and laying on of hands. In some case they will need to counsel with the [local] church officers or the [conference] minister, but if they are devoted women, maintaining the vital connection with God, they will be a power for good in the church. This is another means of strengthening and building up the church. We need to branch out more in our methods of labor. Not a hand should be bound, not a soul discouraged, not a voice should be hushed; let every individual labor, privately or publicly, to help forward this grand work.<sup>31</sup>

The director of Adventist Archives and Statistics, Bert Haloviak believes that the 1895 statement resolves the dilemma the church is in today. For him the problem of whether it is unscriptural to ordain women is a historical problem<sup>32</sup> rather than a theological one. Haloviak sees in the 1895 statement a clear call for the Adventist Church to start ordaining women. Thus according to him, Ellen White's historical statement provides an interpretative key for the debate, because in his view the 1895 statement clearly speaks *for* the ordination of women.<sup>33</sup>

However not everyone shares the same positive interpretation of the 1895 statement as the key to the solution, especially not opponents of women's ordination for whom the statement says nothing about ordination.<sup>34</sup> Whatever the interpretations of this statement might

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<sup>31</sup> Ellen G. White, "The Duty of the Minister and the People," *Review and Herald*, July 9, 1895, paragraph 8 (The Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings on CD Room).

<sup>32</sup> Bert Haloviak, "A Place at the Table: Women and the Early Years," in *The Welcome Table*, 34.

<sup>33</sup> Ellen White's statements are continuously being used by both sides of the debate as supporting arguments. However this does not mean that Adventist proponents or opponents would consider the ordination dilemma to be resolved solely on the basis of statements made by Ellen White. While for both sides Ellen White's contribution is important it is not the only factor that decides the issue, even if some proponents (such as Haloviak) see her 1895 statement as the hermeneutical key and thus call the church to pay more attention to her approach. Mrs. White herself seemed to be aware of the influence her statements had on the church' understanding of certain issues and that's why she deliberately refused to be the deciding voice in theological debates: "I have words to speak to my brethren east and west, north and south. I request that my writings shall not be used as the leading argument to settle questions over which there is now so much controversy. I entreat of Elders H, I, J, and others of our leading brethren, that they make no reference to my writings to sustain their views... I now ask that my ministering brethren shall not make use of my writings in their arguments..." Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, 164 (The Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings on CD Room).

<sup>34</sup> The 1895 statement is interpreted by opponents as "not applicable to the ordination of women *as pastors or elders*. The statement and its context indicate that these women were being dedicated to a specific *lay* ministry, not the ministry of elders or pastors." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "Are Those Things So?-Part II: A Summary and Evaluation of Key Historical and Theological Arguments of *Women in Ministry*," in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 295. Italics original.

be, the fact remains that it was only after 1895 that the church first decided to ordain deaconesses. At least three women were ordained as deaconesses in Australia in the 1890s.<sup>35</sup>

Australia was not the only country where the work of females was tangible. In the 1890s, Adventist women started to work in England. An example of such international female ministry is mentioned in *Light Bearers*, where three female Bible workers are mentioned as working in London in 1890s. On the pages 208 and 209 of the same book, the beginning of the Adventist work in England is described – thus the context where the work of these three female Bible workers is mentioned suggests that they were among the pioneers who started to work in England.<sup>36</sup>

Twenty years after the 1881 resolution, the issue of ordaining women appeared again at the administrative level in 1901. The particular case that directly led to the 1901 proposal, beside all the other factors mentioned already, was the case of Lulu Russell Wightman. Mrs. Wightman was for more than a decade one of the most successful pastors and evangelists in New York state. The career of Lulu Russell Wightman started when she received a license as a minister in 1897. Mrs. Wightman worked in the field of establishing companies (small groups) and churches “in a number of places in New York where Adventism had never gained a foothold before.”<sup>37</sup> Church statistics from that time indicate that 60% of new members came to the church in New York as a result of the work of Lulu Wightman and her husband who became a pastor in 1903, while to that year he only helped his wife as an assistant. Even male ministers have regarded her work highly: “She accomplished more in two years than any other pastor in this state...”<sup>38</sup> From 1901, Mrs. Wightman started to receive the salary of an ordained minister. Thus, it is not surprising that in 1901 the New York Conference opened the issue of her ordination. The union president R. A. Underwood supported her ordination, but the General Conference president A. G. Daniells who “just happened to be at that conference meeting not by design or invitation was against her ordination: ‘at least not now’”.<sup>39</sup> The Conference at the end voted that Lulu Wightman would receive a salary of an ordained

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<sup>35</sup> Kit Watts, “Appendix 5: An Outline of the History of Seventh-day Adventists and the Ordination of Women,” in *The Welcome Table*, 337. The ordination service was held in Sydney, Australia on January 6, 1900. W. C. White participated in the service. This news was given very little publicity and officially was documented 86 years after the event in Arthur Patrick, “The Ordination of Deaconesses,” *Review and Herald*, January 16, 1986, 18-19. Also noteworthy is that Ellen White herself lived at that time in Australia and new about the ceremony.

<sup>36</sup> Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers*, 208. The first Adventist female working as a missionary was Maud Sisley Boyd. She joined J. N. Andrews (Andrews was the first official missionary of the church. He went to Europe in 1876) in 1877 in Switzerland. Later she was a missionary to Africa and Australia. See Kit Watts, “Appendix 6: Selected List of 150 Adventist Women in Ministry, 1844-1944,” in *The Welcome*, 361.

<sup>37</sup> Bert Haloviak, “A Place at the Table: Women and the Early Years,” in *The Welcome Table*, 28.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

minister, but would not be ordained.<sup>40</sup> This decision had been in effect for only two years when John Wightman her husband obtained a ministerial licence and became a pastor. The Conference in addition lowered the salary of Mrs. Wightman to the level of a licensed minister (un-ordained minister) – that meant to the level of the salary of her husband despite her husbands' objections.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, it was a *practical* ministry of a gifted woman that forced the church to open the question of ordination for the second time at the administrative level. The issue of ordaining women into the pastoral ministry in the Adventist Church had neither been however resolved in 1881 nor in 1901. Women despite the lack of official ordination continued to serve in the church in important leadership positions and this trend continued up until 1915.<sup>42</sup> After 1915 a decline in numbers of women serving in leadership or ministerial positions begins for various reasons which are beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Kit Watts, "Moving Away from the Table: A Survey of Historical Factors Affecting Women Leaders," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 56.

<sup>41</sup> It is interesting to read the original letter of John Wightman addressed to the conference president (employer). The letter contains "revealing" insight into the work of Lulu Wightman and particularly on what terms John Wightman used to describe Lulu's work. The letter can be found in Josephine Benton, *Called by God*, 221-222. "Letter from John Wightman, Avon, N.Y., to Eld. S. H. Lane, conference president, Rome, N.Y., Sept. 2, 1904." The irony of the whole story of Lulu Russell Wightman is that her husband was ordained in 1905 after two years of pastoral work, while she herself was serving for nine years as pastor and was never ordained. The saddest aspect of her story occurred in 1910. In that year the president of the Central Union Conference E. T. Russell (interestingly enough, E. T. Russell was the brother-in-law to Wightmans) circulated a 16-page pamphlet against the Wightmans, saying that they opposed the church structure. They were dropped from their church employment. See Bert Haloviak, "A Place at the Table: Women and the Early Years," in *The Welcome Table*, 31. Haloviak lists 12 churches that were established as a result of the work of Lulu Wightman and an additional 5 churches as a result of the Wightmans. (Ibid., 32).

<sup>42</sup> In 1905, women still held influential administrative positions in the church. In fact, women held 20 out of 60 conference treasurer positions. Another remarkable fact is that before the turn of the last century there were three women who served as General Conference treasurers: Adelia Pattern Van Horn (1871-1873), Frederica House Sisley (1875-1876), and Minerva Jane Loughborough Chapman (1877-1883). From 1883 until today, no other woman has been elected to this position again. In 1915, two thirds of the total number of conference leaders were women. Probably the most female department was the Sabbath School Department. In 1915, 50 out of 60 Sabbath school departmental leaders were women. These statistics also show that the number of women in leadership positions grew mostly between years 1905 and 1915. The interesting fact about the Sabbath School women leaders is that they supervised not only children but also adults, a situation not common elsewhere in other churches. For example in the Anglican Church women were allowed to teach children only but not adults. See Kit Watts, "Moving Away from the Table: A Survey of Historical Factors Affecting Women Leaders," in *The Welcome Table*, 50-52 and Kit Watts, "The Rise and Fall of Adventist Women in Leadership," *Ministry*, April, 1995, 8-9.

<sup>43</sup> The number of women serving in leadership positions starts to decline rapidly and in the 1950, the number of women serving in the church in comparison to the number of women serving in the church prior 1915 was significantly lower. The reasons which may explain the decline are discussed in Kit Watts, "Moving Away from the Table: A Survey of Historical Factors Affecting Women Leaders," in *The Welcome Table*, 54-55; in Michael Bernoi, "Nineteenth-Century Women in Adventist Ministry Against the Backdrop of Their Times," in *Women in Ministry*, 225; also in Bertha Dasher, "Women's Leadership, 1915-1970: The Waning Years," in *A Woman's Place: Seventh-day Adventist Women in Church and Society*, ed. Rosa Taylor Banks (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1992), 4; Laura L. Vance, "From Sect to Church, From Meeting-House to Kitchen: The

## Theological and Hermeneutical Matters

The historical and ecclesial context concerning the ordination of women was presented in the first two sections. However it may be illuminating, in view of later chapters and the overall perspective of this thesis, to describe also the situation as far as the theological-hermeneutical views were concerned about the role of women in the early Adventism. The main questions which this section will investigate are why women in the early years of the Adventist church were allowed to serve publicly and even hold leadership positions while the rest of the society in those days seemed to be far more restrictive toward the public roles of women;<sup>44</sup> and what role did theology and hermeneutics as such play in shaping the decisions of the church about women?

One of the ways to investigate the issue of the theological and hermeneutical voice of the church in its early years is to look into the key articles dealing with the issue of the role of women which were published in the official church magazine in the first 60 years of the existence of the Adventist Church. The approach in this place will be selective, aiming to analyze the leading and the most influential theological articles.

(1) "*May Women Speak in Meeting?*"<sup>45</sup> The article was first published in January 1879 in the *Review and Herald* magazine. Written by John N. Andrews who became the denomination's first official missionary in 1874, the article deals with the two most cited texts against the public speaking of women – 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2. There are several (hermeneutical) lessons which can be learned from the way Andrews makes his argument.

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Development of Adventism and the Changing Roles of Adventist Women," *Adventist Heritage*, 17/2 (1997): 42. See also Steve Daily, "The Irony of Adventism: The Role of Ellen White and Other Adventist Women in Nineteenth Century America" (DMin Project, School of Theology at Claremont, 1985), 234 and William Johnsson, "Women in Adventism," *Adventist Review*, February 4, 1988, 4-5.

<sup>44</sup> Although this question sounds like inviting me to touch on also the sociological issues behind the developments, I felt that exploring sociological questions would consume too much space and would broaden this chapter beyond its purpose. There are several studies trying to answer the above question on the basis of sociological theories. An explanation worth noting is by Laura Vance. Laura L. Vance in an informative article "From Sect to Church, From Meeting-House to Kitchen: The Development of Adventism and the Changing Roles of Adventist Women," 31-44 taken from her published doctoral dissertation Laura L. Vance, *Seventh-day Adventism in Crisis: Gender and Sectarian Change in an Emerging Religion* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999). Vance explains the changing roles of Adventist woman on the basis of Max Weber's theory of sectarian development. Weber's theory rests upon three hypotheses: (1) Because sects root their identity in rejecting the values of wider society, they find it easier to give members of marginalised groups (such as women) more opportunities for leadership, service and affirmation. (2) However as sectarian movements become more like mainstream society, they tend to make fewer and fewer positions of authority to marginalised groups. (3) Once the movement is mature religious body, non-privileged people are once again allowed to take leadership positions (Ibid., 31). Vance in her article takes the Weber's points and compares them with the stages of the development of Adventist gender identity. Her conclusion is that the Max Weber's hypothesis provides a good sociological explanation for the historical experience of Adventist women.

<sup>45</sup> John N. Andrews, "May Women Speak in Meeting?" *Adventist Review*, February 4, 1988, 17; first printed in *Review and Herald*, January 2, 1879.

1. Andrews approaches Paul's texts in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 based on *contextual interpretation*. Particularly referring to 1 Corinthians 14, he interprets the text from the wider context of the book.

2. Andrews bases his interpretation on the assumption that Paul's words were normative in his situation and his cultural circumstances. If the situation is different from that of Paul's – his words do not apply literally. Andrews' approach in this case is not based exclusively on the literal reading of the text, but he takes the issue of *culture* into consideration. "What Paul says... is not to be taken as directions to all Christian women in other churches and in other times, when and where such disorders do not exist."<sup>46</sup>

3. The third hermeneutical rule that in Andrews' article can be discovered is the way he explains Paul's instructions. Andrews interprets the passages by comparing them with other places of the book or the Bible. This can be termed a *comparative procedure*.

4. In the case of 1 Timothy 2, Andrews' methodological approach is less clear. His technique relies largely on comparison, highlighting positive examples of women in the Bible. The author's intention is to prove that 1 Timothy 2 is not the last word about the role of women in the church. However, his comparative approach suggests *literal reading* of 1 Timothy 2. Moreover, his comparative approach depends on how the comparative text is interpreted by the reader, but Andrews' hermeneutic is less than clear from his comparative texts because the interpretation is too short and suggests only a literal understanding.

5. The last observation about Andrews' hermeneutical approach is that Andrews is *not performing an actual exegesis* in either case. From the theological point of view Andrews is arguing in favour of women's public roles.

(2) "*Women in the Church*."<sup>47</sup> James White, husband of Ellen White and a co-founder of the denomination wrote his article in 1879. Right at the beginning of his article which deals with 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, White states his general interpretative rule:

The only safe and proper rule of biblical interpretation is to take every passage of the Book of God as meaning what it says, word for word, excepting those cases where the text and context clearly show that figure or parable is introduced for a more clear elucidation of the subject.<sup>48</sup>

His *literal approach* to the text of 1 Corinthians 14 leads him to dead end because there are many other "plain" passages that speak contrary, so "a position must be found that will harmonize the texts."<sup>49</sup> James White's approach after the initial clarifications is based on primarily a *contextual reading* which is guided by his underlying assumptions about the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> James White, "Women in the Church," *Adventist Review*, February 4, 1879, 17-19; first published in *Review and Herald*, May 29, 1879.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 18.

background of the text which he says is in the context of a church business meeting. White also *compares various texts* to interpret the passage.

His theological conclusion is that Paul's words are normative but the situation in Corinth is not a religious meeting but a business meeting because there are many other examples in the Bible of women being public leaders.

(3) "*Woman's Relation to the Cause of Christ.*" George C. Tenney wrote the article in 1892.<sup>50</sup> The article is trying to provide an explanation for the 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 texts. Tenney places emphasis on the "main tenor of the Bible",<sup>51</sup> while using a *contextual harmonising reading*. It is interesting to observe that contextual reading is for Adventist pioneers always harmonizing, not contradictory, which perhaps could indicate something about their view of the unity of Scripture.

In Tenney's article one can note some indication of exegetical work, mainly involving *linguistic procedures*. His main argument propounds that circumstances and language explain Paul's point. The theological perspective for Tenney is that God is no respecter of persons and this principle according to him must apply in the context of the public ministry of women as well.

From all three articles that were selected as examples for describing the leading theological and hermeneutical direction the church was taking at that time, one thing deserves particular notice. The articles create an impression that there was no widely agreed-upon hermeneutics that might have enabled the church to deal with the interpretation of Paul. Reading Pauline passages rested upon a literal reading and this was creating confusion in the minds of the readers. The visible reality of this theological confusion or ambiguity is that the official church magazine *Review and Herald* printed also articles arguing against the public role and service of women.<sup>52</sup> Thus, in this sense the theological voice (understanding) was probably not the key motive that convinced the church officials to withhold the ordination from women in the nineteenth century. As a matter of fact, the ambiguity of interpretative method can partially explain why the church on one hand allowed women to serve even in the authoritative leadership positions but on the other hand did not make the final step in recognizing women's contribution with ordination. It appears to be reasonable to conclude that the ordination was not finalised (although it was considered) because there existed theological

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<sup>50</sup> G. C. Tenney, "Woman's Relation to the Case of Christ," *Adventist Review*, February 4, 1888, 19-21; first printed in *Review and Herald*, May 24, 1892; then reprinted in *Review and Herald*, June 5, 1894.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>52</sup> For example: Uriah Smith, "Let Your Women Keep Silence in the Churches," *Review and Herald*, June 26, 1866; or J. H. Waggoner, "Women's Place in the Gospel," *Signs of the Times*, December 19, 1878.

and hermeneutical ambiguity in the way Paul's passages were understood among the church officials.

In addition, it may be necessary to consider a second factor, one that may explain the schizophrenic behaviour of the early church towards women in accepting their service, yet not willing to recognise it by official ordination: the factor of practical giftedness of and results achieved by women. This can be learned repeatedly from the experience of many Adventist women.<sup>53</sup> Ellen White's service was the most visible example that God called Adventist women to ministerial and even leadership service.<sup>54</sup> Theological conclusions it appears came only second after the practical experience of those who were serving without a prior clear theological-hermeneutical voice.

By the way of conclusion it can be said that the key concerns for the early Adventist church were practical and in this sense, it might have been the negative perception of the society and the resulting "at least not now" denominational response mixed with the weak theological-hermeneutical voice, which together resulted in not ordaining women into the pastoral work in early Adventism.

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<sup>53</sup> At least two cases of women can illustrate this point. (1) A woman called Laretta Fassett belonged to females who decided to speak up publicly in Millerite movement and later in Adventist movement. She was raised and educated in upper-class society. At some point in her life, she was asked to offer a public address. She however was taught that the Bible prohibits women from public roles. Even so, she threw aside her prejudices and delivered her first address. Her husband was not in doubt that "the spirit of the Lord was with her." Her husband supported her in her public ministry, because he was afraid to oppose her not just because she was gifted, but also because of what he read in Acts 2:18 (which is a quotation of Joel 2). The text in Joel for him stood against the teaching of Paul, but as the example of Mrs. Fassett exemplifies, the issue that decided in the end, which text (whether "Paul" or Joel 2) is more important for the perception of the role of women was the issue of calling and giftedness for Christian ministry. The schizophrenic reading of the Bible was probably due to the lack of a coherent hermeneutical system that would deal with difficult passages. In this situation, what Mr. Fassett *saw* was more important than what he *read*. The issue of the service of his wife was perceived through the practical lenses of her results. Ray Oel Fassett, *The Biography of Mrs. L. E. Fassett, A Devoted Christian; A Useful Life* (Boston: Advent Christian, 1885), 26-27; cited in Catharine Rayburn, "Women Heralds of 'The Advent Near'," 15. (2) The other case that highlights the dynamic connected with the issue of women's motivation to stand up and serve is the case of Mary D. Wellcome. Mary Wellcome firmly believed that God called her to public Christian ministry. However not like in the case of Mrs. Fassett, her husband strongly opposed her decision. He was even persuaded that his wife's impressions were diabolic. Despite the opposition, Mary for her sense of duty and vocation was willing to ask to be released from the marriage obligations. After some time Isaac, her husband was ready to admit that "God uses her talent for good." Worthy of noting is that "she had waited until her husband had become convinced that God was directing her steps." Wellcome M., *A Sketch, Being a Vindication of the Writer's Course in Regard to Her Public Labor in the Cause of God, and Final Separation from Her Family* (Austa, ME: Farmer Office, 1856), 3-10; cited in Catharine Rayburn, "Women Heralds of 'The Advent Near'," 18. This observation of Carole Rayburn is revealing something about the way people accepted women's public ministry. It seems that what convinced Isaac Wellcome was not the theology of ordination, but rather the fruits of *practical* ministry of his wife.

<sup>54</sup> For non Adventist readers there is a possibility to read the biography of Ellen White either on the official Ellen White Estate server [www.whiteestate.org](http://www.whiteestate.org) or in Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church Volume 1* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), 9-62; or read her detailed biography by her grandson in Arthur White, *Ellen G. White: The Early Years Volume 1 – 1827 – 1862* (Washington: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985).



## Ordination of Women in Adventism from 1950s to the Present

Part two of the first chapter aims at documenting the modern history of women's ordination. The description provided in this part is in no way comprehensive or exhaustive: rather, it is aimed at highlighting only the key ecclesiological developments and the main turning moments in the current debate.

The event that started the modern history of the debate about the roles of women in Adventist Church was the request sent by W. Duncan Eva, president of Northern European Division to W. R. Beach, General Conference (GC) Secretary on March 28, 1968.<sup>55</sup> In the letter sent to GC secretary, the Northern European Division (NED) requested counsel on the ordination of women in Finland. The question of the possible ordination of women arose in the Finnish Union where women played an active role in the church. The request however surprised the NED as well as GC administrators.

On April 8, the request from Europe was discussed by the GC administrators and the move was made to put the ordination topic on the agenda of the upcoming annual GC executive meeting. This decision of the GC was communicated back to the church in Europe<sup>56</sup>. With these two letters the modern history of the ordination of women in Adventist church started. However, the request of the Finnish Union has not been solved satisfactorily even after more than 40 years.

Six months after the request from Finland was sent to the GC administrators, in September 1968 the GC annual council appointed a 3-member committee for studying the topic of the ordination of women. The same decision was taken in June 1970 when the GC officers appointed what they called at that time "an adequate committee to consider this large topic".<sup>57</sup>

On June 21 1972 The Far East Division had sent a letter to GC similar to the request of NED. Because of these requests as well as the result of the growing pressure on GC from

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<sup>55</sup> "The Seventh-day Adventist Church is organized with a representative form of church government. This means authority in the Church comes from the membership of local churches. Executive responsibility is given to representative bodies and officers to govern the Church. Four levels of Church structure lead from the individual believer to the worldwide Church organization: (1) The local church made up of individual believers (2) The local conference, or local field/mission, made up of a number of local churches in a state, province, or territory (3) The union conference, or union field/mission, made up of conferences or fields within a larger territory (often a grouping of states or a whole country) (4) The General Conference, the most extensive unit of organization, made up of all unions in all parts of the world. Divisions are sections of the General Conference, with administrative responsibility for particular geographical areas." Taken from [www.adventist.org/worldchurch](http://www.adventist.org/worldchurch).

<sup>56</sup> Minutes of GC Officers Meeting, April 8, 1968; cited in Kit Watts, "Appendix 5: An Outline of the History of Seventh-day Adventists and the Ordination of Women," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 339.

<sup>57</sup> Minutes of GC Officers, June 5, 1970; cited in Kit Watts, "Appendix 5: An Outline of the History of Seventh-day Adventists and the Ordination of Women," in *The Welcome Table*, 340.

the local churches,<sup>58</sup> the GC committee established an *ad hoc* committee on the role of women in the church in July 1973. As a result of the work of the *ad hoc* committee a meeting was called to Camp Mohaven, Ohio<sup>59</sup> to discuss a dozen papers on the role of women.<sup>60</sup> The committee recommended that women be ordained as local church elders and those with theological training hired as “associates in pastoral care”. The committee also proposed a pilot program that would lead to the ordination of women in 1975.<sup>61</sup> The annual council in the same year (1973) voted “that continued study be given to the theological soundness of the election of women to local church offices which require ordination” and that “in areas receptive to such actions, there be continued recognition of the appropriateness of appointing women to pastoral-evangelistic work, and that the appropriate missionary credentials/licenses be granted them.”<sup>62</sup> In 1974, the annual council still felt that “the time is not ripe nor opportune” for going ahead with ordination.<sup>63</sup>

The important breakthrough came however during the next year. In 1975 the GC spring annual meeting adopted a policy of permitting the ordination of deaconesses and women elders. The policy was however adopted accompanied by an advice that “greatest discretion and caution” should be exercised.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, it took the Adventist church 7 years, from when the first request on ordination of women appeared on the administrative level in 1968, to adopt an official policy regarding the ordination of women. The church in 1975 was for the first time in its history able

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<sup>58</sup> In 1972 the first Adventist woman, Josephine Benton was ordained as a local elder in Brotherhood Church in Washington D.C. by the conference and union presidents. See Kit Watts and Cherie Rouse, “A Historical Outline: Adventists and the Ordination of Women,” *Adventist Today*, March/April 1994, 5.

<sup>59</sup> The Mohaven conference plays a critical role for the modern discussion about the ordination of women. The *ad hoc* committee made it clear that there are no theological reasons prohibiting women's ordination, yet on the other hand the conference concluded that there are no explicit texts that encourage the ordination of women either. Thus many people refer to Mohaven conference in 1973 as the time since there is “a division in the house”. The discussed papers were published first in 1984. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *The Role of Women in the Church* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1984, 1995).

<sup>60</sup> The “theological” committee meets and discusses the issue of ordination of women elders after almost one year the formal rite of ordination of Josephine Benton in Washington D.C. on December 5, 1972. This highlights the crucial dynamic between the church practice and the church theology. The theology of the church appears to be one step behind the practical developments also in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>61</sup> Kit Watts, “Appendix 5: An Outline of the History of Seventh-day Adventists and the Ordination of Women,” in *The Welcome Table*, 340-341.

<sup>62</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Washington, DC), Minutes of Meetings of the General Conference Committee, 4-18 October 1973, meeting of 18 October 1973, 73/1819.

<sup>63</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Washington, DC), Minutes of Meetings of Annual Council of the General Conference Committee, 9-17 October 1974, meeting of 17 October 1974, 74/388.

<sup>64</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (Washington, DC), Minutes of Meetings of the General Conference Committee, 1-10 April 1975, meeting of 3 April 1975, 75/153.

officially<sup>65</sup> to acknowledge and approve ordination of deaconesses and women elders. The Annual GC council reaffirmed the 1975 decision in October 1984,<sup>66</sup> despite the continuing discussions and tensions in the world church concerning the matter.

With the 1975 permission to ordain women as deaconesses and women elders and with the 1984 affirmation the issue of the ordination of women in Adventist Church made a step forward. Yet this step was only the commencement of twenty turbulent years of discussion and argument at every level in the church.

With the looming of the 1985 GC session in New Orleans<sup>67</sup> the way was prepared to make the final step for approving the ordination of women also to the gospel ministry. The GC session at New Orleans however decided to move rather cautiously and the delegates requested more study to be done on the issue.

Between 1985 and 1990 (the next GC session) the church theologians and administrators began to diversify in their opinions about the ordination more considerably than before. On one hand there were arguments to extend the ordination to the pastoral ministry work, on the other hand there was a strong effort to eliminate any ordination of women and to return to the situation that existed before 1975. From the theological point of view the most important developments were made by the so called "Commission on the Role of Women" committee that was voted for by the 1984 October's annual council meeting. The commission met three times between the years 1985 and 1989 and was made up of representatives from each world division. The commission met the first time at the church's headquarters in Washington D.C. in March 26-28, 1985. The commission consisted of 65 members including 15 women and recommended more study especially on Pauline material and church history. The commission was however against a definitive decision on women's ordination.<sup>68</sup>

With an almost identical conclusion the commission met for the second time in March 24-27 1988, again in the Washington D.C. headquarter building. This time 80 delegates were present, including 19 women. Twenty documents were studied, most of them exegetical and theological in nature. Largely, the papers tended to cancel each other. The world church

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<sup>65</sup> As it was already mentioned there was an "unofficial" ordination already in 1900.

<sup>66</sup> The October Annual GC Council in 1984 extended the possibility of ordaining women deaconesses and women elders to the world church.

<sup>67</sup> The GC world sessions are held every 5 years. Between the GC sessions the GC executive committee meets twice a year on its annual spring and autumn meetings. The GC world sessions are gathering of delegates representing their national churches and it is only at the GC session that official world wide policy could be adapted or approved. The GC executive committee has the right to adapt new policy in between the GC sessions but the next coming GC session must approve the decision. There are certain exceptions from this general rule, but the most important decisions are made by following this general rule. For the more comprehensive understanding of how the decision making and implementing process in the Seventh-day Adventist Church works see the official web site of the church on [www.adventist.org](http://www.adventist.org).

<sup>68</sup> Kit Watts, "Appendix 5: An Outline of the History of Seventh-day Adventists and the Ordination of Women," in *The Welcome Table*, 345.

president Neal C. Wilson commenting on the commission meeting observed that "our theologians... are far from united concerning the application of some of the key biblical passages to the ordination of women for the gospel ministry. Strong differences of opinion surfaced in these discussions..."<sup>69</sup>

Despite their differences, the members of the commission also felt that "the world church should stay together on this matter, rather than permitting some divisions to proceed on an independent course."<sup>70</sup> No further action in connection with the issue was recommended, but the need for additional study was suggested.

The last time the Commission on the Role of Women in the Church met was in July 12-18 1989 this time at Cohutta Springs, Georgia. The commission representatives voted "56-11 in favour of a two-pronged controversial recommendation brought to them by division presidents and GC officers who were present at the meeting."<sup>71</sup> The committee recommended: "(a) Women not be ordained to the gospel ministry, and (b) that divisions may authorize qualified women in ministry to perform baptisms and marriages"<sup>72</sup> (roles which belong to the competency of ordained ministry). With these two recommendations the work of the commission was finished but the general feeling in the church was that the recommendations were "half-hearted".

The upcoming General Conference Session in Indianapolis in July 5-14 1990 was impatiently awaited as more and more news reports about the positive work of women were surfacing.<sup>73</sup> The GC delegates accepted by a vote of 1173 to 377 the recommendation of the Commission on the Role of Women in the Church not to ordain women to the gospel ministry at his time. On the other hand, however, the delegates also voted by 776 to 494 votes to accept the second part of the commission's recommendation, allowing women pastors to perform marriage and baptism ceremonies in accordance with those divisions which authorised them.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Neal C. Wilson, "Role of Women Commission Meets: The General Conference President Reports to the Church," *Adventist Review*, May 12, 1988, 7.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* For more comments on the meeting of the commission see also Floyd Bresee, "Women in Ministry," *Ministry*, August 1988, 22-23.

<sup>71</sup> Kit Watts, "Appendix 5: An Outline of the History of Seventh-day Adventists and the Ordination of Women," in *The Welcome Table*, 352.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> For example, in 1988 the Institute of Church Ministry at Andrews University presented a survey that found almost 1000 women elders serving throughout the territory of North America. In the same year the news came from China that Mrs. Hui Ying Zhou baptised more than 200 persons. Note however that baptisms conducted by women were not officially recognised at that time. Once again the "unofficial" was ahead of the official theology and official policy of the church. For the mentioned news see Kit Watts and Cherie Rouse, "A Historical Outline: Adventists and the Ordination of Women," *Adventist Today*, March/April 1994, 6.

<sup>74</sup> For a comprehensive evaluation of what happened at the Indianapolis General Conference Session in 1990, see Charles Scriven, "The Debate About Women: What Happened? Why?," *Spectrum* 20/5 (August 1990): 25-30; Ari L. Goldman, "Foreign Influence Gains in the Adventist Church," *Spectrum*, 20/5 (August 1990): 42-43 (This article was also printed in *The New York Times National*,

Given the two-sided decisions with which the church left Indianapolis it was expected that the coming next five years would be spent in preparation of new studies, arguments and searching for possible acceptable solutions. During the 1990-1995 period both camps published significant books regarding ordination.<sup>75</sup> The official church periodicals *Adventist Review* and *Ministry* as well as unofficial ones such as *Adventist Today*, *Spectrum*, *Adventist Affirm* and *The Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* also started to publish articles for and against the ordination of women.

The turning moment in the debate occurred in 1994, when - in a special session - the executive committee of the NAD prior to the Annual Council voted the recommendation that requested the Annual Council to refer the request of the NAD to the GC session for consideration. The full recommendation of the NAD read as follows:

To request the Annual Council to refer the following action to the General Conference session for consideration: The GC vests in each division the right to authorize the ordination of individuals within its territory in harmony with established policies. In addition, where circumstances and practice do not render it inadvisable, a division may authorize the ordination of qualified individuals without regard to gender. In divisions where the division executive committee takes specific actions approving the ordination of women to the gospel ministry, women may be ordained to serve in those divisions.<sup>76</sup>

Thus with the coming of the year 1995 and the upcoming 56th General Conference Session in Utrecht, Holland in that year the expectations especially of the church in North America, Europe and Australia were high. The church in these territories expected that the world church would authorise the ordination of women to the gospel ministry *in the territories of individual divisions* "where the division executive committee take specific actions to approving the ordination of women to the gospel ministry..."<sup>77</sup> This time it was hoped that the territorial request of the NAD division would pass. On 6<sup>th</sup> of July "at the most divisive and

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July 17, 1990); [Editors], "Speaking in Turn: Excerpts From Delegates' Speeches On the Ordination of Women," *Spectrum*, 20/5 (August 1990): 31-36; Ronald Knott, "The Media and the GC Session: Women Make the Most News," *Spectrum*, 20/5 (August 1990): 41-42; Kendra Haloviak, "Voices of Global Change?," *Spectrum*, 20/5 (August 1990): 26-27.

<sup>75</sup> In 1990 Josephine Benton, *Called by God*; in the same year Norskov V. Olsen, *Myth and Truth: Church, Priesthood and Ordination*; in 1992 Review and Herald compilation book Rosa T. Banks ed., *A Woman's Place*; in 1994 an anti-ordination book is published by Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*; in 1995 another anti-ordination book is published by Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*; in 1995 the book from the pro camp is published *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women* edited by Patricia Habada and Rebecca F. Brillhart.

<sup>76</sup> David Newman, "Another Look at Ordination," *Ministry*, April 1995, 3; the original recommendation can be found in *GC 1995 Bulletin* L 45; or in Proceedings of the General Conference Fifty-sixth General Conference session 1995, Cassette 114, July 5 p.m. (General Conference Archives), 101.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

emotional meeting by far, GC delegates voted down women's ordination 1,482 to 673 (69 percent to 31 percent)"<sup>78</sup>

The GC session in Utrecht ended a 20-year-effort to acknowledge women's contribution in the church by official ordination to the gospel ministry. Since the first official decision was made in 1975 allowing ordination of deaconesses and women elders, the church additionally approved only for trained women to perform baptism and marriage ceremonies. The decision of the GC made at Utrecht however again did not put to sleep the issue in the Adventist community. This can be particularly seen from the fact that the list of what women cannot do has gradually shrunk from 1975 to the present situation where policy-wise there are only four things today that an ordained male minister can do and a trained woman serving in the church cannot do: "Hold the office of conference, union, division or General Conference president, organize and disband churches, ordain local elders and deacons, and baptize and marry outside one's own district."<sup>79</sup>

Since 1995, the issue of women's ordination has not been addressed officially at Annual or GC session meetings. This however does not mean that the ordination of women was defeated. It appears that the negative votes of delegates have only slowed down the process of acknowledging the ordination of women officially. Unofficially though between the years 1995 and 2000 eleven women were ordained as ministers.<sup>80</sup> What the GC sessions were not able to acknowledge, the local churches in North America began to do unofficially. For the church in North America the issue of ordination of women became not only a theological issue but also a moral issue and an issue of conscience.<sup>81</sup>

The positive trend toward the ministry of women in the western world after 1995 is also mirrored in the statistics about the number of women elders and pastors in North America. In 1996 of the 4,600 churches in the NAD only 100 had women pastors (2.17%). Of the 10,000 elders in the NAD 1,500-2,000 were women elders (15-20%). Of 45,000 local church committee board members 23,000-27,000 were women (50-60%).<sup>82</sup> In 1999 The Southeastern California Conference statistics revealed that on the territory of this conference

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<sup>78</sup> Jim Walters, "General Conference Delegates Say NO on Women's Ordination," *Adventist Today*, July/August 1995, 11.

<sup>79</sup> Maryan Stirling, "Male Clergy Reject Exclusive Credentials," *Adventist Today*, November/December 1995, 8.

<sup>80</sup> [Editors], "Women in Ministry: Landmarks in Women's Ministry Since Utrecht," *Spectrum*, 28/3 (Summer 2000): 25-27.

<sup>81</sup> See for example [Editors], "Equality is Present Truth," *Adventist Today*, September/October 1995, 1 and 4; Raymond Cottrell, "Justice Postponed is Justice Denied," *Adventist Today*, March/April 1994, 18; or Jim Walters, "General Conference Delegates Say NO on Women's Ordination," 11-13.

<sup>82</sup> Georgia Hodgkin, "NAD Commission Encourages, Affirms, and Advances Women," *Adventist Today*, November/December 1996, 10.

10% of ministers were women ministers.<sup>83</sup> These numbers reveal that the number of women serving in the full-time gospel ministry in the western world (North America, Europe, Australia) is growing despite of the lack of official recognition of their work.

In this regard, it is important to mention one of the latest significant developments made by the Southeastern California Conference (SECC) executive committee that voted on March 16 2000 for equal credentials (indicating official church approval for ministry) for women in ministry.<sup>84</sup> The solution of the SECC was to issue to all its ministers with the hyphenated title of "ordained-commissioned' minister in good standing" avoiding altogether the issue of ordination (or non-ordination).<sup>85</sup>

Given modern developments, what seems certain is this: the issue of official ordination to the gospel ministry is trapped both practically and theologically between the arguments from both sides. While on one hand the church has acknowledged local ordinations of deaconesses and women elders, on the other hand there is no sign of agreeing on a worldwide ordination of women to the gospel ministry.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> [Editors], "Southern California Conference Supports Women in Ministry with Ordination Initiative," *Adventist Today*, November/December 1999, 6.

<sup>84</sup> [Editors], "Women in Ministry: Landmarks in Women's Ministry Since Utrecht," 25-27; also Dennis Hokama, "Never is Heard the Commissioning Word: Jennifer Scott Ordained in the Loma Linda University Church," *Adventist Today*, May/June 2000, 9, 22.

<sup>85</sup> This move of the SECC, however, was criticised by the GC president as regretful "The issue is not the rightness or otherwise, ethically, morally or biblically, of the position that there should be no difference between them. My regret is that the SECC could not, out of deference to the larger international family of Seventh-day Adventists, have held in check their exercise of 'freedom,' knowing that the church makes her decisions sometimes frustratingly slowly, but in a very deliberate manner with an eye to many issues. Moving together until we have agreed to give room to differ on specific issues is the price we pay for unity." Dennis Hokama, "Never is Heard the Commissioning Word: Jennifer Scott Ordained in the Loma Linda University Church," 9.

<sup>86</sup> One of the latest examples of how the ordination issue is still charged are three articles published in the winter 2009 issue of *Adventist Today*. See Bonita Joyner Shields, "Ordination is not the Issue: Reflections of Female Pastor," *Adventist Today*, Winter 2009, 12-17; David Newman, "Why Men Should Not Be Ordained," *Adventist Today*, Winter 2009, 14-15 and Fabiola Vatel, "My God is Bigger: Finding a Job as a Female Pastor," *Adventist Today*, Winter 2009, 18-19. The *Spectrum* online blog has also very recently (29 July 2009) published an article concerning the historical dimension of the matter. See Bonnie Dwyer, "1985: Postponing Difficult Decisions," available at <http://www.spectrummagazine.org>.

## CHAPTER II

### SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF OPPONENTS' BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND HERMENEUTICAL POSITION

#### Introduction

Following the historical introduction in Chapter One, the discussion in Chapter Two will move into biblical, theological and also hermeneutical grounds. The main objective of this chapter is to systematically analyze the major biblical and theological arguments used in the debate by opponents and to investigate the hermeneutical apparatus which supports those conclusions.

The structure of the arguments in this chapter is not present in the format of the writings produced by opponents, however. In fact arguments of both sides usually appear in a random format in various documents and there is no study available at the present that would contain a systematic and analytical presentation of the main arguments or the whole debate. For this reason one of the important tasks of this thesis is to provide such a systematic structuring of all the key points of both camps for the sake of the overall clarification of the debate. The task of structuring and systematizing the debate thus should not be underestimated and for this reason the dissertation will provide necessary space in part one of this chapter to achieve this objective.

The chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first part biblical and theological arguments of opponents will be examined and arranged into a coherent system. The analysis will begin with investigating first the biblical arguments and then it will proceed to examine the main theological arguments. The structuring of the arguments in the order of biblical-theological reflects for once the logical progress for doing theology, moving from the text to theological conclusions and secondly it also reflects different levels of importance attached to these arguments.<sup>1</sup> The second part of the chapter will move from biblical and theological grounds to hermeneutical and methodological matters. Part two will be divided into several subsections covering first the opponents' theory of biblical inspiration which will then directly lead to the section on their methodology and finally to the section on the functional aspects of their hermeneutical method or as sometimes called principles of interpretation.

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<sup>1</sup> Both sides in the debate emphasise the prominence of "Sola Scriptura" method for finding the solution. Thus, this chapter is in accordance with this underlying assumption that exegetical (biblical) arguments are more highly endorsed than those theological arguments based solely on the exegetical.



Chapter Two will not investigate every type of argument employed in the debate, nor will it investigate every theological or biblical argument. For the purpose of the overall thesis it is not relevant for example to investigate sociological or practical-church arguments which do not contribute to the hermeneutical understanding of the opponents' case. Equally it is not important to investigate every biblical or theological argument but just the main ones which repeatedly appear on the agenda of opponents and which in essence constitute the core of their position. Finally, chapter two is limited to only the analysis and synthesis and therefore I will not provide assessment at this stage.

### **Structured Analysis and Synthesis of Biblical and Theological Arguments**

The presentation of the opponents' arguments is based on the analysis of their own documents. Out of different types of arguments which appear in their writings four main categories can be identified. The first category was already covered in chapter one: that pertaining to *historical arguments*. Opponents generally do not engage in reconstructing the early Adventist history<sup>2</sup> but they still argue that the Adventist church in the past did not ordain women for theological reasons and not for cultural or sociological.<sup>3</sup> Opponents mention sometimes arguments referring to *practical church life and sociology*. These, as mentioned above will not be covered in this place.<sup>4</sup> The last two categories of arguments which however the chapter will proceed to investigate are the *biblical* and *theological*. These have primary significance in the debate and so the presentation will focus on them now.

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<sup>2</sup> Out of the four main books published by opponents: Raymond Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg: Biblical Authority, Biblical Interpretation and the Ordination of Women in Ministry* (Wakefield, MI: POINTER Publications, 1994); Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word: How New Approaches to the Bible Impact Our Faith and Lifestyle* (Berrien Springs, MI: Berean Books, 1996); Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1985); and Mercedes H. Dyer ed., *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000, only the last one has two chapters discussing the historical background. Both of these chapters (13, and 17) however do not provide historical reconstruction of the past but only react to the historical reconstructions provided by proponents. The same is the true about the leading magazine of the opponents' side *Adventist Affirm*. Although some issues of the magazine were devoted to the issue of women's role in the Adventist church, none of the articles dealing with the history do informed historical reconstruction, but only defend the position held by the magazine publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Especially, Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "Are Those Things So?-Part II: A Summary and Evaluation of Key Historical and Theological Arguments of *Women in Ministry*," in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 287-312.

<sup>4</sup> There are already studies available which have covered and investigate the sociological background of the Adventist ordination debate. See for example the published doctoral dissertation of Laura L. Vance, *Seventh-day Adventism in Crisis: Gender and Sectarian Change in an Emerging Religion* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

## Biblical Arguments

There are six key passages in the New Testament which are crucial for both sides. These are 1 Timothy 2:9-15, 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36, 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, Ephesians 5:21-23, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Galatians 3:26-29. All these passages will be presented under biblical arguments.

Besides the key New Testament passages, the discussion also focuses on the Old Testament passages of Genesis 1 to 3. These however are not included in the biblical section because references to Genesis text are very much part of the theological arguments. Thus the opponents' interpretation of Genesis 1 to 3 will be presented under theological arguments.

It is also important to mention that even though exegetical parts will be dealing primarily with the above mentioned six scriptures it does not mean that other Biblical texts are not mentioned in the debate. Other biblical or exegetical evidence is usually a part of the larger theological evidence and thus these scriptural places will be included in theological arguments. The presentation in this place will aim to cover only *the key* exegetical evidence. Passages will be presented in the above-mentioned order beginning with 1 Timothy 2:9-15.

For the opponents none of the key texts are "problematic, obscure, or painfully puzzling. All are written in clear prose and do not contain typological, figurative, symbolic, or poetic language, which means that they are not difficult to understand. It does not take a scholar to interpret them."<sup>5</sup> All of these passages are "to be interpreted literally unless the context clearly indicates otherwise".<sup>6</sup>

### 1 Timothy 2:9-15

Opponents appeal to the text of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 as one of the most important scriptural evidences for the debate. 1 Timothy 2 is the absolute centre of the opponents' evidence. This text is used not only to provide biblical proof, but it is also used as a hermeneutical vantage point for understanding Genesis 1-3. Opponents themselves have acknowledged the centrality of Paul's letter to Timothy at more than one place.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, "Does Paul Really Forbid Women to Speak in Church? A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:11-15," in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 163.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Literal interpretation is stressed throughout the writings of opponents and in the ordination debate this literalistic approach constitutes an underlying hermeneutical difference between both sides. This issue will be explored in the next chapter.

<sup>7</sup> "Central to the debate on women's ordination is 1 Timothy 2:11-14." See Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 58. Also Bacchiocchi acknowledges that "the significance of this passage lies in the fact that it addresses specifically the question of the role of women within the church." See Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 145. Furthermore Herbert Kiesler also says "this passage may be considered as one of the most important texts in the New Testament on the role of men and women in community leadership." See Herbert Kiesler, "Ephesians Four and the Role of Women," Commission on the Role of Women Papers, 1987, 11.

## Universal Application and Permanent Validity

The significance of 1 Timothy lies for opponents in the fact that this letter presents principles with permanent validity and universal application. The passage under consideration is not culturally or geographically conditioned. Neither is the text of 1 Timothy 2 limited to the context of marriage. Gerhard Damsteegt observes: "The universal thrust of 1 Timothy's direct injunctions was intended to reveal instructions for the successful operation of the church throughout the Christian era".<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Bacchiocchi states: "Even a cursory reading of 1 Timothy suffices to see that the instructions given by Paul were meant not merely for the local church at Ephesus, but for the Christian church at large."<sup>9</sup> Claims for universal application of 1 Timothy 2 stands upon the following reasons:

(1) *The precise wording and the use of generic language* used by Paul in the context of 1 Timothy 3:14, 15.<sup>10</sup>

(2) *The nature of the subjects discussed* indicates a general applicability.<sup>11</sup>

(3) *Using of general words for man* (ἀνὴρ/ἄνδρες) *and woman* (γυνή/γυναῖκας) indicates that the passage of 1 Timothy 2 has implications beyond the family relationship of husband and wife.<sup>12</sup>

(4) *The immediate context in verses 8-10*, which gives instructions on Christian dress and adornment suggest that 1 Timothy 2 cannot be limited to family context but it must relate to life in the church context.<sup>13</sup>

(5) Theological reasons mentioned in verses 13-15 suggest permanent validity.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gerhard Damsteegt, "Scripture Faces Current Issues," *Ministry*, April 1999, 25.

<sup>9</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 147.

<sup>10</sup> The language "indicates that he considered his instructions to be normative beyond the local situation of the Ephesus church." Ibid., 146. Two words are of a special significance here: δεῖ and ἀναστρέφεισθαι. Δεῖ – "The impersonal verb *dei* ("one ought") generally emphasizes a strong necessity, usually deriving from a divinely established moral obligation." Ἀναστρέφεισθαι – "Similarly the present infinitive form *anastrephesthai* ("to behave"), which takes no person or number, suggests a general rather than a restricted application." (Ibid., italics original). Interestingly, Gerhard Damsteegt uses the same text of 1 Timothy 3:14, 15 after his statement about the "universal trust of 1 Timothy". See Gerhard Damsteegt, "Scripture Faces Current Issues," 25.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 147. 1 Timothy 1 – perverted and proper use of the law. 1 Timothy 2 – prayers for rulers and worship procedures. 1 Timothy 3 and 4 – qualifications for church leaders. 1 Timothy 5 and 6 – how Timothy should function in relation to various social groups.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 59. Accordingly the argument is explored by stating that: "Had Paul intended to confine his prohibition in verse 12 only to the relationship of a wife to her husband, then he likely would have used a definite article or a possessive pronoun with man: 'I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over her man'... The context is abundantly clear. Paul addresses men and women in general as members of the church and not just husbands and wives, as he does in Ephesians 5:22-23 and Colossians 3:18-19." Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 103.

<sup>13</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 103.

(6) *Addressing the letter to Timothy and not to the church at Ephesus* is significant. It shows that Paul is instructing young Timothy in the principles for running congregations, which, in turn, is not limited solely to the congregation at Ephesus with its specific situation.<sup>15</sup>

(7) *“Reference to the ‘later times’ (1 Timothy 4:1) and the ‘coming age’ (6:19) supports the universal application of principles...”*<sup>16</sup>

(8) *Purpose of the Scriptures* is to give message for all time, all places and all situations.<sup>17</sup>

Samuele Bacchiocchi concludes on the universal application of 1 Timothy 2: “Whatever is said about church order in the epistle applies to the universal church.”<sup>18</sup> Thus the universal validity of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 is the first and vital conclusion which opponents reach regarding this passage.<sup>19</sup>

#### Interpretation of Verses 11 and 12

Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2 for the opponents is also significant in the light of verses 11 and 12. These verses according to opponents should be taken together as one unit because they form an inverted parallelism. “What is stated positively in verse 11, is restated and amplified negatively in verse 12. Quiet learning is paralleled by the command not to teach, and the attitude of submission is paralleled by the command not to exercise authority.”<sup>20</sup> Quietness (ἡσυχία), as required in verse 11 by Paul, does not mean that women can never speak to men

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<sup>14</sup> “Theological reason cited by Paul in verses 13-15 (‘For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor’) makes it very difficult to limit 1 Timothy 2:8-15 (or 2:11-15) to the church of Ephesus. It has implications for the church in a transcultural and universal manner.” Gerhard F. Hasel, “Biblical Authority and Feminist Interpretation,” *Adventist Affirm*, Fall 1989, 16. Similarly argues Raymond Holmes: “He (Paul) appeals to the order of creation (2:13), basing what he says on God’s revelation, not on any other source. His appeal is to a universal principle applied to a specific situation, and what he says is an apostolic command.” Raymond C. Holmes, “Does Paul Really Forbid Women to Speak in Church? A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” in *Prove All Things*, 164.

<sup>15</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, “Does Paul Really Forbid Women to Speak in Church? A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” in *Prove All Things*, 169.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 168. Italics mine.

<sup>17</sup> “Therefore, any idea that this text is applicable only to a specific situation in the Ephesus congregation... and not to any other period or place in the history of the Christian church, especially our own, is untenable, and must be rejected in the strongest terms. Otherwise we would have to conclude that the rest of 1 Timothy is not applicable to our time, together with all the rest of Paul’s writings as well as Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.” Raymond C. Holmes, “Does Paul Really Forbid Women to Speak in Church? A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” in *Prove All Things*, 168.

<sup>18</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 146. See also his arguments that the passage in 1 Timothy 2 does not present a case for domestic policy in Samuele Bacchiocchi, “A Response to Some Pro-Ordination Papers,” *Commission on the Role of Women Papers*, 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Gerhard Hasel has argued that hermeneutically it is impossible to limit the application of 1 Timothy 2 without limiting the scope of biblical authority. See Gerhard Hasel, “Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women,” *Commission on the Role of Women Papers*, 1988, 29-32.

<sup>20</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 149.

in church, however. Paul is not talking about absolute silence, but rather peacefulness implying respectful listening.<sup>21</sup> Learning of woman should be ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ and in full submission – ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ. For opponents submission becomes a pivotal concept: “‘Submission’ appears to be the pivotal concept that unites the learning of women in verse 11 with the issue of their teaching in verse 12.”<sup>22</sup> All of this leads opponents to only one conclusion:

The text indicates that there is a specific situation in which women are not to teach, thus denying them a specific authority. The text says that women *should keep silent when it comes to exercising spiritual authority over men within the context of the worship life of the church.*<sup>23</sup>

Similarly Mervyn Maxwell concludes: “In 1 Timothy 2:11, 12, the close proximity of the words ‘teach’ and ‘have authority’ suggests that God is opposed to a certain kind of authoritative teaching in the presence of men.”<sup>24</sup> Gerhard Hasel’s argument follows a similar line, here; for him, this reference relates to authoritative teaching.<sup>25</sup> The argument of opponents based on exegesis of verses 11 and 12 is thus that Paul intended that women should not be authoritative teachers in the church. Mario Veloso has justified such conclusions when he linked the prohibition to teaching and exercising authority over men to the universal ruling of God: “He shall rule over you” (Genesis 3:16). Paul cannot grant women doctrinal authority over men because it would be an open contradiction to what God said in Genesis 3:16.<sup>26</sup> Women can however teach “specific groups of young men” and “individuals” but never “pastors nor elders (bishops)” who are the only ones allowed to exercise authoritative teaching and provide doctrinal orientation for the life of the church.<sup>27</sup> Accordingly Keisler argued that the prohibition of women not to hold authority over men in the context of church leadership and teaching is based on “the way men and women were created.”<sup>28</sup>

Hence, the role of authoritative teachers or spiritual leaders in the church is reserved to men only. Women can participate on worship services, they can pray, prophesy or exhort but “they can do so on the basis of the authority delegated by the male pastor...whose spiritual

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<sup>21</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, “Does Paul Really Forbid Women to Speak in Church? A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” in *Prove All Things*, 167.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>23</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 144. Italics mine.

<sup>24</sup> Mervyn C. Maxwell, “Let’s Be Serious,” *Adventist Affirm*, Fall 1989, 29.

<sup>25</sup> Gerhard Hasel, “Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women,” 34-36.

<sup>26</sup> Mario Veloso, “Exegesis and Theological Implications of 1 Timothy 2:8-15,” *Commission on the Role of Women Papers*, 1988, 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-8. He says that it is an intellectual teaching of doctrine, gradual, systematic and authoritative that is being prohibited by Paul. Interestingly Veloso is also arguing that since it was a woman who was not able to distinguish the presence of deceit and permitted herself to be deceived she lacks the necessary capacity of discernment required for governing the church doctrinally and authoritatively. (*Ibid.*, 9-10).

<sup>28</sup> Herbert Kiesler, “Ephesians Four and the Role of Women,” 13.

authority is derived from Christ.”<sup>29</sup> According to opponents then, Paul is prohibiting women from the kind of teaching done in the capacity of a leader of the church.<sup>30</sup>

#### Interpretation of Verses 13 and 14

As with case of verses 11 and 12, opponents similarly argue for taking verses 13 and 14 as a unit.<sup>31</sup> But not only do they constitute a unity, in addition, verses 13 and 14 are connected with verses 11 and 12 with the conjunction “for” – γάρ. Γάρ is designated, in the understanding of opponents, to introduce the reason and not merely an example in verses 13 and 14.<sup>32</sup> Thus in verses 13 and 14 opponents find additional reasons for why women are prohibited from authoritative teaching roles in the church. These reasons are:

(1) The priority of Adam's creation: “For Adam was formed first, then Eve” (1 Timothy 2:13) and;

(2) The deception of Eve: “and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor” (1 Timothy 2:14).

Both these reasons are explained with the help of a type-antitype relationship. In the first case in regard to Adam's creation priority the connection to the idea of the firstborn is established. “This typological understanding of the priority of Adam's formation is reflected in the meaning both the Old and New Testaments attach to primogeniture (being first-born).”<sup>33</sup> Typology in verse 13 thus looks as follows: Adams's creation priority (firstborn) = type; leadership role of man = antitype. Bacchiocchi explains: “Paul saw in the priority of Adam's creation the symbol of the leadership role God intended man to fulfil in the home and in the church.”<sup>34</sup>

In the case of verse 14 the theological typology looks as follows: Deception of Eve = type; subordination of women = antitype.

By adding together verse 13 with verse 14 and by applying type-antitype relationship leads opponents to general conclusion about the discussed verses:

Typological thought assumes that if Adam was formed first, then Scripture must be indicating something about the role of man. Similarly, if the woman was deceived and not man, then Scripture must be indicating something about the role of women.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 145.

<sup>30</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, “Does Paul Really Forbid Women to Speak in Church? A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:11-15,” in *Prove All Things*, 166. See also Herbert Kiesler, “Exegesis of Galatians 3:26-28,” *Commission on the Role of Women Papers*, February 1987, 20-[21].

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>32</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 154.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 158. While opponents generally claim that the key biblical passages do not contain typological or symbolic language (see above on page 32), Bacchiocchi's application of typology in the case of 1 Tim 2 may be regarded as an exception from their general tendency to see language as plain.

Both reasons given in verses 13 and 14 are based on the biblical event of creation and are part of the very order of creation. This, in the opinion of opponents, is absolutely vital<sup>36</sup> for the understanding of 1 Timothy 2, because the very connection to Genesis 1-3 establishes a permanent theological reason or principle for the role of women and men in the church.<sup>37</sup>

#### Interpretation of Verse 15

Conclusions from verses 11 and 12 regarding the authoritative teaching prohibition for women and from verses 13 and 14 regarding the additional theological reasons from creation order and fall which point to men's headship and women's submission are further elaborated with exegesis of verse 15. In the opponents' view this verse is connected with the preceding verse 14 with the preposition "yet" – δέ, thus forming a climatic conclusion to the whole argument and a further clarification on the meaning of the whole passage.<sup>38</sup>

Despite acknowledging that the passage contains some linguistic problems, overall in the "whole context, the meaning of this concluding verse is obvious" to opponents.<sup>39</sup> Raymond Holmes voices his summary of verse 15: "The reference is to childbearing, a women's primary role and most glorious calling...the fulfilment of proper feminine roles in the church...is tangible proof of salvation."<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, Samuele Bacchiocchi announces his final verdict on verse 15 and on the whole passage in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 when suggesting that: "Women will be saved, not by aspiring to the leadership role of teacher-superintendent of the local congregation, but through faithfulness to their maternal and domestic roles...the concern of Paul is to emphasise the proper sphere of women's activities."<sup>41</sup>

Thus, the first studied text of 1 Timothy 2 is, in many ways, the opponents' biblical cornerstone. The analysis of their interpretation uncovered the following points: Opponents

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<sup>36</sup> Holmes for example says that "First Timothy 2:13 is central to Paul's argument". Raymond C. Holmes, "Does Paul Really Forbid Women to Speak in Church? A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:11-15," in *Prove All Things*, 169.

<sup>37</sup> In this context, Koranteng-Pipim stresses that: "The apostle Paul employed a *theological* reason to address the specific problem that occasioned his statement... Paul pointed back to the *pre-fall* creation ordinance of headship, reiterated after the fall. By appealing to the divine arrangement from creation as the reason why the woman is not to have authority over the man, the apostle dispelled any suggestion that his instruction in 1 Timothy 2:11-14 was culturally conditioned or time-bound." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 59. In a similar fashion Bacchiocchi warns that discrediting Paul's theological argument would open the doors "to question the validity of any of his other teachings, or those of any other bible writers." Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Women: Ministry without Ordination," *Ministry*, October 1986, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 160.

<sup>39</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, "Does Paul Really Forbid Women to Speak in Church? A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:11-15," in *Prove All Things*, 171. See also Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 160. Here Bacchiocchi acknowledges some linguistic complications with the interpretation of this verse.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 161.

follow the assumption of the universal applicability of the passage; they believe the text teaches prohibition of women from authoritative teaching; the priority of man's creation provides a theological reason for man's headship role. It can be observed that opponents follow a close reading of the text with a specific retrospective theological orientation which is shaping their conclusions.

### **1 Corinthians 14:33b-38**

The second key text for both sides is in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-38. The passage in 1 Corinthians 14 just as the passage in 1 Timothy 2 according to opponents is in clear prose and therefore no "fog of clever rhetoric" should obscure the plain meaning of Paul. The only way, opponents insist, the clear message of 1 Corinthians 14 could be made to mean other than the literal intent is to search for "principles".<sup>42</sup> The interpretation of opponents is thus centred on the immediate and broader context, the key phrase in verse 34 and the permanent validity of Paul's counsel.

#### **Context**

It is not difficult to establish the context for the text under consideration. Unequivocally all the prominent opponents agree here that the context is "how to maintain order in the worship assemblies"<sup>43</sup> or as Holmes puts it: "the context is Paul's concern for the proper conducting of worship services."<sup>44</sup> In this context, Paul is giving his instruction regarding the silence of women.

In the broader context of 1 Corinthians 14 however, as opponents insist, women were included in prophesying and speaking in tongues which indicates that the reference to silence must have a specific meaning. The apparent contradiction between 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14 can be solved by considering the difference between principle and application. Paul was consistent with his teaching about women's speaking and silence because he was consistently appealing to the principle of headship/subordination which had various cultural applications such as head covering or women silence in the church.<sup>45</sup> There is no contradiction in his writings. Not asking question in the assembly was a *custom* subservient to the *principle* that women should be subordinate.<sup>46</sup> Keeping silence in the meetings therefore must be

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<sup>42</sup> Raymond Holmes, "The Ordination of Women and The Anglican-Episcopal Experience: The Road to Schism," Commission on the Role of Women Papers, September 1987, 25.

<sup>43</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 99.

<sup>44</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 139. Also Herbert Kiesler, "Ephesians Four and the Role of Women," 8-9.

<sup>45</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "A Response to Some Pro-Ordination Papers," 5-6.

<sup>46</sup> "While the principle is permanent, its application is culturally conditioned... Wearing a head covering and refraining from asking questions in the assembly were customary ways in Paul's time for



understood in the context of the time and not as a principle otherwise it would contradict other Scriptural places. In the context of other New Testament texts and the context of time keeping silent meant accepting the authority of the husband.<sup>47</sup>

The context talks about the general topics of church life and one can understand this passage by distinguishing between principle and application. This suggests that there are permanent elements in the text as well as conditioned.

#### The Key Phrase – Verse 34

To better understand the difference between permanent and conditioned elements, one has to look into the verse 34. Verse 34 becomes the key verse of the whole passage for opponents. “The sentence which may provide the key to understand the meaning of the injunction is the phrase ‘For they are not permitted to speak, *but should be subordinate*, as even the law says’ (1 Corinthians 14:34).”<sup>48</sup>

Permission not to speak and subordination in the verse lead Bacchiocchi to but one conclusion: “This phrase suggests that the speech denied to women is a kind of speech that was seen as inappropriate to them as women or wives.”<sup>49</sup> It is any speaking on the side of women which is reflecting a lack of subordination to male leadership or authority including questioning that is challenging the authority of the leadership.<sup>50</sup> Kiesler has with this regard observed that, while the text does not provide specific clues as to what Paul had in mind when penning the statement of prohibition in verse 34, it is nevertheless clear that the concept of headship is the basic injunction.<sup>51</sup>

#### Permanent Validity of 1 Corinthians 14

The permanent validity of 1 Corinthians 14 is established by references to the “law” – ὁ νόμος in the text and by referring to the nature of Paul’s counsel in verses 37 and 38.

*The “law”*. Mention of the ὁ νόμος in verse 34 is seen by opponents as a clear reference to “divine arrangement of role differentiation established at creation.”<sup>52</sup> Paul’s teaching at this place is thus in harmony with the law of God which is a leadership and

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women to show submission to their husbands and church leaders.” Samuele Bacchiocchi, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Prove All Things*, 99.

<sup>47</sup> Joel D. Awoniyi, “Priesthood of All Believers: Meaning and Doctrine, Does the Priesthood of All Believers Mean That Women Can Be Ordained?” Commission on the Role of Women Papers, 7.

<sup>48</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 166.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>50</sup> This inappropriate speech included “speaking up as authoritative teachers in congregation or as judges of the words spoken by prophets, elders or even by their own husbands. It could also include any form of questioning that was seen as challenging the leadership of the church.” Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 166.

<sup>51</sup> Herbert Kiesler, “Ephesians Four and the Role of Women,” 9-10.

<sup>52</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 60.

submission principle established at creation. This principle represents God's "permanent will for the relationship between the sexes."<sup>53</sup>

Koranteng-Pipim also suggests that in 1 Corinthians 14:21 Paul uses "the law" to mean Old Testament Scriptures "suggesting that when he uses "the law" in verse 34, he has in mind the pre-fall headship principle recorded in the Old Testament (Gen 2:20b-24)."<sup>54</sup>

Opponents deny any interpretation which suggests that the  $\delta \nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\varsigma$  under consideration is some cultural Jewish or Corinthian civil law. Bacchiocchi in this regard argues that "the term "law" (*nomos*) is never used in Paul's writings with reference to cultural customs."<sup>55</sup> Bacchiocchi's interpretation of "the law" is, however, initially more cautious than his colleagues': "The "law" Paul had in mind is most likely the Old Testament principle of headship and subordination."<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, after taking into account 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 2 passages Bacchiocchi is much more confident about his interpretation of "the law":

Since the law to which Paul appeals in the parallel or analogous passages (1 Cor 11:8-9; 1 Tim 2:13) is the order of creation of Genesis 2, we can safely presume that the latter is also what Paul has in view in his reference to the 'law' in 1 Corinthians 14:34.<sup>57</sup>

By referring to "the law" opponents argue for the permanent validity of the passage. The passage for them is in tune with other New Testament texts referring to headship and the submission principle established at creation. Ultimately therefore what decides the question of women's ordination is not women's claim of divine calling but the biblical teaching of role distinctions between men and women which according to opponents is "God's order and command" since verse 34 clearly declares "as even the law says"<sup>58</sup>

*The source of Paul's instruction.* Permanent validity is further confirmed in the immediate context in verses 37 and 38. Here, Holmes observes that Paul is referring to "Lord's command" ( $\delta\tau\iota \kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\upsilon \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu \acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\omicron\lambda\eta$ ) as a source for his instructions in the previous verses: indeed, the command is no invention of Paul but points to the divine source for his counsel. Holmes therefore makes this conclusion: "Neither culture nor his own personal opinion are involved. His counsel is clearly under the authority of God's revelation, where it must always remain for the church."<sup>59</sup>

In addition to Holmes's comments regarding the divine source for Paul's counsel (and thus implying divine authority for the counsel), in a rhetorical question Koranteng-Pipim

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<sup>53</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 140.

<sup>54</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 60.

<sup>55</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 169.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>58</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "A Response to Some Pro-Ordination Papers," 8 and 10.

<sup>59</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 141. See also page 140 for his explanation of "the Lord's command". What Holmes concludes in the above quote may raise later important questions about his view of inspiration.

summarises all the insights of opponents about the passage: "How can a 'command of the Lord,' addressed to 'all the churches,' referred to as 'the law,' and grounded in the fact of 'creation,' be a sinful practice and hence culturally conditioned?"<sup>60</sup>

The text of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 is, for the opponents' side, the second key Scriptural evidence which teaches that even "the law" does not permit women to use their influence in the church in an authoritative manner. Authoritative and leadership roles, both in the church and in the family are reserved to men only. This principle was established at creation and applied in the time of Paul in accordance with the customs of the day. While customs are conditioned the principle of male headship role and woman's submission is not.<sup>61</sup>

### 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

First of all the leading opponents do not agree with those who say that the text of 1 Corinthians 11 is problematic. To them, "the important issues to which the text refers are clear."<sup>62</sup> What are those important issues to which the text refers then? According to the opponents the "importance of this passage lies not so much in what Paul says about head coverings as in the significance that he attaches to head covering as a symbol of the role distinction."<sup>63</sup>

The text is being interpreted from verse 3 where the "head" is understood as "authority" and not "source" as some proponents argue.<sup>64</sup> Verses 8 and 9 further clarify the issue. For opponents the reference to Genesis 2 and the creation of Eve is a reference to the basic principle behind the text. This principle is the theological principle of headship and submission.<sup>65</sup> "Therefore, for a woman to uncover her head...in worship was viewed as an act of rebellion against that divinely established headship."<sup>66</sup> Women were to show respect toward male authority by veiling their heads in church gatherings. Head covering<sup>67</sup> in the text is only a

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<sup>60</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 129. Pipim uses the specific phrase 'sinful practice' as a response to interpretations which suggest that male-female role differences are God's adaptation to sinful human conditions (see the immediate preceding context of the statement).

<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, these roles, as Holmes clarifies "do not make the man superior to the woman, nor the woman inferior to the man...rather (it) makes them both faithful to God and His Word." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 142.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>63</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 97.

<sup>64</sup> Kiesler had pointed out in his study that κεφαλή while in its basic sense means "head" it also has for Paul relational connotation which means that despite of his upholding the headship principle Paul "does in no way envision a dictatorial relationship between men and women in the church" Herbert Kiesler, "Ephesians Four and the Role of Women," 8, also 5-7.

<sup>65</sup> "The basic principle is that of male headship and female submission." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 138.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>67</sup> It seems to be that there is more than one view among the opponents of what exactly the head covering which the text mentions is. Samuele Bacchiocchi in his book from 1985 says that the

cultural symbol, but the real principle is nevertheless to be found in the reference to Genesis 2. Thus for opponents it is crucial to “look for the principle at work”<sup>68</sup> in 1 Corinthians 11.

In verses 11 and 12 Paul further clarifies the issue of “respect towards male authority”. There is no contradiction in Paul’s argument. “Male leadership is not in conflict with equality.”<sup>69</sup> As verses 3, 8 and 9 point to the main principle based on functional differences so verse 11 and 12 emphasise ontological equality of sexes. There are distinctive roles, but equal value.<sup>70</sup>

In verses 13 to 16 Paul moves back to his topic of covering and provides two additional reasons for supporting his position, referring to nature and cultural customs in churches. According to Bacchiocchi, in verse 16 Paul refers to his own authority and the prevailing custom in the churches. By this he makes it clear that the custom of head coverings was not opened for discussion. Discussion was not allowed as the head covering was a symbolic act at that time which pointed to a permanently valid principle of male leadership and female submission.<sup>71</sup>

The text in 1 Corinthians thus has universal implications for the church. This universal application of 1 Corinthians 11 is not destroyed despite the fact, that everything that Paul said was said in the context of marriage relationships.<sup>72</sup>

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head covering was *a long hair* which was customary at that time. Although he immediately acknowledges that the issue is not clear. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 131. For Maxwell the covering points to a more general concept of *modest dress*. Mervyn C. Maxwell, “Let’s Be Serious,” 30. Holmes leaves the matter open and refers to the “covering” as *head covering*. Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 138.

<sup>68</sup> Mervyn C. Maxwell, “Let’s Be Serious,” 30. Although Maxwell is pointing to the “principle” in his article which he identifies as “respect for God’s house”, when it comes however to application it is not clear from his description how the application is different in Paul’s time (Corinthian church setting) and in our time. He writes: “Women in Paul’s day were to show respect by dressing modestly. Today they are *still* to dress modestly...” (Ibid. Italics mine). There seems to be confusion in his principle application approach.

<sup>69</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 139.

<sup>70</sup> Mervyn C. Maxwell, “Let’s Be Serious,” 30. Maxwell further clarifies the issue by writing: “He’s (Paul) cautioning us not to go too far, not to teach that because women aren’t the head, they aren’t as valuable as men... We are not ‘independent,’ he says. We need one another, and so we should value one another.” (Ibid., 29). Similarly, Koranteng-Pipim says: “Paul wants us to understand that although man and women are equal in essence and being, they have different roles in relation to each other, the man exercises a headship function, and the woman a supporting role.” Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 52.

<sup>71</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 135.

<sup>72</sup> Because, as Bacchiocchi explains, “the husband-wife relationship in marriage is the paradigm for the man-woman relationship in the church... Although 1 Corinthians 11 focuses on husbands and wives, the principle of headship and submission is applicable to the broader relations of men and women in the church.” Samuele Bacchiocchi, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Prove All Things*, 98. On the same page Bacchiocchi gives four reasons in support of his conclusion regarding husbands-wives versus men-women from the very text of 1 Corinthians 11. (a) Verses 4 and 5 speak about “every man” and “every woman” [Greek: *pas*], which suggests that head covering applies to all men and women; (b) verses 7-9 teach a general theological principle, hence the application is general; (c) verses 11, 12 and 13-16 argue from nature which can indicate “that men and

## Ephesians 5:22-25

The next text which draws attention of both sides involved in the debate is in Paul's letter to Ephesians. The interpretation<sup>73</sup> here starts with a semantic discussion about the Greek term κεφαλή.<sup>74</sup> As it was in the case of 1 Corinthians 11, here again κεφαλή is understood as implying "authority" and not "source" as proponents would argue.<sup>75</sup>

### Context of the Passage

Bacchiocchi identifies the immediate context as "household rules", but the broader context nevertheless refers to relationships in the church. Although the passage is in the setting of marriage relationships, there are broader implications for church members in general.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand though, for Holmes the immediate context is "primarily about the relationship between Christ and His church."<sup>77</sup> This for him "establishes the universal principle of male headship and female submission in the marriage relationship"<sup>78</sup> Both authors recognise the marriage context, but both of them move beyond this context to suggest a more general implications.<sup>79</sup>

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women in general are being discussed, rather than just husbands and wives;" (d) ambiguity of *gyne* is clarified when we bear in mind the paradigm of family-church symbolism.

<sup>73</sup> Interestingly enough I was able to identify only two places in opponents' writings which deal with the text in Ephesians 5 systematically and exegetically. Almost every opponent of women's ordination refers to this place, but except of spending paragraph or two (and mostly for reasons of arguing against proponents' interpretation), they do not do comprehensive interpretation. The two places which however have some substantial exegesis on Ephesians 5 can be found in: Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 111-124; and Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 142-144. In addition Herbert Kiesler examined Ephesians 4 in his paper for the Commission on the Role of Women, but he did not touch on chapter 5. Kiesler's paper primarily tries to answer the question of Paul's silence on sex roles in chapter 4. Interestingly Kiesler answers this question by presenting other New Testament texts which are according to him clear on the sex roles and so he does not engage in deeper interpretation of Ephesians. See Herbert Kiesler, "Ephesians Four and the Role of Women," 2 and following.

<sup>74</sup> Both main sources dealing with Ephesians 5 (see the above footnote) start with interpreting "head" as authority.

<sup>75</sup> Since the discussion about the κεφαλή has been weakened (as not all proponents today argue for κεφαλή as "source") in debate since 1985 when Bacchiocchi's book was published and since 1994 when Holmes' book was published I do not mention a comprehensive treatment especially Bacchiocchi provides in his book on the topic in his *Women in the Church*, 111-117.

<sup>76</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 118. The heading in chapter 5 of the Bacchiocchi's book which deals with Ephesians 5 is called: "Headship and Subordination in the Marriage," which suggest that the first and immediate context Bacchiocchi recognises is the marriage context.

<sup>77</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 142.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Holmes for example writes: "While the will of God concerning the relationship between male and female, especially within the marriage covenant, has a broad aspect and covers all society, it is especially pertinent to the church." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 143. Italics mine.

## The Nature of Subordination

Opponents referring to the passage of Ephesians 5 deny any suggestion of mutual subordination, at least a suggestion of mutual subordination which would neutralise the headship and subordination principle. The passage speaks according to them only about a one-way subordination for various reasons.<sup>80</sup> Kiesler, for example, recognises only a one way submission in the passage which calls for wives to assume a role of subordination towards their husbands.<sup>81</sup>

Bacchiocchi concludes that mutual submission is not foreign to the passage, but it does not constitute the main lesson.<sup>82</sup> "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God," in verse 21 suggests accepting the authority of the other person, in this case husband's authority. Verse 21 also provides a reason for the submission – God wants it, it is the will of God.<sup>83</sup>

According to opponents there are different types of subordinations, but the one Paul has in mind is subordination "as to the Lord" (verse 22). This is the subordination of love. In fact husbands are to exercise a headship role in love. All this is "symbolic of relationship that exists between Christ and the church."<sup>84</sup>

### 1 Timothy 3:1-7

The text in 1 Timothy 3 is widely used by the opponents' side in the ordination debate, in fact, there is probably not a single opponent who would not use this text as a backbone in the argument against women's ordination. There are three particular issues around which the interpretations evolve. It is the issue of the meaning of verse 2, the issue of qualifications for the office of elder and the issue of permanent validity of the text.

### Meaning of Verse 2

The key to understanding the whole passage and the generic pronouns lies in verse 2: "Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife." Opponents here

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<sup>80</sup> There are four reasons given by Bacchiocchi to support this view: (1) The structure of the passage in Ephesians 5:21–6:9 mentioning children and slaves, suggests rather a one-way subordination. "Slaves are to obey their masters and children are to obey their parent – not the other way around" (Mervyn C. Maxwell, "Let's Be Serious," 28); (2) The word for subordination is given only to a partner who is to subordinate; (3) The verb ὑποτάσσω which in the active form means "to recognize authority" and in the passive "to be subordinated," brings up a thought of authority and (4) The same term "one another" – ἀλλήλοις appears also in James 5:16 where "confess your sins to one another," does not suggest a two-way confession, but only a one-way confession. The sick is to confess to the elder. This same logic applies in verse Ephesians 5:21. See Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 119 and 120.

<sup>81</sup> Herbert Kiesler, "Exegesis of Galatians 3:26-28," 22.

<sup>82</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 120.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 142.

argue that the main lesson of the verse is to teach that an elder should be male. Opponents deny interpretations which prefer to see the phrase in terms of opposing polygamy. "There is a very little chance that our phrase 'the husband of one wife,' merely opposed polygamy."<sup>85</sup> For opponents "the original language refers to *a male*...It is a masculine reference."<sup>86</sup> There are two reasons for this conclusion:

(1) Linguistic reason – The Greek language uses a masculine noun ἀνὴρ (or γυνή for a wife) and not a generic word for person ἄνθρωπος.<sup>87</sup>

(2) Cultural-historical reason – Roman culture was monogamist, "evidencing little or no polygamy."<sup>88</sup> "By law a man was allowed only one woman at a time, whether wife or concubine, and that was it."<sup>89</sup> It is thus unlikely that verse 2 merely prohibits polygamy.

By the way of conclusion, Raymond Holmes comments: "The intent is obvious. The usage is not generic here, as verse 2 clearly indicates. In spite of all attempts to make this text say something else, it is an unequivocal statement reserving the office of overseer/bishop/elder/pastor for men."<sup>90</sup>

#### Qualifications for the Office

In the next verses "the apostle's concern is about the qualifications for the office of elder or pastor..."<sup>91</sup> The primary "criterion"<sup>92</sup> is "clearly and unambiguously"<sup>93</sup> maleness of the candidate.<sup>94</sup>

There are two clarifications mentioned with regard to qualifications. First, the question of spiritual gifts is explored. Here Bacchiocchi suggests that the presence of specific spiritual gifts is not the primary qualification for leadership. Regardless of how important spiritual gifts

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<sup>85</sup> Mervyn C. Maxwell, "Let's Be Serious," 30.

<sup>86</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 147. See also Gerhard Damsteegt, "Scripture Faces Current Issues," 26; where Damsteegt uses the same reasoning and linguistic procedure to determine the meaning of verse 2.

<sup>87</sup> See Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 147; and also Mervyn C. Maxwell, "Let's Be Serious," 30. Maxwell for example says: "At any rate, we should notice that the passage doesn't say that an elder is to be a "person" with "one spouse" (Ibid., 30). Similarly argues Holmes: "The text does not say that an overseer/bishop/elder/pastor must be a "person of a spouse" (Ibid., 147).

<sup>88</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 147.

<sup>89</sup> Mervyn C. Maxwell, "Let's Be Serious," 30.

<sup>90</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 148.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 122.

<sup>93</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 148.

<sup>94</sup> See also Appendix A, "Answers to Questions about Women's Ordination," in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 373. Here the question: "Does the Bible clearly teach that a church elder should be a man and not a woman?" is answered with a resolute "yes" followed by an explanation: "Whether we like it or not, the specifications require males." (Ibid.)

are they are only secondary qualifiers.<sup>95</sup> The question of the role of women in the church cannot therefore be determined by women's claims of charismatic gifts or divine calling. More important are "virtues of fatherhood" and gender qualifications (verse 2).<sup>96</sup>

Similarly argues Holmes: "It is not enough that one merely possesses certain gifts or feels called"<sup>97</sup> Thus spiritual gifts are not the only qualifier for the church ministry. When it comes to leadership roles the Scripture in 1 Timothy 3 states this position is reserved only to males.<sup>98</sup> The second clarification is made with regard to the New Testament concept of "priesthood of all believers". It is neither this concept which would automatically qualify women for overseer position in the church. Priesthood of all believers is in line with the Old Testament concept of priesthood which knew only male priests.<sup>99</sup>

### Permanent Validity of 1 Timothy 3

Finally, the above-mentioned interpretation is sealed with an allusion to inspired and infallible revelation. According to Holmes "God does not adapt His divine instructions to meet the desires or opinions of a particular society or culture."<sup>100</sup> Thus any cultural conditioning is disqualified by the very nature of God's inspired instructions. Holmes concludes the interpretation of the passage with a resolute statement concerning the permanent validity of the passage which springs from his view of infallible inspiration.

The counsel is inspired, infallible, and constitutes God's revelation. The words are Paul's, framed in his mode of expression; nevertheless, the counsel is God's Word, not just Paul's word. Therefore this verse cannot be ignored, explained away as having been culturally conditioned, or discounted as constituting a mistake or misunderstanding by Paul.<sup>101</sup>

### Galatians 3:26-29

The text of Galatians 3:26-28 is regarded as a premier text or the Magna Charta by proponents of ordination. Although this passage does not constitute a main argument for opponents, nevertheless opponents provide their own interpretations of the text in order to

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<sup>95</sup> "No reference is made to the presence of specific spiritual gifts. This does not mean that spiritual gifts are irrelevant, but rather that they are secondary to those qualities that would allow a man to exercise the same kind of leadership in the church that he exercises in the home." Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 183.

<sup>96</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "A Response to Some Pro-ordination Papers," 8.

<sup>97</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 148.

<sup>98</sup> Gerhard Damsteegt asks: "Are there not capable women who are good administrators?" and then answers: "Yes, indeed; but the Bible does not call simply for able administrators to lead God's church. It calls for men who have been successful husbands and priests in their own families." In this place again Damsteegt does not see the issue of spiritual giftedness as the only criterion for service in the church. Gerhard Damsteegt, "Scripture Faces Current Issues," 26.

<sup>99</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "Are Those Things So?-Part 1: A Summary and Evaluation of Key Biblical Arguments of *Women in Ministry*," in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 186.

<sup>100</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 148.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 149-150.



contest the argumentation of the other side.<sup>102</sup> Here therefore, only brief presentation of opponents' views is provided. There are two focal points to which opponents point when it comes to Galatians 3:28.

The first element which must be considered is the *context* of the passage. "The context in which Galatians 3:28 appears tells us that the apostle is talking about salvation, not church order...it gives us no guidance whatsoever regarding roles and offices in the church."<sup>103</sup> The text thus does not have a direct bearing on the question of different gender roles in the church or ordination question and "it should not be cited in its favour."<sup>104</sup> Hasel makes some progress through appealing to renowned evangelical scholars such as David Wenham, Robert Saucy, Gordon Wenham, Roger Oldham and Arthur Vogel to demonstrate that the immediate context of Galatians 3 is baptism, union with Christ and men and women's spiritual status before God.<sup>105</sup> This illustrates how critical is for opponents to demonstrate that Galatians 3:28 has no direct relevance for the ordination of women.

The second angle from which the passage may be approached relates to the explanation of "there is...neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ" (verses 28, 29). Here all opponents unanimously approve the view that the statement is on equality of being, or ontological equality, which is also present in Genesis 1-2.<sup>106</sup> However, and this is crucial for a proper understanding of Galatians, as opponents insist, the equality (whether ontological or spiritual) does not nullify the role distinctions in the church or home.<sup>107</sup>

Galatians 3:26-29 is thus explained in its context as referring to nothing else than "salvation and *salvation only*"<sup>108</sup> Rightly understood the emphasis is on ontological or spiritual status, which however does not negate the principle of male headship and female subordination. While it is true that Paul's message has also social implications it does not

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<sup>102</sup> Herbert Kiesler had examined and interpreted the passage for example in his 32-page study. See Herbert Kiesler, "Exegesis of Galatians 3:26-28." Also Gerhard Hasel's paper while being on biblical authority and interpretation also paid attention apart from 1 Timothy 2 to Galatians 3:28. See Gerhard F. Hasel, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women," 15-28.

<sup>103</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 135. Bernard Seton explains the context more specifically as a proclamation of "freedom from dependence on Judaistic legalism to those who accept salvation...in Christ." Bernard E. Seton, "Should our Church Ordain Women? No," *Ministry*, March 1985, 20.

<sup>104</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should our Church Ordain Women? No," 20.

<sup>105</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women," 20-21. Hasel quotes specifically scholars who dealt with the problem of Galatians 3 context.

<sup>106</sup> Koranteng-Pipim for example says: "The context of Gal 3:28 itself clearly explains the sense in which male and female are equal." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 49; or Holmes: "Thus there is full spiritual equality for all." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 135.

<sup>107</sup> "This equality between male and female does not invalidate the headship principle." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 49. Similarly, "Spiritual equality does not do away with role distinctions. On the other hand, such distinctions do not imply inferiority or superiority." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 136.

<sup>108</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should our Church Ordain Women? No," 20. Italics original.

mean that social or sexual differences are obliterated.<sup>109</sup> Calvary has not abolished for opponents role distinctions between men and women.

In summation, when concerning the biblical arguments of opponents, the following conclusions can be drawn: opponents appeal to universal application of biblical passages; they appeal to the theological principle of male's headship; opponents follow a close literal reading and collate semantic, contextual and comparative explanations. Opponents thus conclude that God has ordained "an all-male ministry" and it therefore possesses the seal of eternal validity. Given this biblical model we should "not be seduced into following such an unbiblical custom as the ordination of women!"<sup>110</sup>

### Theological Arguments

The second group of arguments mentioned by opponents is the group which has a central value for the whole debate about the ordination of women. At the heart of the debate lie undoubtedly theological premises. These in fact form a crucial foundation of the whole thesis of opponents against the ordination of women. This part of the second chapter will analyse four *key* theological conclusions of opponents which capture the essence of the opponents' theology. These just as the biblical arguments add to their overall hermeneutical stance.

#### Theological Principle of Headship and Submission

The first and the main argument for opponents in the debate is the already mentioned theological principle of headship and subordination. Genesis chapters 1-3 provide for opponents the scriptural context and the foundation which establishes the permanent principle of headship and subordination. Genesis is thus a place where the debate about the headship principle must begin.<sup>111</sup> For opponents there are three places of importance in Genesis which need to be examined: Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 2; and Genesis 3:1-24.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Herbert Kiesler had examined and interpreted the passage for example in his 32-page study. See Herbert Kiesler, "Exegesis of Galatians 3:26-28," 15. See also Samuele Bacchiocchi, "A Response to Some Pro-ordination Papers," 7-8.

<sup>110</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should Women Be Ordained as Gospel Ministers? A Biblical Response," Commission on the Role of Women Papers, 20.

<sup>111</sup> Here Koranteng-Pipim directs reader's attention to the beginning of the Bible: "The Bible teaches that the male headship/leadership role and the female supporting/cooperative role were instituted at creation." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 46. See also Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 67.

<sup>112</sup> I am treating the texts in Genesis 1-3 under the theological arguments for the following reasons: (1) the texts in Genesis are not used by the opponents among the key Scriptural evidence against the role of women since they do not address the role of women in churches directly; (2) in most cases opponents allude to and interpret the Genesis passages retrospectively from the New Testament perspective. They tend to move from more direct passages which address the role of women, such as 1 Timothy 2, to Genesis which is then seen retrospectively as the theological backbone of the New Testament evidence; (3) the Genesis passages are used primarily for their theological significance,

## Genesis 1:26-31

The first key place where opponents look for insights is Genesis 1. From this passage they deduce two conclusions, ontological equality and functional difference of roles.

*Equality* - The creation of humanity "in the image of God," points to ontological equality of sexes.<sup>113</sup> The name "Adam" is understood as a collective term denoting both beings, which means that "both participate in the image of God."<sup>114</sup>

*Sexual difference* – Despite of the fact that man and woman are equal, yet they are sexually different as verse 27 indicates.

The understanding of both these elements in Genesis 1:26-27 proves very important to opponents, due to their belief that such facets provide a general framework for the headship and subordination principle - which is in fullness arguably presented in Genesis 2.<sup>115</sup>

## Genesis 2

Opponents view Genesis 2 as the central place where the Bible establishes the headship and subordination principle. There are nine key arguments used in connection with Genesis 2. These arguments are based on *the manner and order of creation* and, according to opponents, firmly establish the principle of headship and subordination. Four additional arguments are also to be found in Genesis 3. These are based on *the fall* rather than creation; nevertheless they reiterate the theology of headship from Genesis 2.

(1) *The word אָדָם denotes both "man" and "human race". Human race is thus also called "man", rather than "woman". "Genesis 1:26-27...also alludes to male headship by twice calling the human race 'man-ha'adam' rather than 'woman'."*<sup>116</sup>

(2) *Priority of Adam's creation.* According to opponents origin and authority are related.<sup>117</sup> This is especially true if we look at the concept of firstborn in the Bible. The typological meaning of firstborn related to Christ in Colossians 1:15-18 expresses the idea of authority and headship. The same typology can be applied to Adam's creation. Priority of creation represents thus "not an accident, but a divine design."<sup>118</sup>

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rather than for their exegetical implications for the role of women. These passages therefore seem to have a "middle function" operating between direct exegetical material and/or sole theological arguments. For these reasons the chapter treats these passages under the theological arguments, rather than exegetical.

<sup>113</sup> "Equality is suggested by the fact that both man and woman were created in the image of God." Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 71.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. See also Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 67 for the same argument.

<sup>115</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 64.

<sup>116</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 71.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 74.

(3) *Creation from the dust and rib.* Adam's creation from the dust of the ground symbolises his relationship to and dependence upon nature. Eve's creation, from the rib symbolises her relationship to and dependence upon Adam.<sup>119</sup>

(4) *God gives instructions to Adam in Genesis 2:16-17.* The Genesis account confirms that not only was Adam created first but he was also given the responsibility. Here opponents argue that this God called Adam to spiritual leadership<sup>120</sup>

(5) *The manner of Eve's creation from Adam's rib.* The manner of Eve's creation out of Adam suggests a divine purpose not an accident. This then teaches the principle of headship and submission.<sup>121</sup>

(6) *Adam spoke after Eve's creation, not Eve.* This suggest a leading role and also that she was created for him, to make him complete.<sup>122</sup>

(7) *The Bible calls Eve "help for him".* Eve is created as "a help" for Adam which suggest woman's supportive role. Furthermore, "for him" suggest functional dependency and submission.<sup>123</sup> Seton for example points out in this respect that Eve was not a replica of Adam in that she was created for a different purpose than Adam. Adam was made to be the head and priest of the family, while Eve was created for a full-time role of wife and mother. This pattern from Eden remains God's pattern today.<sup>124</sup>

(8) *Adam gives names both to animals and Eve.* The naming of Eve before and after the fall is viewed as defining Eve's nature (from man) and Eve's function (mother).<sup>125</sup>

(9) *Adam's leading role in marriage.* The text, according to opponents, shows that in marriage man is the one who must act (leave) which indicates that her role is to complement but not lead.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 124. The argument is then followed by concluding that Adam "would learn how to utilize the gifts of the nature... And it was the woman who would learn how to help the man succeed." (Ibid., 124-125).

<sup>120</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should Women Be Ordained as Gospel Ministers? A Biblical Response," 2 and Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 46. The same argument is used also by Holmes in Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 125.

<sup>121</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 74-75.

<sup>122</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 125.

<sup>123</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 77.

<sup>124</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should Women Be Ordained as Gospel Ministers? A Biblical Response," 3.

<sup>125</sup> "In the Bible, name-giving often indicates authority." Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 79. See also page 80 on the discussion of nature and function of Eve.

<sup>126</sup> "In marriage, it is the man who must act, leaving dependence on father and mother to be united with his wife.. Woman's role is to complement the man in his duties." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 46.

(1) *After the fall, God calls Adam for responsibility.* There is a reason why God called out only to Adam. Despite of the fact that Eve initiated the rebellion, "it is Adam (nor Eve, nor even both of them) who is blamed for our fall,"<sup>127</sup> which suggests that Adam was the spiritual head and representative of the family.<sup>128</sup>

(2) *God told only Adam that he would die.* This once again illustrates that Adam alone was the head and represented Eve and the whole human family.<sup>129</sup>

(3) *The sin in Genesis 3 was due to role reversal.*<sup>130</sup> Koranteng-Pipim propounds Eve's responsibility in that she usurped Adam's headship, whilst acknowledging Adam's responsibility in failing to exercise his headship by protecting Eve.<sup>131</sup>

(4) *Paul's use of Genesis 1-3 in the New Testament provides an inspired interpretation that supports the headship and subordination principle.*<sup>132</sup>

### Genesis 3: 1-24

The third passage considered by opponents is the fall story and its consequences. Here, opponents focus on the fact that Genesis 3:1-24 is not the place where the principle of subordination is first introduced.<sup>133</sup> By doing so, they try to meet arguments of the other side

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>128</sup> "Had there been no such roles before the fall, we would expect God,...to address Eve first as the leader in sin. The only explanation for God doing otherwise is that He had given leadership of the first family to Adam." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 125.

<sup>129</sup> "God pronounced the death sentence on Adam alone, because he was the head, and the dead sentence upon him included Eve and all members of human family that he represented." Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 86.

<sup>130</sup> Bacchiocchi argues: "Original sin of Adam and Eve was largely due to role reversal." Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 83.

<sup>131</sup> "Both our parents were responsible for the fall-Eve usurping Adam's headship and Adam failing to exercise his responsibility to protect his wife..." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 47.

<sup>132</sup> "A close study of significant details of these texts, in light of Paul's interpretation of the same passage, has shown that the principle of male headship and female submission is rooted and grounded in the very order and manner of Adam and Eve's creation." Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 82. There are many of such statements like the one above; not only in Bacchiocchi's writings, but almost without exception Paul is used as an inspired interpreted of Genesis 1-3 in other opponents' publications. Appeals to Paul's inspired explanation of Genesis 1-3 is one of the most favourite arguments of opponents. However such a claim is based on certain assumptions about the presuppositions of the reader and so the notion of one text working as a inspired commentary for another will be investigated carefully in part 2 of this chapter.

<sup>133</sup> This view of headship as being not introduced after the fall was, however, not always held by some. Bernard Seton who served as an associate secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists before his retirement, for example, argued throughout in his article (published in a special double article alongside the view supporting ordination) in 1985 that submission is the result of the fall, nevertheless still valid as it best fits humanity's fallen condition. On page 15 Seton says: "Because of Eve's initiative in disobedience,...she was subordinated to her husband." Similarly on page 19 he makes his view clear: "The Creator, seeing the human race in its sin-marred setting (Gen 3:8-11), knew that humanity would function best when men and women each fulfilled their distinctive roles without trying to usurp the other's functions." Bernard E. Seton, "Should our Church Ordain Women? No," 15 and 19. The example of Seton's article thus indicates that there may be others who see things similarly. On the

that subordination is the result of the fall. In general, there are four arguments used to support the opponents' view.

(1) *The story of the fall and its consequences in its details indicates that headship and submission was not formed after the fall, but rather deformed.* In Genesis 3 we see an introduction of distortion and discord of the headship principle, but not its formation.

(2) *The usage of מָשַׁל (מִשְׁלָּה-רָדָה) - "to reign" (in Septuagint κυριεύω) in Genesis 3:16 shows development of an unhealthy dominion which is foreign to Genesis 2. There is thus a distorted headship in Genesis 3.*

(3) *The subordination and headship principle is already present in Genesis 2.*

(4) *When the New Testament speaks about female submission it does so on the basis of the creation story in Genesis 2 and not on the basis of the story of the fall in Genesis 3 (Ephesians 5:31, 1 Corinthians 11:8-9, 1 Timothy 2:13-14).*<sup>134</sup>

In the end regarding the headship and submission principle, it is important to mention that this principle is not viewed in negative terms. The headship and submission should be exercised in love for the sake of greater unity. The example of such usage of the headship principle is present in the Trinity, between Father and Christ.<sup>135</sup>

### **The Role of Women in the Old Testament**

Headship and submission principle established at creation is widely applied in the following study of the Old Testament and NT. Bacchiocchi - who published the most comprehensive study on the role of women in the Old Testament from the opponents' representatives<sup>136</sup> - bases his argument on the fact that on one hand Old Testament women played important roles in the public and private religious life of Israel and however on the other hand women in the Old Testament times were excluded from certain appointed leadership roles which were reserved only to males. The description of private and public religious life of the Ancient Israel provides enough clues to see the pattern and the theological argument the Old Testament develops in regard to the role of women.

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other hand however, all key protagonists of headship and submission principle argue today from Genesis 2 as the place where the principle is introduced and not Genesis 3.

<sup>134</sup> In conclusion, Bacchiocchi summarises the opponents' views on Genesis 3: "Genesis 3 describes the distortion of creation order... This distortion affected... also the submission of woman to man... The curse on the woman marked not the institution of submission but rather its distortion into oppressive dominion. The function of redemption is not to redefine creation but to restore it, so that wives may learn godly submission and husbands may learn godly headship." Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 88.

<sup>135</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 76-77. The example of headship among the members of Trinity is used widely by others as well. It is for opponents a theological argument the New Testament uses to clarify submission.

<sup>136</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "The Ministry of Women in the Old Testament," in *Women in the Church*, 31-42. Bacchiocchi's book is still being reprinted (first printing in 1987). In August 2004 it was published in its sixth printing. The book serves as one of the opponents' cornerstones in the debate having forewords from two renowned evangelical scholars Wayne Grudem and James B. Hurley.

## Spheres Open to Women

In *private worship life* the Old Testament presents women as first of all being members of the covenant. Women not only shared with men in the blessings of the Old Testament covenant (Deuteronomy 5:29-33) but women also shared with men responsibilities of the covenant.<sup>137</sup> One such responsibility included learning and keeping God's law (Deuteronomy 31:12, Nehemiah 8:2). Women were expected to be present in the worship assembly so that they could hear and obey God's word. Secondly, women were free to approach God in prayer just the same way as men (1 Samuel 1:10; Genesis 25:22; 30:6, 22; 21:6-7).<sup>138</sup>

The next sphere of responsibility for Old Testament women was education of children. According to opponents it is noteworthy that Scripture gives the names of mothers of great spiritual leaders such as Moses, Samuel, Jesus, John the Baptist and Timothy.<sup>139</sup>

Lastly opponents also mention the example of the Nazirite vows which women could take with men and which involved a high degree of devotedness.<sup>140</sup> This is just another important indicator - according to opponents - that women in the Old Testament played significant roles in private religious life.

When it comes to *public roles* of Old Testament women opponents name the fact that "Mosaic law expected women to be present at the great festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles."<sup>141</sup> Women also contributed to the public worship by bringing their own sacrifices (Leviticus 12:6; 15:29), using their own gifts for the building of the tabernacle (Exodus 35:22) and serving at the temple by ministering at the entrance to the tent (Exodus 38:8, 1 Samuel 2:22) and by singing and dancing (Ezra 5:65, 1 Chronicles 25:5-6, Exodus 15:20). Even more significantly some women were serving as prophetess, judge and even queen. "The very existence of female prophets point to the considerable religious influence women could legitimately exercise."<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>139</sup> Adventist opponents generally view "home" as the most suitable place for women's ministry. They argue for a personal soul winning-ministry as a ministry designed for women. Women can best serve in counselling, visiting and helping ministry to other women, young or sick people, all done in the family context. See for example Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 79-84. Similarly Bacchiocchi in his book *Women in the Church* called one of his subheadings: "Home Teacher." He then continued to explain: "The greatest religious influence of Hebrew mother was undoubtedly in the home" Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 34-35.

<sup>140</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 35.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. Bacchiocchi clarifies that "their attendance, however, was not obligatory, presumably because of their responsibilities at home" (Ibid.).

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 37. The example of women's prophetic authority seem to be an exception to the opponents' view that females should not exercise authoritative teaching and leadership. Apparently the Old Testament prophetesses functioned also in those roles.

## Spheres Closed to Women

Despite the fact that women played a most vital role both in the private and public religious life of Ancient Israel, there are several indications in the Old Testament that the principle of male headship and female subordination is very much in place. The first of such indications is woman's lack of circumcision. This, according to Bacchiocchi, was due to the fact that "the rite was seen as the sign of the functional headship role" of men.<sup>143</sup> The second of such indicators is the difference in time in uncleanness of a mother after giving birth to a daughter and to a son.<sup>144</sup> The clearest indicator regarding the role of women in the Old Testament, however, is given in the exclusion of females from the Old Testament priesthood.<sup>145</sup> The true reason for this exclusion can be found in the "unique Biblical view of the role of priest fulfilled as representative of the people of God."<sup>146</sup> The peculiar people-priests roles were not for all Israelites. In fact Moses is an example of someone who was exercising his ministry without ordination. Only Aaron and his male descendants became part of the ordained ministry. Thus the first specific case of ordination in Leviticus 8:1-36 "provided the model for male priesthood."<sup>147</sup> When the priests ministered they acted as the representatives of people, thus fulfilling the headship/representative role which, in the Old Testament, is reserved for males only. Although the religious roles of women in the Old Testament were complementary, they were also different to that of men, in accordance with the biblical principle of headship and submission. While women were allowed to function in the private and public life of Israel, they were crucially excluded from leadership and priesthood functions.

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>144</sup> The boy was received into the covenant community earlier than a girl, which, according to Bacchiocchi is analogical to the creation order of man-woman. See Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 34. Thus even mother's ceremonial cleanness is governed by the creation principle of headship and submission.

<sup>145</sup> Bacchiocchi in his chapter one of *Women in the Church* also deals with two points some proponents mention as the reasons for this exclusion: frequent ritual impurity of women and danger of sacred prostitution. Both of these arguments are according to Bacchiocchi invalid. In the first case of frequent ritual impurity Bacchiocchi argues that men were also frequently ritually unclean due to the discharge of semen during sexual intercourse and yet they were not excluded from priesthood service (Leviticus 15:1-12). In the second case of the danger of sacred prostitution argument, Bacchiocchi argues from logic and then historical background. Logically, he says, "a legitimate practice cannot be prohibited because of its prevention" (1 Sam 2:22). Historically, "there are indications that many, if not most, of the pagan priestesses in the ancient world, lived celibate and devoted lives." Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 39.

<sup>146</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1985), 39.

<sup>147</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should Women Be Ordained as Gospel Ministers? A Biblical Response," 6-7.



## The Role of Women in the New Testament

As was the case in the Old Testament, women are also presented from two different angles in the New Testament. On one hand Jesus and the New Testament church accepted women and their service, even to the extent of going against cultural perceptions of the time. On the other hand however, the New Testament presents a second view, which excludes women from leadership roles in the church. Neither Jesus, nor the primitive church called women to serve as apostles or church elders.

### Women Fully Equal and Accepted by Jesus and the Church

The first view considers the following evidence in support of active roles which women were allowed to hold.

(1) *Jesus' dealing with women presents a radical break with the Jewish cultural tradition of His time.* Jesus' attitude toward women as *persons* was radically different from that of other rabbis. This attitude of Jesus could be seen in many encounters with females as well as in His parables.<sup>148</sup> Seton in this regard points out that "if there is one person above all others who has been the champion of women's rights, it is our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>149</sup>

(2) *Jesus' acceptance of women in His ministry.* Women were His travelling companions, they were present at His crucifixion and resurrection.<sup>150</sup>

(3) *Participation of women in the life and ministry of the early church was visible and active.* Women joined the expanding church in large numbers (Acts 5:14, 8:12). Among the roles women held was charitable service illustrated by Tabitha in Acts 9:36; service of deaconesses as illustrated by Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2); missionary service – here women were "fellow-workers" or co-workers as exemplified by Prisca in Romans 16:3-5; and lastly opponents mention the role of prophets as the role women could hold. For example Acts 21:9 speaks of the four daughters of Philip who prophesied.<sup>151</sup>

In the first part of the argument from the New Testament, opponents thus highlight the equal status and many opportunities women were given by Jesus and the early church. This

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<sup>148</sup> "Jesus' attitude toward women was in many ways revolutionary. He rejected the prevailing prejudices against women..." (Ibid., 49-50). Listing a number of examples, Bacchiocchi argues that Jesus accepted women as persons and he acknowledged their intelligence and Faith. See in Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 44-52.

<sup>149</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should Women Be Ordained as Gospel Ministers? A Biblical Response," 11.

<sup>150</sup> "The role that some women filled in the ministry of Christ is absolutely unique. It is remarkable that while Christ ministered to men, women are shown as ministering to Him." Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 50.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 53-59.

shows that the New Testament treatment of females is not culturally conditioned or otherwise restricted by the custom of the day.<sup>152</sup>

#### Positions to Which Women Were Called Neither by Jesus, Nor by the Church

The second angle from which the position of women in the New Testament is presented in the Bible is closely in connection to the first.<sup>153</sup> Despite the fact that Jesus championed the equality of women with men and that he and the early church utilised their gifts and ministry, yet neither Jesus nor the infant church made moves to include them among disciples or subsequent apostleship.<sup>154</sup> For opponents the logic of revolutionary acceptance on one hand and the vacuum of female apostle in the ministry of Jesus and the early church on the other, leads to but one conclusion. "The reasons, why women were not ordained as priests, apostles, elders or pastors are not socio-cultural or sexist but theological."<sup>155</sup> Jesus was not guided by the culture when he chose no female apostle<sup>156</sup>, nor was the church when it restricted leadership positions of elder/pastor to its male members only. If God wanted to establish ordained female ministry in the church he could have authorised its formation at any stage of the church's long history; but such was not the case in the Old Testament or in the New Testament life of Jesus or the early church.<sup>157</sup>

Opponents make it clear that the issue of ordination of women is not about whether God calls women to ministry. Jesus and the New Testament church evidenced women serving actively and visibly in different roles. The issue rather is "whether Scripture permits women in ministry to perform the oversight/leadership roles which ordained elders and pastors are called upon to exercise."<sup>158</sup> This question the New Testament answers with "no". There is no

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<sup>152</sup> "The fact that Jesus accepted both the presence and the service of these devoted women clearly shows that His actions were not conditioned by the custom of the day." (Ibid., 51).

<sup>153</sup> "Some statements and examples suggest that women shared equally with men in the various ministries of the church, while others indicate that women were excluded from the appointive representative roles of apostles, pastors, and elders/bishops." (Ibid., 45).

<sup>154</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should Women Be Ordained as Gospel Ministers? A Biblical Response," 11-12.

<sup>155</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 76.

<sup>156</sup> With regard to the "no female apostle" argument, some proponents argue that in Rom 16:7 apostle Paul mentions one female apostle – Ἰουνιδῶν meaning a female. To this arguments opponents respond by the fact that: (1) The name in Greek can mean both male and female and from the Bible itself it is not clear which is meant; (2) Grammar of the verse 7 allows reading "they (Andronicus and Junias) are counted by apostles;" (3) The term "apostle" has both narrow and broader meaning. In the first case it denotes 12 apostles in the second it means simply "messenger". Bacchiocchi therefore concludes: "If Andronicus and Junias were apostles, most probably it would be in the latter sense, since nowhere else are their names associated with the inner circle of the apostles." Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 60.

<sup>157</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should Women Be Ordained as Gospel Ministers? A Biblical Response," 10.

<sup>158</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 48. See also page 47.

evidence in the New Testament which would suggest a "yes" answer.<sup>159</sup> To opponents "there is no scriptural escape from this New Testament design for it stands foursquare upon the writings that have been given by inspiration of God."<sup>160</sup>

### **The Representative Role of Elder/Pastor**

The last major theological argument brought by opponents' side is based on the representative role of elder/pastor.<sup>161</sup> The basic logic behind this argument is that "the understanding of the nature of the pastor's role within the church determines to a large extent one's position on whether or not a woman should serve as pastor/elder of the congregation."<sup>162</sup> This argument is based on an ecclesiological understanding of pastor's role as representative. The representative role of the pastor has two levels: on the first level elder/pastor is the representative head of his members; on the second level elder/pastor is a representative of Christ for his members.<sup>163</sup>

#### **Elder/Pastor as the Representative Head of His Members.**

First, opponents establish a link between the New Testament role of elder and pastor. After analysing of roles of elders and then looking at the term pastor (ποιμένας - meaning shepherds in Ephesians 4:11), they claim that "in the New Testament the local elders/leaders

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<sup>159</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi makes at this point a very fitting summary: "Women played a very prominent role in the ministry of Jesus... In spite of His revolutionary treatment of women, Jesus did not choose women as apostles nor did He commission them to preach the Gospel. Such an omission was not a matter of concession to the social conventions of His time, but rather of compliance with the role distinction for men and women established at creation. The apostolic churches followed the pattern established by Christ by including women as integral members in the life and mission of the church... Though women ministered in the church in a variety of vital roles, including that of prophet, there are no indications in Scripture that they were ever ordained to serve as priests in the Old Testament or as pastors/elders/bishops in the New Testament." Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 60-61.

<sup>160</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should Women Be Ordained as Gospel Ministers? A Biblical Response," 8.

<sup>161</sup> This argument was - within the Adventist debate - mainly explored by Samuele Bacchiocchi. His most comprehensive treatment of this argument is in his book *Women in the Church*. The other two treatments are from the Ministry magazine: Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Women: Ministry without Ordination," 4-7, 23; or respectively the most recent one from Bacchiocchi, Samuele. "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 65-110.

<sup>162</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 180.

<sup>163</sup> Interestingly enough, Bacchiocchi clarifies qualifications for the representative role by saying: "The primary requirement for this kind of pastoral leadership are those spiritual and natural qualities which lead the members to respect the pastor as their personal spiritual leader. Leadership skills and charisma are important but secondary requirements. What is essential are the qualities of moral and spiritual integrity which enable the pastor to serve as a worthy representative of God and of the members." Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 84. Here spiritual gifts are given only a secondary importance, which is probably one of the key differences (when it come to ecclesiology and the theology of ministry) between opponents and proponents. Proponents argue just contrary to the view of Bacchiocchi, giving primary importance to spiritual giftedness of candidates for ordination (or ministry in general).

functioned as the pastors of the congregation...the New Testament role of the local "elder/overseer" corresponds essentially to the role of today's pastor."<sup>164</sup>

The main underlying argument for an elder's role as the representative head of his members is the understanding of church as an extended spiritual family. "What is true for the home is equally true for the church... The Bible uses the family model to explain the respective roles of men and women within the church."<sup>165</sup> Obviously, because certain basic roles are determined by gender in the home, the same will apply within the church.<sup>166</sup>

Because pastor/elder functions as a spiritual father within the church family, for "a woman to serve as elder or pastor is analogous to assigning her the role of fatherhood in the family."<sup>167</sup> Moreover, the importance of the representative role of head of people is visible when one compares the function of priests/elders/pastors with prophets: it is apparently thus clear that women could hold positions of prophets but not priests. This distinction, to opponents, shows that while it was appropriate for women to function as communicators of the will of God in a prophetic role, it was not appropriate for them to function as representative heads of the people in a priestly role.<sup>168</sup>

#### Elder/Pastor as the Representative of Christ for His Members

The role of elder/pastor as the representative of Christ was prefigured by Christ Himself when He has chosen 12 male apostles to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Although it is

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<sup>164</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 186. Interestingly, after the above statements Bacchiocchi continues: "In view of this fact the present policy of the Seventh-day Adventist church to allow for the ordination of women as local elders but not as pastors is based on an artificial distinction between the two offices, a distinction which does not exist in the New Testament" (ibid.). The logical conclusion of what Bacchiocchi says in this place is that the ordination debate in the Adventist church had been already solved in 1984 when the church made the ordination of women elders possible. By establishing the link (which proponents also do) between the role of elder and pastor, Bacchiocchi logically shoots himself in the back, especially in the view of the 1984 developments. Secondly, this statement also implies that maybe for the Adventist church to arrive at a solution in the present situation when there are ordained women elders, but not ordained women pastors (meaning not officially recognised, because there have been a few local ordinations already – see chapter 1, developments after 1950s) is to work on the theology of ministry and ordination for finding the final solution. In accord with Bacchiocchi's conclusions about the elders-pastors role are also conclusions of proponents who also see New Testament elders as pastors of today. See for example Keith A. Burton, "A Practical Theology of Ordination," *Ministry*, November 1996, 26-27, 29. For proponents however the fact that the Adventist church ordains women elders means that the issue has been already solved and that there is no turning back. Their emphasis is thus logically on clarification of ecclesiology, particularly the theology of ministry and ordination. More on this issue is in "theological arguments of proponents" in Chapter III.

<sup>165</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 103-104.

<sup>166</sup> For opponents, "this understanding of the church as an extended family of believers, led by elders who functioned as spiritual fathers and shepherds explains why women were not appointed as elders/pastors, namely because their role was seen as being that of mothers and not fathers." Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 187.

<sup>167</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 105. See also Samuele Bacchiocchi, "A Response to Some Pro-ordination Papers," 8.

<sup>168</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "A Response to Some Pro-ordination Papers," 6.

true that "while every believer is Christ's ambassador and belongs to the 'royal priesthood' (1 Pet 2:9; Ex 19:6; Deut 26:19), the pastor fulfils in a special sense the role of Christ's representative."<sup>169</sup> This means that the New Testament teaching of all Christians being part of "priesthood" does not nullify a special role the elder/pastor holds in the church.

The Bible witnesses that God reveals Himself constantly in male terms and imageries. He has revealed Himself as father, not mother; we pray "our Father", not "our mother"; Christ is the new Adam<sup>170</sup>, not Eve.<sup>171</sup> If then, God reveals Himself in masculine terms, it is expected that an elder/pastor who represents Christ and God must be male as well. Although most of the terms and imageries are only symbols, it does not mean humans can change these symbols: such a change would lead to a distorted perception of reality to which these symbols point.<sup>172</sup> The male sex has its own distinctive functions, as does the female sex. That is why females cannot represent *the Fatherhood of God*, which is a dominant theme in both testaments.<sup>173</sup> In conclusion, Samuele Bacchiocchi summarises his main points and emphatically affirms the opponents' view that to begin to ordain women pastors and elders will mean to adulterate the symbolic representation of God.<sup>174</sup>

The exegetical and theological arguments used by opponents in the debate form the key evidence for them as to why the Scripture is against women pastors and elders. These arguments have been explored in this place only to the extent which is necessary for the overall understanding of the opponents' position, and in order to gain a coherent picture of their approach.

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<sup>169</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 198.

<sup>170</sup> Bacchiocchi explores typological relationship between Christ and Adam to argue that behind Christ's incarnation as male was a theological reason, not cultural. This for him is another confirmation (theological) that God has chosen males to be His special representatives. "The typological correspondence between Adam and Christ can help us understand a major theological reason for the maleness of the incarnate Christ." Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 207.

<sup>171</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Women: Ministry without Ordination," 6.

<sup>172</sup> As Bacchiocchi claims: "To change the nature of the symbol means to distort the apprehension of the reality to which the symbol points." Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 200. In the case of creating women pastors it would mean "to dispense with the biblical function of pastoral ministry altogether." Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Women: Ministry without Ordination," 7.

<sup>173</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Prove All Things*, 107.

<sup>174</sup> "The pastor fulfils a unique symbolic role in the church as representative of the heavenly Father, Shepherd, High Priest, and Head of the church. A woman pastor cannot appropriately fulfil such a symbolic role because her Scriptural role is not that of a father, shepherd, priest or head of the church. Thus, to ordain women to serve as pastors/elders means not only to violate a divine design, but also to adulterate the pastor's symbolic representation of God." Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Women in the Church*, 209.

## Analysis of Opponents' Hermeneutical Apparatus

The second part of Chapter Two will aim at systematic analysis and structuring of the methodological and hermeneutical paradigms of opponents. With this part the thesis is moving one step deeper into the hermeneutical matters which effectively operate behind the biblical and theological argumentation of opponents.

Part two argues that the basic hermeneutical approach of opponents is operating on the key assumption of the plainness and clarity of Scripture. Opponents, however, hold certain number of interconnected assumptions about the nature of Biblical inspiration too. Part two will show that their controlling hermeneutical assumption of Scriptural plainness is not standing isolated from other foundational concepts from which the most important are full inspiration, full authority and absolute inerrancy notions. It will be also revealed that the assumption of Scripture's plainness or clarity finds its hermeneutical expression in the basic interpretative principle of literalistic reading. However the literalistic aspect of their method does not stand isolated from its accompanying hermeneutical principles of comparative reading, rejection of cultural conditioning, and normative use of Ellen White's writings in interpretation. All of these aspects of their method will be explored and analysed along with the undergirding literal principle.

Thus the overall purpose of this part is to comprehensively analyse the interrelated web of concepts, assumption and principles operative behind opponents' biblical and theological arguments.

To achieve this purpose, first, the theory of *Biblical inspiration* will be examined in order to unveil how opponents perceive the nature of Scripture and how it consequently influences their reading of it. This will be followed by investigating opponents' *theological method and its characteristics*.

### Opponents' Theory of Biblical Inspiration

#### Introduction to the Adventist Context

Seventh-day Adventist hermeneutical debate is not a new issue in the modern church. Actually, it goes well back into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Significantly, the hermeneutical diversification began not with the debate about the rules of interpretation or method but rather with the controversy over inspiration.<sup>175</sup> Around that time three different groups emerged with

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<sup>175</sup> See Sakae Kubo, "A History of Adventist Interpretation of Revelation and Inspiration," *Adventist Perspective*, December 2000, Online edition. Also Bert Halloviak and Gary Land, "Ellen White and Doctrinal Conflict: Context of the 1919 Bible Conference," *Spectrum*, 12/4 (June 1982): 23. Although George Butler's proposal of different degrees of inspiration (1884) is a well known fact in Adventism, the less known fact is that it was W. W. Prescott who popularised the inerrant view of inspiration in the denomination in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Prescott's position became popular despite the fact that most of the pioneers believed that inspired writing was not inerrant (see footnote 176 below).

three different views on inspiration and inerrancy.<sup>176</sup> The earliest position of the pioneers<sup>177</sup> which regarded the Bible to be inspired but not inerrant was replaced by the inerrant view of inspiration in the beginning of the 1920s. This became the predominant view until the 1950s. In the middle of the 1950s with the coming of the new General Conference president Reuben Figuhr in 1954, the understanding of inspiration began to shift back to the view held before 1920s.<sup>178</sup> A decade later however, the General Conference leadership with the coming of Elder Pierson changed once again the direction of hermeneutical debate on inspiration back to the post-1920s emphasis. Thus the stage for Adventist present diversity in interpretation and the related hermeneutical issues has been set.

The hermeneutical differences in the debate about the ordination of women, when viewed from this brief historical overview, only reveal what seems to have been present in the church for a long time. Opponents of women's ordination, as we shall see, represent one tendency within the historical spectrum of views on inspiration; proponents, on the other hand, also present one tendency within that sphere. None of the inspirational positions can claim uniqueness within Adventism as the spectrum on inspiration became visible already in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It will become clear that there is also a certain overlap of positions between scholars in the respective camps.<sup>179</sup> Because of the overlap and the spectrum of views on

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<sup>176</sup> The first group included A. T. Jones, E. J. Waggoner, and J. H. Kellogg. They were inerrantists and literalists who could not allow for contradictions or inconsistencies in the Bible or the writings of Ellen White. Contradictions came from some other non-inspired source. The second group which included Haskell, G. Butler, and Washburn also believed in the literal interpretation of Ellen White's writings but ignored or downplayed the inconsistencies and contradictions. The third group included A. G. Daniells, W. W. Prescott, and W. C. White. They allowed for errors, but for them this did not mean that her writings were not inspired, or that the Bible was not inspired. Also they emphasised the need for a non-literal, contextual approach. See Sakae Kubo, "A History of Adventist Interpretation of Revelation and Inspiration," online edition.

<sup>177</sup> W. C. White (son of Ellen G. White) for example wrote to L. E. Froom (a prominent Adventist scholar) on January 8, 1928: "This statement made by the General Conference of 1883 [mentioning that the prophet is not exempt from grammatical imperfections] was in perfect harmony with the beliefs and positions of the pioneers in this cause, and it was, I think, the only position taken by any of our ministers and teachers until Prof. [W. W.] Prescott, president of Battle Creek College, presented in a very forceful way another view-the view held and presented by Professor Gausen [sic]. The acceptance of that view by the students in the Battle Creek College and many others, including Elder Haskell, has resulted in bringing into our work questions and perplexities without end, and always increasing. Sister White never accepted the Gausen [sic] theory regarding verbal inspiration, either as applied to her own work or as applied to the Bible." Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1980), 3:454-455.

<sup>178</sup> During this time Adventist scholars started to receive their training from non-Adventist universities and this opened their eyes to new concepts and new ways of looking at things. Thus questions were raised regarding inspiration and hermeneutical method; particularly the proof text method which was the method of interpretation generally followed that time in the Adventist Church.

<sup>179</sup> For example, since 2003 (at least), Bacchiocchi advances an inspirational concept (limited inerrancy) that is very close to proponents' understanding. See his "Biblical Errancy and Inerrancy-Part 2," *Endtime Issues*, 19 August 2003, 7-24. On the other hand, Richard Davidson, one of the contributor of the pro-ordination book *Women in Ministry* has a tendency toward an absolute inerrancy position when he minimises the human element in inspiration to minor transcriptional errors only: "Recognise that there are some minor transcriptional errors in Scripture." Richard Davidson, "Biblical

inspiration and related interpretation the best way to analyse inspirational concepts is to approach them and see them as *tendencies*.

The inspiration position of opponents can be best seen when investigated on the background of the following topics: *Terminology and definitions* and *full inspiration rationale* and its consequences for the understanding of hermeneutics.

## Terminology and Elements of Inspiration

### Definition and Terminology

From the outset, opponents of women's ordination make it clear that they do not subscribe to dictation or mechanical concept of inspiration.<sup>180</sup> Thus for example Holmes defines his position when he says: "Adventists have rejected the dictation/verbal inspiration concept" and he does "not subscribe to a dictation model of verbal inspiration".<sup>181</sup> He however does not specify what "verbal" or "dictation" means. Instead he moves to highlight that this definition, however, does not exclude concepts of "infallibility" or "inerrancy" as proper descriptions of inspiration. "Seventh-day Adventists need to be careful that with the non-acceptance of dictation/verbal inspiration they do not also reject the infallibility of the Bible."<sup>182</sup>

The closest Holmes comes to a specific definition of inspiration is when he reiterates the words of Ellen White: "The Bible is an inspired, authoritative, infallible, and unerring

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Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000, 73.

<sup>180</sup> As the above footnote indicates, in this section only material which generally is representative of the opponents' general tendency towards *inspiration* will be used. Hence the position of Samuele Bacchiocchi who was significantly involved in the publishing campaign against women's ordination is not here mentioned *in its entirety* because (1) his position concerning inspiration as it specifically relates to inerrancy questions was clarified quite late in his works, some 20 years (in 2003) after he published his major works against women's ordination and therefore (2) his later inspiration-inerrancy views could be viewed as transitional at best. For these reasons it has been difficult to establish precisely what was S. Bacchiocchi's view of inspiration at the time when he was publishing his major studies. To simply take his 2003 views and assume he held the same views 20 years earlier would be presumptuous and anachronistic. Finally it has to be pointed out that the above stated limitations apply only in the specific area of *inspiration and inerrancy* and do not extend to other areas such as inspiration and culture for example where Bacchiocchi's position is detectable and therefore his views are included in the analysis later in the chapter. A summary of Bacchiocchi's 2003 inspiration views is however provided on page 83 in the footnote section alongside with the rest of the opponents' summary. There are two key resources which deal in detail with the issue of inspiration from the opponents' perspective and which are representative of the underlying inspiration tendency of opponents. These are the book *The Tip of an Iceberg* by Raymond C. Holmes and the book by Koranteng-Pipim: *Receiving the Word*.

<sup>181</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 32.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 42. See also page 32 or 43 where he emphasises the same thing: "No" to dictation/verbal inspiration but yes to infallibility. Infallibility itself is covered in more detail in the next section on authority.



revelation from God".<sup>183</sup> This becomes Holmes' favourite definition and he will repeat it throughout his book over and again.

The second important book of opponents published on the issue of biblical interpretation and inspiration however supplies another definition:

The Spirit's guidance of the inspired writers in expressing their God-given thoughts and ideas in their own words is known technically as *verbal (propositional) inspiration*. This should not be confused with *mechanical (dictation) inspiration*, a mistaken theory which claims that the Holy Spirit dictated each word of Scripture.<sup>184</sup>

This definition, it seems, confuses the terminology of opponents and raises additional questions of what then is their exact concept of inspiration. While on one hand the *dictation* inspiration is rejected by Pipim, the *verbal* terminology is not.<sup>185</sup> While for Holmes *verbal equals dictation* inspiration, for Pipim *verbal does not equal dictation*, but rather thought/propositional inspiration. The terminology of opponents rejects "dictation or mechanical inspiration", but it uses "verbal" and "plenary" terms as notions of their concept.

According to Pipim "'verbal inspiration' is a technical theological phrase that means different things to different people" and even more importantly the "liberal scholars have hijacked these terms and injected them with new meanings."<sup>186</sup> Thus for Pipim the "clumsy phrase" "verbal propositional" implies that God guided Bible writers in their choice of words.<sup>187</sup>

Against the liberal use of "thought inspiration" which for some Adventists came to mean that God did not impart any objective information to Bible writers only personal experience, suggesting that the Bible is not the word of God, only becoming the word of God if one has the same experience as the Bible writer, Pipim justifies his use of "verbal-propositional" and at the end avoids the term "thought or plenary inspiration". The inspiration then, for opponents, has a verbal aspect and not just a thought aspect. From the above discussion it is fair to conclude that the opponents' theology of inspiration while rejecting the

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 54. Holmes quotes almost exactly a statement of Ellen White which can be found in her book *Great Controversy* on page vii. However he adds the word "unerring" to his definition to bring up again the idea of infallibility.

<sup>184</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 51. Italics original. The same position is repeated on page 265.

<sup>185</sup> He reiterates his terminology by saying that "God's verbal propositional revelation comes to us as inspired authoritative Scripture." See Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "An Analysis and Evaluation of Alden Thompson's Casebook/Codebook Approach to the Bible," in *Issues in Inspiration and Revelation*, ed. Frank Holbrook and Leo Van Dolson, (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992), 60.

<sup>186</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent? Issues Dividing Our Church*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Berean Books, 2001), 474 and 508.

<sup>187</sup> "While rejecting mechanical/dictation inspiration, to preserve the truth that the Holy Spirit guided the Bible writers in the choice of their words, I employed the clumsy phrase 'verbal propositional inspiration'." Ibid., 474.

dictation or mechanical concepts still retains a tendency to emphasise the verbal element in the inspiration of human writers.

Because of the non-uniform and confusing manner in which contemporary Adventists use the terms 'thought inspiration' and 'verbal inspiration,' it is important to demand from those who use these expressions a clear explanation of what they mean.<sup>188</sup>

The above suggestion of opponents calls for further analysis of additional elements in their inspiration concept.

### Divine and Human in Inspiration

Using the incarnation analogy of Christ's dual divine-human nature, opponents apply the same principle to the inspiration of the Bible. The Bible for them has a dual nature just as Christ "was fully both human and divine, so is the Bible...fully human and fully divine."<sup>189</sup>

The human nature of the Scripture suggests that the style and the character of a human writer is stamped in the message, particularly visible in "the choice of words, mode of expression, emphasis, structure, choice of what to include and even the meaning given to events."<sup>190</sup>

The divine character on the other hand is - for the leading opponents - characterised by the fact that the "Bible shares in the unquestionable, supreme, and infallible authority of God."<sup>191</sup> In the process of inspiration humans were divinely aided and carried along so much so that when it comes to the final product there is one principal or primary Author. Although the role of human authors is attested, the leading role of the divine in the process of inspiration means "it would be inexact to say that the Bible is a human book."<sup>192</sup> As *product* however the Bible has a dual nature, it is a blend of human and divine.

Importantly, opponents clarify the relationship between the divine and human by stressing the indivisibility and unity of the elements. "Indeed, Bible-believing Adventists recognise the impossibility of separating what is divine from what is human in the Scripture. They also recognise that attempting to do so denies the basic unity of Scripture."<sup>193</sup> The fact that human influence is indivisible from the divine for opponents means that in the process of analyzing the inspiration one should not attempt to bring up the human nature of the bible to

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 509.

<sup>189</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 52. Similarly Holmes says that the "Bible is both a divine and a human book." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 43.

<sup>190</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 54. Also Pipim acknowledges the influence of human element in the employment of words and expressions. See Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 50, 53, 248 and 249.

<sup>191</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 248.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 53, See also 48-52.

<sup>193</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 503. Also in Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 53 and 117.

the point of emphasizing “humanness” in Scripture.<sup>194</sup> In this sense, a logical link is made between the humanity of the incarnated Christ - who was without sin - and the Bible, which is also, for opponents, without sin – or rather, without any mistake.<sup>195</sup> The Bible contains no human imperfections or distortions.<sup>196</sup> Indeed “there was no distortion of the Word when the Bible writers wrote their message”. “Any distortions will have to come, not from the original copies,” but as Pipim explains, from the transmission and translation process of texts.<sup>197</sup>

When it comes to the process of inspiration, significantly opponents maintain that the control of the divine in the form of the guidance of the Holy Spirit was so immediate that the human writers’ personal and cultural prejudices were not allowed to distort the message.<sup>198</sup> Also Holmes makes his view clear on this particular point when arguing that neither culture nor personal opinions of an inspired author are involved. “His counsel is clearly under the authority of God’s revelation.”<sup>199</sup> In fact, the Holy Spirit inspired the human writers not only with thoughts and ideas but more importantly with “objective information”.<sup>200</sup> “The Holy Spirit’s role in the inspiration of Scripture ensured that the Bible writers were not prisoners of the oppressive structures of their day (race, gender, religion, etc.).”<sup>201</sup> Inspiration seems to

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<sup>194</sup> It is important for opponents to maintain the indivisibility concept of divine and human elements in the centre of their incarnation concept of inspiration for other reason as well. The logical conclusion of separating the elements leads to discussing which part is more important (divine) and which less essential (human) and hence to the concept of cultural conditioning, which is vehemently rejected by the opponents. More on the logic of connecting the indivisibility to cultural conditioning below in the corresponding sections. Interestingly enough, opponents seem to be not aware that they are at least semantically making a distinction and logical separation between the elements when they are able to pinpoint which parts belong to divine (infallibility) which to human (choice of words, style, mode of expression, etc.).

<sup>195</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 133. Also Damsteegt confirms his position on the “sinlessness” of Scripture by saying that “Ellen White has said that the inspired Scripture is not affected ‘by human prejudice or human pride.’” See Gerhard Damsteegt, “Scripture Faces Current Issues,” 26. It is interesting to look into the context of the statement Damsteegt is using from Ellen White’s book *Patriarchs and Prophets* to claim sinlessness for Scripture. In that book on page 567 Ellen White said: “In God’s word we behold the power that laid the foundation of the earth and that stretched out the heavens. Here only can we find a history of our race unsullied by human prejudice or human pride.” While Damsteegt is placing the “human prejudice and pride” into the framework of biblical inspiration, the author of the statement seems to be contrasting the human search of history which is influenced by pride and prejudice, with the God’s record of history which is trustworthy. There is no discussion of biblical inspiration in the context, which talks about the educative importance of the Bible, and hence Damsteegt seems to misrepresent the original source he is quoting from. For opponents there is no difference between the notion of “mistake” and “historical inaccuracy” as it will be shown later in the chapter.

<sup>196</sup> On this point, both main resources which provide systematic description of opponents’ position are very clear. See Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 57, 58. And Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 226, 246.

<sup>197</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 226, 227 also page 249. This absolute inerrancy position will be addressed in the next section which will deal with concepts of trustworthiness, infallibility and inerrancy.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>199</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 141.

<sup>200</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 259.

<sup>201</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 64.

counteract and control the natural, historical, cultural and sociological setting of humanity and for opponents is operating on clear immediacy assumptions which lead to objective preservation of the message.

Illustrative of their objectivist immediate view of inspiration is that the inspired thought is always greater than the human language in which it is expressed.<sup>202</sup> This idea is taken to its logical conclusion by Raymond Holmes who commenting on 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 concludes that it is "not the author's, message or the theology" which is inspired, but it "the *Scriptures themselves*."<sup>203</sup> Holmes hence exemplifies the objectivist and verbal emphasis their immediate view of inspiration has.<sup>204</sup> For opponents, divine activity takes overall control even to a point where human thoughts of the author lose their importance to the verbal and literal aspects in the Scripture which are directly affected by the divine activity.

The emphasis on the human writers' personality being stamped in the choice of words and style on one hand, and the immediate and even sterile control of the divine element on the other hand, (even to a point where personal influence or opinion of a human writer is diminished in the inspiration) captures the essence of opponents' view. The logic behind such a view of inspiration seems to work with two contradictory ideas regarding the role of the human and divine. On one hand the mediating activity of the human inspired agent is acknowledged, on the other hand the human influence is almost nullified by the immediate activity of the divine inspiring agent. Inspiration is therefore presented as a sterile process of communicating objective information through human tools, but without human "baggage" attached to it.

It seems there is only one explanation for this contradiction in the inspiration logic of opponents. It appears that opponents make either a conscious or more probably unconscious distinction between the process of inspiration and the final product of inspiration. In *the process of inspiration* they work with the idea of the divine element taking overall control over the human writers. This in effect allows for no cultural or personal opinions of writers to be expressed. The opponents' logic regarding *the final product of inspiration* however displays a different pattern. In this case their approach acknowledges the presence and the contribution of both elements-not only the divine, but also the contribution of style and choice of words of human writers. Thus as the product of inspiration, Scripture has a dual nature comprising of two inseparable elements. This differentiation between the process and the result of inspiration

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<sup>202</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 55.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 65. Note the similarity with Pipim's verbal/propositional definition in which he dwells on the verbal aspect.

<sup>204</sup> "God was active and took the initiative in the transmission of His Word through the human writers." *Ibid.* The word "transmission" in the above quotation of Holmes is confusing as usually the word transmission when used in the context of inspiration refers to the process of passing on the Biblical texts. Here however Holmes effectively means by transmission "inspiration".

can be nicely illustrated in the statement Holmes makes about the working of human agency in inspiration:

Does this mean that human instruments were unimportant in the writing of Scripture? Certainly not. The human agency is recognized, yet because of the operation of divine inspiration there is no distortion, either personal or cultural, of the divine intent.<sup>205</sup>

Indeed, Holmes makes his point about the human agency cautiously. On one hand he cannot answer the first question with the "yes" as this would destroy the dual nature of the Bible as attested in 2 Peter 1:20, 21, text which he is commenting on. "Yet" on the other hand when he describes "the operation of inspiration" he in fact reduces the mediation of the human author to a mere theoretical concept which is divorced from any personal or cultural contribution. What seems important to him is that the "operation" or the process is a divinely controlled process in which the human has no control.

Similar distinction between the process and the result of inspiration can be illustrated with another example. On pages 248-249 of *Receiving the Word*, Pipim talks about the fact that the Bible is both human and divine. The human nature of the Bible means that "as a human document the Bible reflects the individuality of its human writers." Nevertheless, some 20 pages earlier in the same book when speaking about the *process* of inspiration, Pipim seems to downplay the impact of human individuality, emphasizing rather the divine control: "The Holy Spirit guided them [Bible writers], not allowing their personal or cultural prejudices to distort the God-given message."<sup>206</sup>

The above examples illustrate a two-way logic of opponents. Their inspiration rationale distinguishes between the process of inspiration and the final product of inspiration. In the first case the divine takes precedence and full control. In the second case the human has a place next to the divine. In this context the terminology of inspiration of opponents seems to make sense also. Using the terminology of verbal inspiration is not a contradiction for Pipim when he views inspiration as a process.<sup>207</sup> But when the final product perspective is applied both Holmes and Pipim unanimously deny any dictation or mechanic concept of inspiration due to the fact that the dual nature of the Bible is acclaimed in the New Testament. This two-way approach which fully accepts neither immediate nor mediate inspiration activity hence helps to explain the terminology and function of the opponents' inspiration theory.

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 31, 32.

<sup>206</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 248 and 226.

<sup>207</sup> In this regard Holmes also comes very close to Pipim's "verbal" inspiration when he acknowledges the importance of verbal element: "Notice also that Paul did not refer to the authors, the message, or the theology as being inspired, but to the Scriptures themselves." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 65.

## The Concept of Full Inspiration

Another area in the inspiration logic of opponents is the extent of inspiration. Opponents often emphasise when it comes to the question of: "How much of Scripture is inspired?" or put differently, "Is the Bible fully inspired or partially inspired?" that *all* Scripture is inspired.<sup>208</sup> Based on texts like 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Hebrews 1:1 and 2 Peter 1:20, 21 the inspiration works not only on every single book of the Old Testament and the New Testament, but more crucially also on "sections of the Bible which talk about miracles, history, geography, ethics science, etc."<sup>209</sup> Hence for opponents the Bible "is *fully* inspired and therefore binding upon all people in all ages and all places."<sup>210</sup>

The concept of *full inspiration* has significant implication for the whole structure of the logic, language and concepts of inspiration and reading of opponents. Four major areas are significantly touched by the logic of the *full* inspiration concept. They will be introduced briefly and then investigated in the next sections in more detail.

The first area of impact is obvious from Pipim's statement above, in which the Bible has a universally binding character—"upon all people in all ages". A universally binding character can hermeneutically translate as universal applicability.<sup>211</sup> It also means that each section, text or piece of information in the Bible has equal value, according to opponents.<sup>212</sup> In fact it is the liberal Historical-critical scholarship that suggests that "in Scripture some things are 'essential' and other are 'debatable'."<sup>213</sup> For opponents because of the *full* extent of inspiration and the resulting binding nature of its product, the Bible, all has universal applicability and the same face value whether salvific statements or historical and scientific details.

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<sup>208</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 47 and 115. Pipim deals in depth with the topic on pages 115-142. The concept of "full" is not strange neither to Holmes and other opponents as it will become clear especially in the next section on authority and related issues.

<sup>209</sup> These "are inspired just as the doctrinal sections are" *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 115. Italics added.

<sup>211</sup> The logic of full inspiration helps to explain their emphasis. The many examples in part 1 show how often opponents in their interpretation of key texts used the argument of universal application. Also Holmes makes the position of opponents clear when he addresses the topic under the headline in chapter 3 of his book "Universal and Timeless Application". He makes it clear that the Bible is not limited in its application. See Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 59-60.

<sup>212</sup> "Can we make a distinction between theological statements of God's saving acts and their accompanying historical descriptions? ...Bible-believing scholars make no dichotomy between the so-called 'essentials' and 'debatable' aspects of Old Testament saving acts." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "An Analysis and Evaluation of Alden Thompson's Casebook/Codebook Approach to the Bible," in *Issues in Inspiration and Revelation*, 50 and 51. "Like their Savior, they accept every historical detail-chronology, numbers, events and people-as a matter of faith and practice." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 247. "As the matter of faith" in the statement basically means "as the matter of 'doctrine' and practice" which highlights the principle of universal and equal application.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 246.

The second area which is logically implied by the concept of full inspiration is the area of biblical authority. The logic and the language of *full* inspiration for opponents imply *full* authority. The Bible for opponents is not only authoritative, but is *fully authoritative*.<sup>214</sup> The emphasis thus is on *Sola Scriptura* as opposed to *Prima Scriptura*.

The third area on which the logic of full inspiration implies is the area of biblical inerrancy, infallibility and related trustworthiness and reliability concepts.

The last area of impact is logically connected with the first one. It is implied that, because of the full inspiration and the binding nature of the Bible—"upon all people in all ages"—, there is no room for the so-called cultural accommodation. It is sufficient to say at this point that for opponents the Bible is not culturally conditioned, but rather divinely conditioned. All these notions under the logic of full inspiration are transformed into radical concepts of absolute inerrancy, absolute/full infallibility, full trustworthiness and full or absolute reliability. To better expose the logic of the opponents' theory of inspiration all four corollaries of their full inspiration rationale will be examined in the rest of this section on inspiration.

## **Corollaries of Full Inspiration Rationale**

### **Full Inspiration and Universal Applicability**

According to opponents of women' ordination, any statement of the Scripture is either fully inspired, or is an expression of uninspired personal opinion, which then reflects only on the writers' culture and hence is not applicable for the church today. Opponents do not accept the second option as this would destroy the concept of full inspiration as they believe is taught by 2 Peter 1 or 1 Timothy 2. This position however leads opponents to move onto the next level in their reasoning and to affirm that on the hermeneutical level this implies what can be called the universal applicability of Scripture.<sup>215</sup> This position is nicely expressed by Holmes who disputes that "the inspired teachings of the Bible were limited in application."<sup>216</sup> Similarly, Pipim is ready to question that "specific passages [were] addressed to specific cultural situations."<sup>217</sup> This position of both scholars represents a significant hermeneutical implication of their inspiration concept as it relates to historical-cultural factors. The suggestion that Bible is not limited in its application and that messages were not addressed to

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<sup>214</sup> Holmes's book *The Tip of an Iceberg* in its introduction makes it clear how important the full authority concept is not only for the general hermeneutics, but particularly for the ordination of women debate: "Therefore, the primary focus of this book is on the authority of the Bible and the manner of its interpretation; it will attempt to show the difference between full authority and limited authority of the Bible as applied to the contemporary question of women's ordination." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 14.

<sup>215</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, p. 129 and also 132.

<sup>216</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 59.

<sup>217</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 129.

specific cultural situation is a vital hermeneutical position; and one with potentially far-reaching reading consequences. Universal applicability of every Bible statement is also practically evident from opponents' exegetical approach as discussed in the first part of this chapter.

### Full Inspiration and Biblical Authority

The topic of biblical authority is the second corollary of their full inspiration rationale. In the minds of leading opponents it is inextricably linked with the debate about the ordination.<sup>218</sup> Biblical authority becomes for them the ultimate<sup>219</sup> and "the most crucial issue of all" which "we cannot escape"<sup>220</sup> when debating the ordination of women issue.

Not only is biblical authority linked to the ordination debate, but more crucially Holmes also clarifies that "the authority of the Bible on any issue to which it speaks rests upon its divine inspiration."<sup>221</sup> Both topics, biblical authority and biblical inspiration are treated in close proximity in the opponents' flagship book on biblical interpretation *Receiving the Word*.<sup>222</sup> There is thus a clear connection between the two topics in the argumentation of opponents. The logical justification as it is argued is supplied by the rationale of *full* inspiration.

There are two major elements in the biblical authority model of opponents which define and clarify their overall view of Scriptural authority. These are the notions of text directness and the notion of Sola Scriptura.

*Biblical Authority and Text Directness.* In the article: "The Bible: Inspired Book or Booklet?" the author's first question is: "What has happened to Bible authority today?"<sup>223</sup> In a subtle way the author sets forth in a significant passage his underlying assumption (definition) of authority which guides opponents' understanding. It is helpful therefore to quote the passage in its length here:

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<sup>218</sup> Raymond Holmes for instance makes it clear that "many are not fully aware of the crucial relationship between biblical authority, biblical interpretation, and the role of women in ministry." And so clarification on biblical authority even becomes the aim of his against-ordination book: "Therefore, the primary focus of this book is on the authority of the Bible..." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 14.

<sup>219</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 16.

<sup>220</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 63. Indeed, according to Holmes "the authority of the written Word of God" is facing major challenge in the Christian church at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Therefore "our understanding of the authority of the Bible is at the very heart of the faith" (Ibid., 63).

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>222</sup> Both topics are part of chapter two of the book. The topic of biblical authority is dealt with on pages 105-113 and the inspiration is addressed on pages 115-142. Similarly Koranteng-Pipim addresses both issues in Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "The Bible Inspired Book or Inspired Booklet?" *Adventist Affirm*, Spring 1995, 20-29.

<sup>223</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "The Bible Inspired Book or Inspired Booklet?" *Adventist Affirm*, Spring 1995, 20.



Theologians use several well-crafted phrases to express their revised ideas of biblical authority. One English theologian suggested the phrase '*Scripture as a whole*' instead of '*the whole Scripture*'; another person proposed the expression, '*biblical authorization*' rather than '*biblical authority*'; other scholars believe that Scriptures provide only a '*biblical direction*' (or trajectory, flow, or plot, as in a play) and not necessarily a '*biblical directive*'. One ecumenical document described the Bible as possessing a '*normative priority*,' but not in a sense of *normative supremacy*; and John Shelby Spong, the Episcopal bishop of Newark, understands the Bible as '*a historic narrative of the journey of our religious forbears*,' not '*a literal road map to reality*'. None of these phrases ascribes full authority to the whole Bible as the word of God...Such views present a sophisticated challenge to the historic Christian view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible.<sup>224</sup>

The significance of this passage lies in the fact that it identifies the semantic context for understanding authority. The whole passage disputes the attempts of certain scholars to limit the *wholistic, direct, normative* and *literal* authority of the Bible. Pipim's clearest expression of his authority model is in his rejection of "direction," "flow," "plot" and/or "journey" concepts and in his approval of "*directive*" and "*literal road map*" concepts. Indeed, as he says in the last two sentences, the direction or flow concepts ("indirect"-principle-based approach) of biblical authority destroys the Bible's full authority and even the inspiration of the Bible. If anything, it appears that biblical authority is understood here in a concrete way, characterised by literalness and directness. If this emphasis on details, plain reading and direct message is lost the biblical authority is lost with it. I will later argue that the plain, direct and concrete authority will find its expression in a plain and literal reading principle.

The article by Pipim argues against "theological uncertainty," "theological pluralism" and "the growing silence of the Bible" as things which are symptomatic of biblical authority erosion. Against these things there is only one answer and that is that "*we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord'*."<sup>225</sup> Thus plainness of Scripture is a defining pillar in the biblical authority model of opponents and as such, it controls not only aspects of their views on biblical authority and inspiration, but as will be argued also the basic principle of their hermeneutical method - the literal reading principle.

*Biblical Authority and Sola Scriptura.* Another fundamental aspect in the authority model of opponents is the emphasis on the sole authority of the Bible, referred to as the *Sola Scriptura*. For opponents the Bible has *sole* authority and not only *primary* authority. In this regard, opponents fear that *Sola Scriptura* is being attacked and replaced by *Prima Scriptura* today.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 23. Italics original.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 29. Italics original. This is the last sentence of the article and although he quotes from Ellen White's book *Great Controversy* from page 595, the aim is still to emphasise plainness as the means through which biblical authority is exercised.

<sup>226</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 105-106. Pipim addresses the issue of sole versus primary authority in a separate chapter on pages 105-111.

The major difference between *sola* and *prima* lies in where the Bible is placed with regard to extra-biblical sources. The underlying assumption in the authority model of opponents is that the Bible is the sole source for theological work. "We continually declare that the Bible is the only source for our beliefs and practices."<sup>227</sup> Opponents here point to the *Fundamental Belief number one of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* which in their view acknowledges the position of Bible as the only source for theological work.<sup>228</sup> Opponents hence reject any suggestion that "the Bible is not our only source of evidence" and "that doctrines arise not from the Bible alone."<sup>229</sup>

A significant clarification concerning the authority model involves an insight that the concept of *Sola Scriptura* is understood by opponents hermeneutically. The hermeneutical limitation implies that no extra-biblical sources are to be used when studying Scripture, only the Bible alone. Thus *Sola Scriptura* is understood to have apart from epistemological meaning also hermeneutical meaning.<sup>230</sup>

Interestingly however, opponents seem to be aware that *Sola Scriptura* might not totally exclude extra-biblical data, yet this approach is exercised with the greatest of caution.<sup>231</sup>

Significantly, the *Sola Scriptura*'s epistemological meaning is acknowledged alongside the value (however limited) of extra-biblical data.<sup>232</sup> Yet, the overall tendency of opponents when it comes to *Sola Scriptura* still promotes the exclusion of the use of extra-biblical material as the following statement illustrates: "Scripture must always be the *sole authoritative source* of human knowledge-above from nature (science), human experience (psychology), human history, church tradition, etc."<sup>233</sup> The italicised use of the "sole authoritative source" constitutes a major clarification in the authority model of opponents.

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<sup>227</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should Our Church Ordain Women? No," 15.

<sup>228</sup> *Fundamental Belief number one* is analysed in the next section on Semantic component. However close analysis of the *Fundamental Belief number one* will show that while the *Fundamental Belief number one* acknowledges *Sola Scriptura*, it does it only with regard to the evaluative character of *Sola Scriptura* not with regard to resources. For this reason, Seton seems to read into the *Fundamental Belief number one* his own assumption of the Bible as the only source.

<sup>229</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 106.

<sup>230</sup> Raymond Holmes also affirms this perception of *Sola Scriptura* regarding theological sources: "Full authority means the supremacy of Scripture over human reason and philosophy, over human and cultural demands." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 50.

<sup>231</sup> "While upholding the sole authority of Scripture, Bible-believing Christians do not totally reject the value of extra-biblical data and experience in informing their understanding of inspired writ... However because of the impact of sin,... the knowledge obtained from data outside Scripture may sometimes be flawed. To correct such distortions, God has given the Holy Scriptures as the objective basis to evaluate extra-biblical data." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 110.

<sup>232</sup> Indeed, Pipim at this point seems to be almost in line with the historical position of Christian theology which acknowledges the so called "quadriga" Scripture, reason, history and experience as theological resources, while at the same time maintaining the evaluative (epistemological position) character of Scripture – *Prima Scriptura* over non-biblical sources.

<sup>233</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 111. Italics original.

In summary, for opponents, the authority of the Bible is implied by the phrase *Sola Scriptura* which embraces not only using the Bible as *the evaluative source* (epistemological meaning) for extra-biblical sources, but also using the Bible as *the only (sole) source* (hermeneutical limitation) excluding or minimizing the use of extra-biblical sources. The opponents' view and language of "Sola" Scriptura in both its meaning and limitation thus becomes a major clarifying concept in the opponents' biblical authority model.

### Full Inspiration and Biblical Inerrancy

The third corollary of the full inspiration rationale is the opponents' emphasis on Scriptural inerrancy. As it has already been presented, opponents of women's ordination heavily draw on the notion of "*all* Scripture is inspired". Under the influence of the *entire inspiration*, the terminology used to describe the dynamics of inspiration takes a more radical edge. In this regard notions of trustworthiness, reliability, veracity, infallibility and inerrancy which are usually used to describe the nature of Scripture are radically transformed into more rigid expressions using adjectives *full/fully*, *absolute* and *complete*.

One of the most mysterious features of biblical inspiration, according to opponents, is the fact that God was able, despite the fallible human agents, to ensure the trustworthiness of his word.<sup>234</sup> There is not the slightest doubt that the Bible is a trustworthy revelation of God. It is important to mention right at the beginning of this section that words "trustworthy" and "trustworthiness" are used as interchanging terms for "reliability," "infallibility," "veracity" and "inerrancy". The variable use of all these expressions will be apparent from the examples used below. But even more important than the interchanging semantics is the fact that underlying this semantics is the fundamental assumption about absolute inerrancy which springs from the opponents' full inspiration rationale.

Full *trustworthiness* of the Bible is based on the fact that the Bible is without "sin" and it does not give wrong information to its readers. Scripture indeed shares the *infallibility* of God which means that the theological assumption which underlines trustworthiness is the character of God.<sup>235</sup>

When addressing the question of original biblical autographs, the classical absolute inerrancy position of opponents become even more explicit.

Any distortions in the Bible's message would not come from the Bible writers themselves... Any distortions will have to come, not from the original copies (the

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<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 143-144. Pipim devotes one chapter to the trustworthiness of Scripture on pages 143-151. Fundamentally the Bible is without sin because its author cannot lie. The doctrine of God is then the starting point of the opponents' inspiration theory. Opponents then deductively work from the doctrine of God to the doctrine of Scripture. In this sense their approach is comparable to traditional deductivist theories of inspiration. See Kern R. Trembath, *Evangelical Theories of Biblical Inspiration: A Review and Proposal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

*autographs* which no longer exist), but rather from either copyists and translators as they transmitted the sacred texts...<sup>236</sup>

The classical absolute inerrancy position consists of two main declarations. The first affirms the inerrancy of original autographs as for example documented in the statement of David Dockery: "The Bible in its original autographs, properly interpreted, will be found to be truthful and faithful in all that it affirms concerning all areas of life, faith and practice."<sup>237</sup>

The second affirmation of the classical inerrancy position states that the Bible is absolutely truthful and inerrant: not only when it speaks on salvation, but also when it speaks on "history, geography, astronomy, chronology, science, or any other area whatsoever," as one of the most outspoken absolute inerrantists Harold Lindsell advocates.<sup>238</sup>

Opponents of women's ordination not only have a tendency to be in line with the first declaration of classical absolute inerrancy theology as shown above, but they also have a tendency to be in agreement with the second part of the absolute inerrancy position which declares inerrancy in other than salvation matters as well.

Illustrative of this tendency is the question of whether biblical infallibility "is limited only to issues of salvation, but does not extend to non-salvific issues that the Bible touches upon (e.g. science, history, ethical lifestyle, etc.)?" and the resulting affirmative answer: "Bible-believing Adventists affirm the full trustworthiness or reliability of Scripture in all that it touches upon...Not only do its authors tell the truth in what they say about God and salvation, but also in regard other matters."<sup>239</sup>

Hence, both key declarations of the absolute inerrancy position appear in the writings of opponents; and furthermore, both demonstrate that the reasoning and the terminology in their authority model is driven by the absolute inerrancy concept. The closest their terminology comes to the inerrant assumption is when Holmes clarifies the concept of biblical authority and inspiration. Commenting on the important hermeneutical conferences of 1974 he emphasises that "the Conferences did not avoid the terms 'inerrant' and 'infallible' with respect to the message and historicity of the Bible."<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 227. See also page 249.

<sup>237</sup> David Dockery, "Can Baptists Affirm the Reliability and Authority of the Bible," *SBC Today*, March 1985, 16. David Dockery is a Southern Baptist conservative scholar.

<sup>238</sup> Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI, 1976), 18.

<sup>239</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 507-508. There are many other examples of the same emphasis in the book. See for example pages 447, 448 where Pipim speaks about "reliability in all that it deals with" and "the authority of the Bible in all its totality". On page 449 he disputes the view that "Bible is not fully reliable in everything it says." Similar examples of absolute inerrancy logic can be found on pages 451, 459, 461, 470, 498, 500. Also the tendency is evident in his article: Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "An Analysis and Evaluation of Alden Thompson's Casebook/Codebook Approach to the Bible," in *Issues in Inspiration and Revelation*, especially on pages 49-61.

<sup>240</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 32. Also in his hermeneutical book there are other indications that he has a tendency to acknowledge an absolute inerrancy position. For example as

A significant attempt to justify the vocabulary and inerrant logic of their authority model is also done through interpretation of the official Fundamental Belief number one of the Seventh-day Adventist Church which deals with the theology of Scripture.

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)<sup>241</sup>

With the help of italics opponents try to highlight and connect certain elements in the statement to support their inerrant view. Thus Pipim's interpretation of the text looks like this: "The Holy Scriptures are the *infallible revelation* of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and *the trustworthy record of God's acts in history*."<sup>242</sup> In an apparent attempt to prove that the Bible is indeed infallible, opponents connect phrases in italics; this corresponds not only to matters of salvation, but also to its views on other matters like history for example. Notions of "infallible" and "trustworthy" are once again assumed synonymous. Their tendency to perceive biblical inspiration and biblical authority as an inerrant process involving every area the Bible touches upon is therefore at the heart of their doctrine of Scripture and its inspiration.<sup>243</sup>

Opponents thus employ time and again the language of biblical infallibility, inerrancy and trustworthiness. Often these terms are used with adjectives of full or absolute as the treatment is trying to demonstrate. Thus for example Pipim calling himself a "Bible-believing"

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it was already mentioned his preferred definition of biblical inspiration include the phrase "infallible and unerring revelation of God's will" (see pages 32, or 65).

<sup>241</sup> The easiest access to all Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs can be through the church's official website: <http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>.

<sup>242</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 507. Italics original.

<sup>243</sup> The opponents' reading of the Fundamental Belief number one seems to be selective and biased however. Their selective choice of words does not match the overall limited framework which the Statement has in view. Thus, for example, Pipim starts with the third sentence and overlooks the second which significantly frames the meaning of what will follow namely the topic of salvation: "In this Word, God has committed to man the *knowledge necessary for salvation*" (italics mine). In this context the last phrase "trustworthy record of God's acts in history" should also be understood as referring to acts related to salvation history. Secondly, the third sentence containing: "the infallible revelation of His will" is a reproduction of Ellen White's words and the phrase "infallible" is clearly linked to "His will" (having the salvation in view again) rather than to "revelation", because the next sentence covers *revelation* – "record of God's acts in history". Interestingly, here however the adjective is "trustworthy" rather than "infallible" and that seems to be a significant distinction in the semantics of the Statement, not equating "infallible" with "trustworthy". Record of historical data (which is limited to the salvation topic) is not described as "infallible," but is rather carefully worded as "trustworthy". The only "infallible" in the Statement is "God's will" suggesting that what humans have in the Bible about God's salvation is indeed (sure) what God wanted to reveal about Himself and the salvation to humanity. Letting the context and the careful semantics of the Statement explain itself seems to question opponents own reading and interpretation of the Fundamental Belief number one.

Adventist claims that opponents “accept the divinely inspired Bible in its entirety as *absolutely trustworthy* and dependable.”<sup>244</sup> While the statement is clear on the fact that the biblical trustworthiness is absolute, it is also worth noting that the author logically links this understanding to his concept of inspiration.

Raymond Holmes also makes his contribution on the topic when he says that “the Bible is the *unerring standard*...; The Biblical Text is an *inerrant expression* of the will of God and the *infallible guide*...”<sup>245</sup> All three italicised expressions in his statement highlight Holmes’ belief and strong emphasis on biblical infallibility. This belief is once again confirmed just a few pages later in the same publication where he explains his rationale for infallibility: “The account of His revelation in the Bible is divinely inspired and is, therefore, infallible.”<sup>246</sup> It is obvious that Holmes is founding his important assumption of infallibility on his understanding of divine inspiration. Similarly, the logical connection to inspiration is confirmed elsewhere as well: “These two subjects-inspiration and interpretation-have a bearing on whether the Bible is fully trustworthy, absolutely dependable, and completely reliable in all that it deals with.”<sup>247</sup> Apart from the obvious link to inspiration, it is interesting to observe that all three synonymous expressions for infallibility – trustworthy, dependable and reliable - are preceded by a clarifying adverb suggesting an absolute understanding of these terms.

Moreover, the stress on *absolute* is made more lucid when opponents claim that Bible writers unanimously affirmed “the absolute truthfulness of *every* statement in Scripture-not some, or most.”<sup>248</sup> Such statements are even further developed and pushed to their inevitable conclusion-absolute inerrancy. Thus, for example, Pipim, who has provided the most extensive treatment on methodology from the opponents’ side, marks his belief in absolute inerrancy in the form of two rhetorical questions:

Are there inaccuracies, mistakes, or errors in Scripture, so that some of the Bible’s accounts (e.g., history and science) are not fully trustworthy?... In other words does the Bible merely contain ‘a great deal of accuracy’ in its historical and scientific details? Or should the inspired Book be trusted as fully reliable...?<sup>249</sup>

Pipim’s unambiguous implication that the fully trustworthy and fully reliable Bible means total accuracy and absolute absence of inaccuracies or mistakes very nicely illustrates

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<sup>244</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, “An Analysis and Evaluation of Alden Thompson’s Casebook/Codebook Approach to the Bible,” in *Issues in Inspiration and Revelation*, 61. Italics added.

<sup>245</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 33. Italics added.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>247</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 447.

<sup>248</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, “An Analysis and Evaluation of Alden Thompson’s Casebook/Codebook Approach to the Bible,” in *Issues in Inspiration and Revelation*, 49. The same statement appears in his book *Must We Be Silent?* on page 470. Please note, the italic in the statement is original and not added.

<sup>249</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 451.

the opponents' assumption of biblical infallibility which is just another expression for what theologically is called absolute inerrancy.<sup>250</sup>

The question of mistakes, inaccuracies, errors and discrepancies for opponents in the Bible is thus a question which divides Bible-believing conservatives from Moderates (Liberals, Neo-liberals, and Accommodationists) or Bible-doubters. It is Bible-believing conservatives who according to them preserve the traditional view of Scripture – that is the one which upholds Bible's full trustworthiness and reliability on every subject. This view, as they make plain also rejects any notion of even a minor mistake, discrepancy, inconsistency, inaccuracy or error. On the other hand it is the neo-liberal camp, where they put also most of the proponents of ordination, which accepts limited trustworthiness and limited reliability of the Bible. This view accepts that some minor mistakes appear in the inspired Book. For opponents, at the end, there are only two camps when it comes to biblical infallibility. Those who accept Bible as fully trustworthy and infallible and those who accept only limited infallibility.<sup>251</sup>

The significant observation at this point is that the opponents' infallibility assumption actually translates into theological language as absolute inerrancy, which claims that the Bible makes no mistake whether it speaks on salvation or on any other historical or scientific matter.

The point about the opponents' tendency to absolute inerrancy could be further pressed by highlighting that the full trustworthiness for them means that no distinction exists between history and theology, or science and theology or essential and debatable, that is "between theological statements of God's saving acts and their accompanying historical descriptions."<sup>252</sup> If the assumption of full trustworthiness or absolute infallibility is to remain *full* and *absolute* then it must entail a logical necessity of equating theological statements with historical and scientific details, which all are fully reliable that is without even a smallest mistake. "Like their Saviour, they [Bible-believing scholars] accept every historical detail-chronology, numbers, events and people-as a matter of faith and practice."<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Interestingly enough, Pipim on the same page where his rhetorical questions appear vehemently denies that he teaches inerrancy. Unfortunately, he does not provide (anywhere in his writings) a definition for inerrancy and hence his claim is inconsistent with his statements.

<sup>251</sup> See a comprehensive treatment of the topic in Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 59-61 and Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 448-449. The paragraph is a summary of key points mentioned in both books.

<sup>252</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 471. See also Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "An Analysis and Evaluation of Alden Thompson's Casebook/Codebook Approach to the Bible," in *Issues in Inspiration and Revelation*, 50-51.

<sup>253</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "An Analysis and Evaluation of Alden Thompson's Casebook/Codebook Approach to the Bible," in *Issues in Inspiration and Revelation*, 51. See also his book *Must We Be Silent?* page 472. It is however important to mention that opponents accept that copyist and translator errors crept into the Scriptures, yet these are taken as such. They however also make it clear that biblical autographs when they came from biblical writers contained no distortions. See Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 226, 227.

The opponents' assumption of full trustworthiness and absolute infallibility thus contains an unambiguous admission that the Bible is inerrant, not only in matters of salvation and theology, but also in matters of science and history, down to the very last detail. The assumption of *absolute* biblical inerrancy is firmly rooted in and necessitated by the opponents' concept of *full* inspiration; and, as such, constitutes a connecting link between the opponents' inspiration theory and their theological method.

#### Full Inspiration and Historical-Cultural Factors

The fourth corollary of the opponents' rationale of full inspiration is their rejection of cultural accommodation of Scripture. In order to analyse how historical-cultural factors operate within their inspiration concept it will be necessary to logically structure and systematise their understanding first. Analysis in this section will therefore include an investigation of three topics related to their "cultural conditioning" position. These include: Investigation of *the logic of cultural conditioning*; examination of how they *define* cultural conditioning; and looking into *implications* of cultural conditioning for their thought. It is also necessary to mention that the phrase and the concept of "cultural conditioning" is treated only within the context of inspiration here and not in the context of hermeneutics (which will be addressed later in the chapter).

*The Logic of Cultural Conditioning.* Underlying the inspiration concept of opponents as it refers to historical-cultural factors is the rationale of *full inspiration*. Part of the rationale of full inspiration is the view that "the Holy Spirit's inspiration was more powerful than cultural force in the writing of the Scriptures."<sup>254</sup> Inspired writers were endowed with "thoughts, ideas, and objective information,"<sup>255</sup> indicating that inspiration is shaped by the surrounding historical-cultural factors to a minimal extent. Thus the ultimate rationale behind how cultural-historical ingredients influenced inspiration and its product the Bible lies in the understanding of *the Holy Spirit's role in the process of inspiration*: "The Holy Spirit's role in the inspiration of Scripture ensured that the Bible writers were not prisoners of the oppressive structures of their day (race, gender, religion, etc.)."<sup>256</sup>

The result of this "objective" or "liberating" guidance of the Holy Spirit is that when it comes to a Bible writer "neither culture nor his personal opinion are involved. His counsel is clearly under the authority of God's revelation."<sup>257</sup> Opponents therefore deny any involvement

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<sup>254</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 65.

<sup>255</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 259.

<sup>256</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 64.

<sup>257</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 141.



of a human writer's "cultural upbringing"<sup>258</sup> in the inspiration and are even able to affirm that "the inspired Scripture is not affected 'by human prejudice or human pride'."<sup>259</sup>

The rationale behind the historical-cultural factors in the inspiration is therefore based on the immediate activity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was able to liberate the human tools from their surrounding cultural, gender, racial, religious or even sinful influences and personal opinions to ensure "objective" inspiration of Scriptures. This rationale underpins the opponents' cultural conditioning understanding and has important implications for their hermeneutics too.

*Defining Cultural Accommodation.* An important part of the opponents' inspiration concept is also how they define the so-called "cultural conditioning". A good example and indication of what cultural conditioning means for opponents can be found in a question Pipim asks as he attempts to clarify historical-cultural elements in Scripture: "Does God's communication to people in a particular historico-cultural setting imply that Scripture is culturally conditioned-that is, does the message of Scripture suffer from the *limitations, prejudice, or ignorance of the Bible writers?*"<sup>260</sup>

Cultural conditioning - as suggested by the above statement - concerns first of all the historical-cultural *limitations, prejudice and ignorance* of Bible writers. Opponents strongly object to inspiration that would incorporate human limitations and hence they reject the suggestion of cultural accommodation. In fact, it is the liberal scholarship which produced the concept of cultural accommodation with its definition that "Bible mirrors the prejudices or limitations of its writers' culture and time"<sup>261</sup> into the Bible. Opponents therefore stand strongly against any notion that Bible contains human "ignorance or a distorted view of reality."<sup>262</sup> Any distortion, as already mentioned would imply limited inspiration and hence also limited authority. On the other hand, in the opponents' view the Holy Spirit ensured full inspiration resulting in full authority with no distortions of any kind.

In the context of *full inspiration* which constitutes the fundamental logical framework for any historical-cultural influence, opponents also object to cultural accommodation for the reason that it implies *degrees of inspiration*. According to the opponents, the proponents'

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<sup>258</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 119.

<sup>259</sup> Gerhard Damsteegt, "Scripture Faces Current Issues," 26. On the interpretation of Damsteegt' use of Ellen White' "by human prejudice or human pride" see above the section of *Terminology and Definition - Human and Divine in Inspiration*.

<sup>260</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 504-505. Italics mine.

<sup>261</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 116. Also in Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 464. Both books have almost identical paragraphs. There seems to be no substantial modification in Pipim's perception of cultural conditioning in his later book which indicates that his definition of the concept is very stable.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid. Also in Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 465. Again both books have identical paragraphs in this place.

application of cultural conditioning seems “to suggest that there are degrees of inspiration in the Bible-the less inspired parts being tainted with human errors and contradictions.”<sup>263</sup> For opponents, however, there are no degrees of inspiration in the Bible. The Bible was either inspired or it was not inspired. Trying to pinpoint which parts of the Scripture are inspired and which are not would mean that human reason becomes the final judge of inspiration.<sup>264</sup>

In reality, attempts to indicate that inspiration worked by incorporating historical-cultural elements which were influenced by human limitation or prejudice are an effort to “deculturise” the Bible. Deculturization however is a sign of a restless spirit which approaches “the Bible with suspicion and scepticism rather than with an attitude of trust and submission to Scripture’s claims.”<sup>265</sup>

Thus the overall opponents’ attitude toward the historical-cultural ingredients in the Scripture is shaped by their initial definition that *cultural conditioning means that inspiration included cultural and historical prejudices, limitations and ignorance of human writers.*

*Implications of Cultural Conditioning.* One major theological implication of the historical-cultural dynamics in the context of inspiration touches upon the area of divine accommodation. “Does divine accommodation require God to adapt Himself to popular opinion, past or present...?”,<sup>266</sup> is the question which opens the topic for opponents.

In a clear manner Raymond Holmes affirms that “God does not adapt His divine instructions to meet the desires or opinions of a particular society or culture.”<sup>267</sup> But more importantly, Pipim clarifies the level of divine accommodation when he holds that: “God accommodated His message-i.e., He expressed His message in terms that could be understood by the messenger and their audience-*without compromising the truth in the process.*”<sup>268</sup>

What both authors in their statements try to do is on one hand not entirely reject the concept of divine accommodation and on the other hand keep God’s message from being accommodated at all to the level of surrounding cultural opinions. Their primary emphasis in doing this seems however to fall on the objective, uncompromised truth, rather than on “accommodation” as such. This tension between the objective uncompromised truth and the real cultural accommodation of the divine message can be nicely illustrated on the fact that while God accommodated His message to the level of understanding of people, yet God did

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<sup>263</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 71.

<sup>264</sup> More on degrees of inspiration in the methodological section.

<sup>265</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 71-72.

<sup>266</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, “An Analysis and Evaluation of Alden Thompson’s Casebook/Codebook Approach to the Bible,” in *Issues in Inspiration and Revelation*, 49. See also almost identical dealing with the divine accommodation in Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 245; and in Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 469-470.

<sup>267</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 148.

<sup>268</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 117.

not adapt "Himself to the opinions of 'surrounding culture'."<sup>269</sup> The factor which controls the opponents' concept of divine accommodation in tension is once again the leading role of the Holy Spirit: "The Holy Spirit guided them, [Bible writers] not allowing their personal or cultural prejudices to distort the God-given message."<sup>270</sup>

Thus, on one hand divine cultural accommodation or adaptation of divine message means that God accommodated his message *to the level of understanding* of people, yet still the divine accommodation didn't really descend *to the level of cultural opinions*. For this reason, opponents reject the theological and hermeneutical principle of cultural conditioning because it leads to arbitrary picking and choosing from the message of the Scriptures.<sup>271</sup>

However, while rejecting the idea that divine accommodation means accommodation to the level of cultural opinions, opponents nevertheless make an important "exception" in their adaptation model. In a close proximity from each other Pipim is surprisingly ready to admit that "Scripture being *historically constituted*, contains certain cultural elements, some of which are relative to the Bible times." And similarly, on the next page quoting from the so called "Rio Document," Pipim admits that "Bible-believing Adventists 'assume the transcultural and transtemporal relevancy of biblical instruction unless Scripture itself gives criteria limiting this relevancy'."<sup>272</sup> Both these "corrections" in the opponents' model of divine adaptation seem to notably contradict the overall strong rejection of any cultural adaptation and resulting cultural conditioning. For the reasons such as *full inspiration, the Holy Spirit's role in the inspiration, the inerrancy of Bible, the degrees of inspiration* opponents, as it has been shown, reject the notion of cultural conditioning in its entirety. Yet Pipim's admission that there might be "cultural elements which are relative to Bible times" and that Scripture's relevancy might be after all "limited," may raise questions about the sustainability of their rejection of *any* cultural conditioning and also the logical consistency of their divine *cultural* accommodation argument.

As the chapter earlier indicated (page 42), some opponents, such as Samuele Bacchiocchi when faced with certain New Testament ordination texts, such as for example 1 Corinthians 11, which states that women should veil their heads, cannot to escape from a "moderate" cultural accommodation/conditioning argument. Similarly Bernard Seton is incapable of avoiding similar conclusions: "In chapter 11, Paul responds to the church's

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid. The second statement in quotes follows almost immediately the first affirmation; which nicely illustrates the tension between saying yes to accommodation and being cautious about real cultural accommodation.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>271</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 505.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 504, 505. Italics in the first quotation are original. "Rio Document" is a popular name for a hermeneutical document approved in 1986 at the Annual Meeting of the General Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The document was published in *Adventist Review*, January 22, 1987, 18-20. The document's official name is "Method's of Bible study".

question of whether women should veil their heads in church. He gives his counsel in the setting of first-century Greco-Roman customs, and *it cannot be totally transferred to our own day.*"<sup>273</sup>

### **Summary of Opponents' Biblical Inspiration**

The doctrine of Biblical inspiration plays a significant role in the opponents' hermeneutical apparatus. It, in essence, defines the nature of Scripture and hence largely dictates how Scripture should be approached and read. The section on the opponents' inspiration theory has investigated their view of inspiration from various angles. First the section investigated how opponents define inspiration and what elements constitute their theory. I have shown that opponents place a strong verbal emphasis in their definitions of inspiration and therefore they prefer to refer to their theory in terms of "verbal" inspiration and refrain from terms like "mechanical", "plenary" or "thought". Furthermore, opponents employ the analogy of the Christ's incarnation to delineate between the human and divine aspects in Scripture. Crucially, they suggest that since Christ in his incarnation was sinless so is Scripture without sin or any mistake. A major aspect of their theory is also the idea of full inspiration. This as it was argued has four major implications for their hermeneutical thinking. First, the rationale of full inspiration implies that since Scripture is fully inspired it is also fully applicable or universally relevant which is particularly seen in their insistence that Scripture is not silent about the role of women. In the second place, the logic of full inspiration for opponents implies that if Scripture is taken as fully inspired it will also maintain its full authority. Scripture's full authority, however, can be undermined if its directness and plainness is undermined by other than direct and literal forms of reading. Full authority of Scripture also means that Scripture has sole and not just primary authority in the hermeneutical process. Thirdly, the logic of full inspiration for opponents seems to radicalise their notions of Scriptural trustworthiness and reliability and transforms them into more radical notions of absolute inerrancy and errorless inspiration. Lastly the logic of full inspiration is visible in the opponents' hermeneutical rationale in their rejection of cultural accommodation or conditioning. Since their full inspiration concept assumes an immediate working of the Holy Spirit, there is almost no space given to genuine human contribution which means that cultural or historical aspects have not influenced the objectivity of the inspired word.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Bernard E. Seton, "Should Our Church Ordain Women? No," 18. Italics added.

<sup>274</sup> To do full justice to the opponents' case concerning inspiration, the position of Samuele Bacchiocchi, which has not been covered in the analysis for reasons mentioned on page 62 is summarised in this footnote. The series of the two articles published in Bacchiocchi's own *Endtime Issues* in July respectively August 2003 set out his later views concerning inspiration and inerrancy. The first of the two articles serves primarily as a historical introduction to "the controversy over the errancy/inerrancy of the Bible" (page 7). Bacchiocchi makes it clear from the outset that both errancy and inerrancy positions are "heresies" championed by liberals on the one hand and conservative

## Opponents' Method and its Aspects

It has to be recognised that the opponents' theological method is directly and closely linked to their understanding of inspiration. The chapter has already attempted to analyse the rationale of their inspirational logic and so it become now important to specify the opponents' hermeneutical method and its characteristics. This section attempts to show how some of the already mentioned inspiration assumptions find their methodological expression in the form of theoretical and practical hermeneutical procedures.

This analysis will contain three major parts. The first will deal with how opponents see the function of presuppositions in hermeneutics, the second section will investigate the theological method itself and the final section will cover practical aspects of their method which are sometimes referred to as hermeneutical principles of interpretations.

### Opponents' View of the Reader's and Textual Horizon

The question of presuppositions in hermeneutics cannot be overlooked and therefore it may be necessary and illuminating to address it in relation to the opponents' method. There are particularly two main ideas which are significantly influencing opponents' interpretation. The first relates to how opponents perceive the idea of a reader's presuppositions, or horizon

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evangelicals on the other (page 7). After analysing the historical and theological contribution of liberal scholarship, Bacchiocchi concludes in the first article that it was the liberal criticism that reduced the Bible's authority by leaving out or reducing the divine element in its composition to a mere human product. This, according to Bacchiocchi, brought about the heresy of biblical errancy (page 18). In his second article, Bacchiocchi further advances this thesis by arguing that the negative impact of the liberal criticism that reduced the Bible to a document full of difficulties and errors (the errancy heresy) was met by the emerging conservative Evangelicalism from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by their counter-doctrine of biblical inerrancy (page 12). Interestingly Bacchiocchi argues that the absolute biblical inerrancy doctrine, teaching that the Bible is absolutely inerrant-without any error in its original manuscripts in every reference to history, geography, chronology, cosmology or science, dominated the religious scene only from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Thus Bacchiocchi sees the absolute inerrancy position as a historical response of conservative Evangelicalism to the emerging errancy view of the liberal scholarship. However both these positions make the Bible either too-divine (inerrancy) or too-human (errancy) and are therefore rejected by the author. Bacchiocchi defines his own position as limited inerrancy, which is defined as restricting "the accuracy of the Bible only to matters of salvation and ethics" (page 12). The original autographs, according to the author, were not preserved for later generations, which for him implies that "God did not see it vital for us to have an inerrant Bible" (page 15). Inspiration, according to Bacchiocchi does not presuppose inerrancy in all the information the Bible provides (page 15). The Bible never equates inspiration with inerrancy (page 19). Importantly for Bacchiocchi, the nature of the Bible must be defined inductively, that is by considering the data provided by the Bible itself, rather than deductively, that is by drawing conclusions from subjective premises. An inductive analysis of the existing discrepancies in the Bible does not support the absolute inerrancy view, concludes the author (19). Significantly for Bacchiocchi the divinity of the Bible is suggested by the underlying unity, particularly thematic unity (page 21). In his final observation, Bacchiocchi proposes that "both the errancy and inerrancy positions are extreme, heretical views that undermine the authority of the Bible by making it either too-human or too-divine." The solution Bacchiocchi proposes is a *balanced* attitude that acknowledges both the divine and human character of the Bible at the same time (page 23). Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Biblical Errancy and Inerrancy," *Endtime Issues*, No 101, 24 July 2003, 7-24 and Samuele Bacchiocchi, "Biblical Errancy and Inerrancy – Part 2," *Endtime Issues*, No 102, 19 August 2003, 12-23.

and the second relates to how opponents perceive the textual horizon, or the basic nature of the text.

### Reader's Horizon

The first assumption that relates to the opponents' method is the notion of right individual presuppositions which the reader has to possess when interpreting the inspired text. Opponents believe that God Himself eliminates the reader's individual subjectivity as he/she begins to study the Bible.

Gerhard Hasel, one of the most recognised Adventist Old Testament scholars both within and outside of the Adventist Church concerning the issue of subjectivity stated that:

It is a mandate that the interpreter seek to be objective. He must attempt to silence his subjectivity as much as possible if he is to obtain objective knowledge. The more he is aware of his own preunderstanding and presuppositions the more he is in a position to control them.<sup>275</sup>

While in this statement Hasel is making a general assertion about the necessity of silencing subjectivity in interpretation, it is only several pages later where he explains the mechanics of silencing the reader's presuppositions. Thus for him the process of studying the text is also a process of learning, through which the interpreter begins to appreciate the concerns and perspectives of the text itself. And so, "ideally one comes finally to put aside one's own initial interests, concerns, and viewpoints and come to share those of the author."<sup>276</sup> It is thus the studying of the text itself which makes the interpreters' presuppositions change. This significant recognition of the mechanics of change in presuppositions by opponents has potentially far reaching consequences on how seriously actually they take the role of individual subjectivity. Opponents are from the outset clear that "it is God Himself who through the Bible and the Holy Spirit creates in the interpreter the necessary presuppositions and the essential perspective for understanding Scripture."<sup>277</sup>

This initial perception that reading of the text changes presuppositions, rather than presuppositions the meaning of the text, could further be exemplified by opponents' claims about who is the most appropriate interpreter of the inspired text. Their statements about the most appropriate interpreter of the inspired text reveal a great deal about their understanding of presuppositions and reader's subjectivity. Thus for example Pipim unambiguously confirms that

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<sup>275</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Interpretation," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1974), 170.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 170. In a similar way Holmes is suggesting that "As disciples of Christ, all of us must submit our view to the authority of Scripture" in Raymond C. Holmes, "Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women," *Adventist Affirm*, Fall 1989, 62. Holmes in line with Hasel, is indicating that this process of submission of our views is a rather straightforward and simple process.

Bible-believing Adventists accept the inspired writers of the Bible as more authoritative for the interpretation of Scripture than any uninspired modern scholar...Conservatives therefore have no difficulty in accepting one inspired writer to be a final interpreter of a passage produced by another inspired writer.<sup>278</sup>

Pipim's implied dichotomy between the inspired author/interpreter and the reader, assumes that the inspired interpreter can speak with an independent voice of his own to the reader without any reader distortion, as if there was only one independent voice speaking in the Bible, the inspired author/interpreter's voice, leaving the reader's 'voice' with its presuppositions and ideas silent. To put it differently, Pipim is suggesting that when readers are trying to understand what one inspired author meant, another inspired author can answer their questions objectively and independently of the readers' own reading.

This suggests that a difference can be made between the text and the interpretation of the text. That is, between what the *reader* thinks about the text and what the *text* itself "thinks". The two can be for opponents separated in such a way that the reader can hear an inspired text's interpretation of another text without any disruption from the reader's own presuppositions. Pipim here seems to ignore the fact that any reading is already an interpretation.

Ultimately, Pipim's dichotomy is suggesting that the reader's reading of an inspired author-interpreter does not influence the opinion of the inspired author/interpreter, that is, the meaning of the text at all. The inspired author/interpreter is a better qualified person to interpret the text, and can do it without the reader's involvement. While Hasel has recognised that every interpreter, at least at the beginning, is bringing his viewpoints to studying the text, Pipim's creation of an inspired interpreter whose opinion is independent of the reader is significantly bypassing any, even initial influence of reader's presuppositions and subjectivity. It appears that the opponents' understanding of the impact of a reader's subjectivity on interpretation, including the reader's presuppositions or horizon is severely marginalised and even subdued to a point where presuppositions are not regarded as a relevant determinant for the meaning of the biblical text.

In this regard, Hasel's suggestion that God can shift the interpreter's presuppositions through studying the Bible is also significant. The logic of Hasel's proposition is that it is not the interpreters' presuppositions which shape the reading of the Bible, but it is the reading of the Bible itself which rather shapes the presuppositions of the reader. This point is well illustrated by Hasel himself as he explains that the deeper meaning of the text "is unveiled

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<sup>278</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "An Analysis and Evaluation of Alden Thompson's Casebook/Codebook Approach to the Bible," in *Issues in Inspiration and Revelation*, 61. See also page 48 where he is asking a rhetorical question of "who is the most qualified person to interpret inspired writings? Is it the twentieth-century scholar or another inspired writer?" The implied answer is obviously another inspired author.

most properly by another inspired writer. This means that there is no room for any subjective and private interpretation of the Bible."<sup>279</sup>

Hasel's suggestion that it is an *inspired writer* who unveils, as it is, "most properly" the deeper meaning of the text, followed by an immediate and radical acknowledgement that this therefore excludes *any* subjective or private interpretation is once again illustrative of opponents' treatment of the interpreter's contribution or his/her horizon. Opponents of women's ordination assume that the presuppositions which a contemporary reader brings to the Bible can be changed through God's interference and the reading itself. More importantly, the reader's presuppositions can be silenced to a point where an inspired author of the text can speak with his own independent voice from the text to the reader.

### Textual Horizon

Clarity or plainness of Scripture is the opponents' most important perspective when it comes to how they perceive the nature of the text. This perspective closely controls the basic hermeneutical principle of literal or plain reading.

First of all, Chapter Two has already shown that for opponents none of the ordination passages are "problematic, obscure, or painfully puzzling...they are not difficult to understand. It does not take a scholar to interpret them."<sup>280</sup> Similarly, the Scripture is "quite clear about the role of women" and "the Bible says so plainly, elders and church leaders are to be men (1 Timothy 3:2)."<sup>281</sup> Opponents are therefore very conscious about the principle of clarity and their interpretation is evidently based on this assumption from the very outset of their approach to the ordination debate.

Significantly, Pipim defines Scriptures' clarity by saying that "it is the substance of the Bible's message [that] can be understood by every Christian—scholar and non-scholar—as Scripture is compared with Scripture." More specifically, it means that "it [Scripture] can be understood from within itself, by comparing one passage of Scripture with another."<sup>282</sup> The emphasis on clarity as these statements indicate suggests that Scripture is sufficient to interpret Scripture and that every Christian is able to arrive at a substantial understanding of its basic message. While the definition emphasises the substance of the Bible's message as that which could be understood by every Christian, and hence which is clear, opponents apparently

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<sup>279</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Interpretation," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 190.

<sup>280</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, "Does Paul Really Forbid Women to Speak in Church? A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:11-15," in *Prove All Things*, 163. See the introduction to exegetical arguments of opponents in chapter two.

<sup>281</sup> Laurel Damsteegt, "Shall Women Minister?" *Adventist Affirm*, Spring 1995, 7 and 15.

<sup>282</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 38.



tend to include even the question of ordination of women into the category of "substance" and "clarity".

The importance of Scripture's clarity or plainness for opponents can also be illustrated on three opposing concepts which they reject because these undermine Scripture's clarity.

First, in direct opposition to the clarity of Scripture stands what opponents call the alleged obscurity of Scripture. Obscurity of Scripture means that only the learned scholars can understand the Bible, but the average church member is unable to understand it without help.<sup>283</sup> Opponents are rejecting any suggestion that Scripture is obscure or difficult to understand on its own without help from a learned scholar. In fact accepting that Scripture is obscure or difficult to understand would lead to "a new form of papalism-the infallibility of scholars, to whom believers must go for biblical answers."<sup>284</sup> This is vehemently rejected by opponents as opposing the assumption of Scripture's clarity.

Another antithesis to Scripture's clarity is for opponents the so-called theological or hermeneutical pluralism. This according to them is the result of change in basic biblical presuppositions, namely full inspiration and full authority.<sup>285</sup> God's will on the other hand is for like-mindedness, the ideal of unity which is to be sought for and worked for. Hermeneutical unity and pluralism therefore cannot exist side by side.<sup>286</sup> Clarity or plainness of Scripture is however closely related to biblical authority and its nature, as chapter two has already shown before, and as such hence providing a basis for essential theological and hermeneutical unity and God's ideal of like-mindedness.<sup>287</sup>

The last example showing that opponents work with the perspective of plainness or clarity is the example of how they reject any term, expression or notion which indicates anything else than plain and direct understanding of the text. Thus for example opponents reject expressions which suggest an indirect understanding and reading of the text such as "trajectory of the Bible," "Biblical direction," "flow" or "plot". On the other hand, the Bible is for opponents "a literal road map to reality," indicating that it is clear and plain.<sup>288</sup> Indeed, if

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<sup>283</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "The Bible: Inspired Book or Inspired Booklet?" *Adventist Affirm*, Spring 1995, 24.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>286</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 35. Holmes has repeated his understanding of pluralism in another place, significantly concluding that "if we accept theological and doctrinal pluralism, there is no way to settle the issue of women in ministry." Raymond C. Holmes, "Does Paul Really Forbid Women to Speak in Church? A Closer Look at 1 Timothy 2:11-15," in *Prove All Things*, 162.

<sup>287</sup> See *Inspiration and Biblical Authority* section above.

<sup>288</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 212. See also his other works on the same subject: Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "The Bible: Inspired Book or Inspired Booklet?" *Adventist Affirm*, Spring 1995, 22-23. In the same issue of *Adventist Affirm* Laurel Damsteegt is also firmly against these notions. See Laurel Damsteegt, "Shall Women Minister?," 6.

one does not regard the Bible being “a literal road map to reality” then one undermines the Bible’s full authority.

For opponents there exists “a basic agreement between the meaning of the text and the correct interpretation of that text now.”<sup>289</sup> What the text meant and what it means today for the reader is in agreement. The reader has an ability to understand the original meaning of the text. The clarity and plainness assumption guarantees this basic agreement.

In summary, clarity and plainness of Scripture appears to be one of the most fundamental perspectives of the opponents’ method. They regard the Bible as being sufficiently clear and plain not only as it speaks on matters of substance, but also as it touches on the ordination issue. Opponents vehemently contest assumptions undermining biblical clarity such as the Bible’s obscurity, theological pluralism. It is no wonder that when they published their affirmations against the ordination of women in 1989, their last affirmation concerning a new teaching said that it must “have a *clear* mandate from Scripture,” in order to be accepted.<sup>290</sup>

Just as the perspective of opponents on the reader’s horizon raises important additional questions so their perspective on the horizon of the biblical text raises additional questions about the origin and potential influence shaping these views.

### Opponents’ Method

This section will investigate the opponents’ “historical-grammatical method” and its aspects. While they vehemently reject the historical-critical methodologies in both their assumptions and procedures, the analysis of their method will also investigate possible signs of proof-texting as well as theoretical connections to the historical-critical method. The purpose of this part then is to analyze and systematise the theoretical basis and functional aspects of the opponents’ methodological approach to Scripture.

The treatment hence will proceed in several sections and will cover the issues of terminology and definitions, rejection of the historical-critical methodology, description of the historical-grammatical method and analysis of functional aspects of their method.

### Terminology and Definitions

There are three major theological factions for opponents when it comes to theological methods. They recognise “(i) the Liberal (Radical) position, (ii) the Conservative (Bible-believing) position and (iii) the Moderate (Progressive/Accommodationalist/Neo-liberal) position.”<sup>291</sup> While the formal distinction identifies three major factions, in reality there are

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<sup>289</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 36.

<sup>290</sup> [Editorial Board], “Affirmations,” *Adventist Affirm*, Fall 1989, 9. Italics added.

<sup>291</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 57-58. The Liberal position denies the full trustworthiness of the Bible and accommodates truth to modern culture and science (Ibid., 59). The

only two options available because the Accommodationist position is just a modified and popular version of the Radical liberalism in their view.<sup>292</sup> According to them the crisis of identity in the Adventist Church, including the question of women's ordination "stems from moderate liberals' effort to redefine historic Adventist beliefs according to their new views on Bible's inspiration, trustworthiness, and authority."<sup>293</sup>

Hence, opponents are in no doubt that there are only two methodological options available today. The first option is their own method called the *Historical-grammatical Method*, which according to them represents the traditional Adventist plain (literal) reading of Scripture. The second option is the liberal (moderate or radical) *Historical-critical Method* which operates on the principles-based reading.<sup>294</sup> Opponents' thus make it clear that the fundamental dividing line between the two methodologies lies in how the two approaches regard the already mentioned issue of biblical authority, including the Bible's full inspiration and absolute trustworthiness and in how they approach the text, either literally or principally.<sup>295</sup> In summary therefore, opponents recognise "two basic hermeneutical lenses" – traditional Adventist plain or literal reading of Scripture, which regards the Bible fully trustworthy in all matters, also called Historical-grammatical Method or Conservative position and the contemporary Neo-liberal, Modernist position with its Historical-critical Method, which accepts only a limited trustworthiness of the Bible and which reads Scripture principally. The first methodological option leads to a clear perception, while the other to "a blind deception regarding the Bible's message."<sup>296</sup>

At this point, one must note that while opponents identify their Historical-grammatical Method with the plain and literal reading approach, they also reject the so called *Proof-text*

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Conservative position on the other hand preserves the full reliability and trustworthiness of the Bible in matters of salvation as well as in other non-salvific matters. This position also rejects the use of scientific higher critical methodologies. The Moderate position accepts only limited trustworthiness because it accepts that there are some minor inaccuracies or errors in the Bible. This position applies a moderate use of critical methodologies Ibid., 60).

<sup>292</sup> See for example *Receiving the Word*, 60 and also page 10 of the same publication where the author identifies only two camps, liberals and conservatives and a great gulf between them. The whole argument of *Receiving the Word*, which contains the most comprehensive description of opponents understanding of theological method, regarding different methodologies aims to show that the Moderate position is just as dangerous and devastating for Adventist reading of the Bible and its doctrines as the Radical liberal method. So the opponents' logic works with only two options: Conservative accepting Bible's full trustworthiness and the Liberal, whether radical or moderate accepting limited biblical trustworthiness. See also a very clear summary statement on page 28, which recognises only two methodological options.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 11-13. According to the author the theological plurality in the church and uncertainties about Adventist traditional beliefs are the result of the Historical-critical Method, which "in recent decades has gained increasing acceptance among many of the church's thought leaders" (13).

<sup>295</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 37-38. See also for example *Receiving the Word*, 30, 31-32, where the biblical authority issue is mentioned over and over again alongside with the literal, plain reading.

<sup>296</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 38.

*Method*, which in their view is “taking the Bible in a ‘literalistic’ manner,” “out of context” using “an isolated text *arbitrarily*” and overall reading the Bible “naively” and “superficially” which eventually leads to “*misguided conclusions*”.<sup>297</sup> By rejecting the Proof-text Method, opponents hence perceive their Historical-grammatical Method as the only genuine option for Adventist theology having their conviction that it is their method which the best represents the traditional historic Adventist methodology.

#### Attitude towards Historical-Critical Methods

Opponents critique the historical-critical method to a significant degree because it becomes the major counterpart of their historical-grammatical approach. By analysing the opponents’ critique of the Historical-critical Method this section will be able to show an important rationale undergirding their methodological considerations before the discussion moves to analyse their own Historical-grammatical Method.

Speaking about *principles or assumptions of the Historical-critical Method*, opponents identify from five to three such principles. Holmes for example is able to highlight five principles of the method: “1. The principle that the Bible is the record of man’s understanding of God. 2. The principle of doubt. 3. The principle of human reason. 4. The principle of analogy. 5. The principle of correlation.”<sup>298</sup> Gerhard Hasel on the other hand is able to reduce the number of principles to three: “(1) correlation, (2) analogy, and (3) criticism”.<sup>299</sup> Pipim, while not using the name principles, remains somewhat in the middle between Holmes and Hasel with his four assumptions of the liberal method: 1. the Bible is not fully inspired; 2. the Bible is not fully trustworthy; 3. The Bible is not absolutely authoritative and 4. There is diversity in Scripture.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 28-30. Italics original. They recognise that the Proof-text Method takes the Bible as God’s inspired trustworthy and authoritative message, a fundamental assumption which also opponents accept, but its major flaw is in not being able to read the text in its context.

<sup>298</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 38. The principle number one means that an interpreter using the Historical-critical Method sees the Bible as a human book about God and religion; the principle of doubt means that the interpreter is approaching the text with the doubter’s question, ‘Is it true?’; The human reason principle suggests that contemporary experience and world-view is the criteria by which the text is analysed; The principle of analogy assumes that Bible writers had similar attitudes to the present-day interpreter regarding the culture; the principle of correlations suggests that historical events are interrelated in a cause effect relationship and hence limited to the natural realm excluding divine interventions such as miracles or inspiration.

<sup>299</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, “General Principles of Interpretation,” in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 165-166. The principle of correlation for Hasel means that the Historical-critical Method “understands history as an unbroken series of causes and effect in which there is no room for God’s activity;” the principle of analogy claims that the present and the past are analogous which in its rigorous application means that there is no room for the uniqueness of Jesus Christ; finally, the principle of criticism asserts that “any historical assertion is only a statement of probability,” which leads to “scepticism concerning many events described in the Gospels.” (Ibid., 166).

<sup>300</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 34. See also Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 500.

Whether five, three or four, all of these principles or assumptions have - for opponents - one significant thing in common. They reduce or even destroy the transcendent or divine dimension of the Bible and position the Bible as just another human book which should be studied as a human literary product.<sup>301</sup> Their concern is hence for the doctrine of Scripture. When it comes to the *procedures of the Historical-critical Method*, opponents in fact question the use of "scientific" methods which seek to reconstruct the meaning of the text by recreating the real-life situations and various socio-cultural elements which are assumed to shape the biblical text.<sup>302</sup> Among the "scientific" methods opponents explicitly mention historical criticism, literary-source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism, comparative-religion criticism and structural criticism. All of these are branded as naturalistic, rationalistic and *humanistic*, because they are based on the already mentioned principles of scepticism, doubt and reason and therefore unsuitable for interpreting the *divine* book. These "scientific" methods do not do justice to the divine nature of the Bible and thus are utterly inadequate for dealing with both the divine and human dimensions which the Bible contains.<sup>303</sup>

Opponents claim that historically, these scientific methodologies with their humanistic presuppositions have not been part of the traditional Adventist method of interpretation.<sup>304</sup> While the disagreements in the past in the church have been the result of inconsistent use of the right methodology, they argue, today the disagreements in the church, including the ordination debate are the result of using the wrong methodology.<sup>305</sup> For these reasons opponents strongly object to the use of scientific methodologies of the Historical-critical Method and in fact they regard the Method as the end-time "Trojan Horse" within the church<sup>306</sup> or as a deadly virus (bug) in the Seventh-day Adventist hermeneutics.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Interpretation," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 167. Also Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 44 where he says that "It seems that we are more interested in defending the human side of the Bible today than the divine side." Opponents generally tend to emphasise the divine element as it guarantees biblical authority, full inspiration and absolute reliability, all fundamental concepts in their methodology.

<sup>302</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 34-35. Significantly, he does not include into the list textual criticism which he will endorse later in his book on page 228. More on the rejection and endorsement of these methods later.

<sup>303</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Interpretation," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 167.

<sup>304</sup> While chapter one has already argued that the differences between opponents and proponents begin with how both camps interpret history, chapter three will also show that proponents disagree with opponents on whether Historical-critical procedures have been part of the "traditional" Adventist method. For example Raymond F. Cottrell from the pro-ordination camp has argued that some of the procedures of the critical method have been used as far back as in the 1930s. See Raymond F. Cottrell, "Blame it on Rio: The Annual Council Statement on Methods of Bible Study," *Adventist Currents*, March 1987, 33.

<sup>305</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 77-79.

<sup>306</sup> Enoch de Oliveira, "A Trojan Horse Within the Church," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 2/1 (1991): 6-17.

<sup>307</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Must We Be Silent?*, 455.

Importantly, opponents' rejection of the humanistic assumptions of the method, alongside with its scientific procedures, is based on their rationale of the inseparability of assumptions from procedures. Thus even if interpreters wanted to use some of the procedures of the critical method, without their naturalistic preunderstandings, they could not do so without being dragged into these assumptions.<sup>308</sup>

This rationale has found its way into the "Methods of Bible Study Committee Report," the so called *Rio Document*, accepted by the General Conference Annual Council in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on October 12, 1986.<sup>309</sup> Some argue that it was precisely Hasel's contention that it is not possible to use procedures of the critical method without swallowing its presuppositions that found its way into the document, through his own influence.<sup>310</sup> Thus one of the church's official documents on Adventist hermeneutics states that "even a modified use...of the historical-critical method that retains the principle of criticism which subordinates the Bible to human reason is unacceptable to Adventists."<sup>311</sup> This to opponents means that no historical-critical procedures should be used in interpreting the Bible because the underlying rationalistic principle of criticism goes hand in hand with the methods and cannot be divorced from the individual procedures.<sup>312</sup>

It is thus obvious that opponents argue for a total ban on using the Historical-critical Method, including its assumptions and procedures. They in fact regard the method as a life threatening virus in Adventist hermeneutics exhibiting thus a generally very hostile attitude toward the critical methodologies.

In this regard, it becomes rather surprising to discover that their own statements which suggest rather an opposite position regarding the use of some of the critical procedures do not always match this hostility. In a rather out of character spirit leading opponents, including Hasel and Pipim claim that it is after all it is possible to use at least some of the "lower" critical procedures. Thus for example Hasel, whose influence has shaped the *Rio Document* acknowledges that "knowledge of the procedures and methods of textual studies [meaning textual criticism] is needed for recovery of the original text."<sup>313</sup> When Hasel describes the

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<sup>308</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, *Understanding the Living Word of God* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1980), 22-24, 26. See also Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 38 and 79.

<sup>309</sup> "Methods of Bible Study Committee (GCC-A)-Report," *Adventist Review*, January 22, 1987, 18-20.

<sup>310</sup> Sakae Kubo, "A History of Adventist Interpretation of Revelation and Inspiration," online edition. Hasel became the Dean of the Theological Seminary at Andrews University, the most influential Adventist educational institution in 1981 and he was very influential with church administrators.

<sup>311</sup> "Methods of Bible Study Committee (GCC-A)-Report," 19.

<sup>312</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 79.

<sup>313</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Interpretation," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 171. While in the quoted sentence Hasel uses the phrase "textual studies," as the square

*Formgeschichte* or form criticism (form history) procedure of the critical method, while he is overall negative toward the use of the procedure, he rather positively affirms that “nevertheless, form criticism has brought about a greater awareness of external form and has emphasised and stimulated the appreciation of literary units.”<sup>314</sup> Perhaps the most surprising is however his endorsement of the use of comparative studies by using *parallel phenomena*, that is extra biblical materials and sources to interpret the biblical text.

With due recognition of the limitations indicated, the careful interpreter of the Bible can with profit carry on comparative studies, by recognizing the similarities and differences between the terminology, religion, culture, and social patterns of biblical writers and those of their neighbors... To take seriously the meaning and limitations of parallel phenomena is to shield one’s self against reading elements of one religio-cultural setting in terms of another.<sup>315</sup>

Hasel’s explicit admission, however cautious, that one can profit from using comparative studies through the use of parallel phenomena indeed comes very close to the essence of the basic correlation principle of the Historical-critical Method, which he and other opponents so vehemently reject elsewhere. But more importantly, Hasel’s *comparative study of parallel phenomena* could actually be just another name for one of the red listed procedures of Pipim, namely *comparative-religion criticism*.<sup>316</sup>

But Hasel is not alone in explicitly endorsing some procedures of the critical method. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim himself, being one of the most outspoken opponents of women’s ordination and one of the strongest critics of the Historical-critical Method, has also rather surprisingly admitted that “the discipline known as *textual criticism*, sometimes called *lower criticism*” could be useful in recovering the accurate Biblical text.<sup>317</sup> While Pipim hastily clarifies that textual criticism is not part of the higher criticism of the liberal school, the name itself however suggests that the procedure retains the principle of criticism or reason which is also red-listed for example by Holmes.

Besides Hasel and Pipim, Bernard Seton has voiced his positive endorsement of *textual criticism* and *literary criticism*, provided one accepts first the principle of supernaturalism.<sup>318</sup> Thus opponents on one hand compellingly condemn and vigorously reject

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brackets indicate in the context he clearly refers to “textual criticism,” the phrase which he uses at the very end of the paragraph.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid., 176. Hasel also admits that when it comes to words which appear only once in the Bible it is a “methodological necessity” to study such words in extrabiblical literature. (Ibid., 173).

<sup>316</sup> See above. Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 34.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid., 228.

<sup>318</sup> His statement reads as follows: “Belief in the inspiration of Scripture, however, does not relieve the interpreter of the obligation to examine the records rigorously. This calls for *textual criticism* to establish the reliability of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts; for *literary criticism* to reach an understanding of what each author has written... by acceptance of the concept of supernaturalism...”

even the modified use of the critical method, while at the same time a closer investigation uncovers their cautious, yet very explicit endorsement of textual criticism, literary criticism and comparative-religion criticism procedures of the critical method. This message send out by opponents is worth noting at this stage since it begs deeper questions to be asked about why there is such an inconsistent message.<sup>319</sup>

### Historical-Grammatical Method

Describing their own method of interpretation, opponents are defining *historical-grammatical* to mean a method which *seeks the simple, plain, literal, direct, or ordinary sense of Scripture*. More specifically,

the method seeks to ascertain the meaning of Scripture by carefully discovering the historical, literary and grammatical identity of a given passage in its immediate historical context and the wider context of the whole Bible. Having thus understood what a given passage meant in its historical context, the interpreter makes a responsible application to the contemporary situation.<sup>320</sup>

This understanding is based according to them on Karl A. G. Keil's historical treatise from 1788, which explains the term *historical-grammatical*. While the first part of the term-*historical* is, according to them self-explanatory, the second word-*grammatico* (Latin) is based on the Greek *gramma* and means *literal*, implying "the simple, direct, plain and literal sense of phrases, clauses and sentences."<sup>321</sup> So for opponents one of the most significant aspects of their method is the *grammatical* that is the literal or plain aspect of Scripture. Thus the true meaning of Scripture could be discovered by seeking the natural and normal sense of the text: "Literal interpretation means *we* understand a given passage in its natural or normal sense. We must understand the words just as *we* would interpret the language of normal discourse."<sup>322</sup>

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Bernard E. Seton, "Interpretation of Biblical History, Wisdom, and Poetry," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1974), 197. Italics added.

<sup>319</sup> The inconsistent message of opponents regarding the Historical-critical Method is not a surprise to supporters who claim that the procedures of the method could be used apart from its assumptions; furthermore, they argue such procedures had been used in the past by various scholars and are being used even by the critics of the method. For example: Jerry Gladson, "Taming Historical Criticism: Adventist Biblical Scholarship in the Land of Giants," *Spectrum*, 18/4 (April 1988): 19-34. This dynamic is explored further in chapter three.

<sup>320</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 32.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 40, footnote 10. Pipim actually quotes Walter C. Kaiser Jr. who explains the meaning of grammatical. See Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward An Exegetical Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 87-88.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, 167. Italics added. See also pages 168-176. The literal or normal sense of the text is contrasted with the principle-based approach of the Historical-critical Method, which according to them misreads the basic plain meaning of words. While opponents do not disregard the use of principles derived from the text, the reading of the text in the first place must be literal. Thus they even refer to their method as *a principled approach to the literal meaning of the text*. (*Ibid.*, 167).



Sometimes they even refer to the grammatical-literal aspect of Scripture as “the common sense approach” calling it also “the Reformation method”<sup>323</sup> It is thus becoming apparent that the plain sense of Scripture is something which is not only fundamental in their methodology, but also corresponds with their view of the horizon of the reader. This is visible from the fact that it is the reader’s “language of normal discourse” or *his/her* “common sense” which establishes what the grammatical-literal sense of the text is. Holmes in this regard holds that “the meaning for faith today is not something different from the meaning intended by the Bible writers for their time and place.”<sup>324</sup> Therefore, it appears that there is such a thing as a correlation of meaning between then and now, or a common sense bridge which connects the two worlds—the world of a contemporary reader and the world of the ancient Bible writer together. The common sense of the contemporary reader is thus identical with the common sense of the biblical author and for this reason the interpreter should understand Scripture in its natural or normal sense, just as he would interpret “the language of normal discourse”.

This then also means that the plain, literal or normal sense of the text is the present-day interpreter’s sense. Thus Pipim logically maintains that the theological assumption behind the plain literal meaning of the Scripture is that God “has spoken in the language of the listener,” that is in the language of the reader.<sup>325</sup>

Interestingly however, Keil’s Latin treatise on the Historical-grammatical Method from 1788 when speaking about the literal or grammatical sense of Scripture is concerned with the author’s historical meaning, rather than with the reader’s meaning. Thus, Keil’s *grammatico* – simple, direct, plain or literal sense of phrases, clauses and sentences is the author’s original (historical) meaning or sense, not the contemporary reader’s sense.<sup>326</sup> It thus becomes important to note that opponents shift the emphasis in their theological method from the author’s historical *usus loquendi* to the reader’s *usus loquendi*. This, as it has been shown is because the author’s original sense correlates with the interpreter’s present sense and because God talks in the language of the listener.

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<sup>323</sup> Jay Gallimore, “The Larger Issues,” in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 347.

<sup>324</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 38.

<sup>325</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 167. In the context Pipim speaks about *our* language of normal discourse and thus given this context, Pipim when mentioning *the listener* appears to have in mind a present-day reader or interpreter, rather than the original recipient, whether the author or his audience.

<sup>326</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward An Exegetical Theology*, 87-88. Moreover, Kaiser is very clear about the meaning of “literal sense” elsewhere as well. For example in *The Messiah in the Old Testament* he explains the meaning of literal by saying: “This term means no more than this; the words of the authors of Scripture must mean what they ordinarily meant when they were accorded their *usus loquendi*, that is, their spoken sense in similar contexts of that day.” See Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1995), 25. It is thus interesting to observe that the literal meaning for Kaiser or Keil is the original meaning of the author, while for opponents it is the present *usus loquendi* of the reader.

The historical aspect of their method, however, also deserves specific attention. The opponents' definition which appears at the beginning of this section seems to put strong emphasis on the historical circumstances discovering "what the passage *meant*" and thus balancing the meaning they give to the grammatical aspect. However, when clarifying what the historical aspect actually means, *they limit the historical research to what the reader can find in the Bible only*. This can be nicely illustrated from the following Canonical and Historical interpretative principles of Pipim:

*The canonical principle recognizes that the information we need to understand the Bible is found in the canon of Scripture itself... The canonical principle rejects the widespread contemporary practice of scholars. Instead of allowing the entire sixty-six books of the Bible to be the *only* context for understanding biblical history and culture, they tend to read the Bible in the light of ancient cultures of Bible times...*<sup>327</sup>

The Historical Principle... involves an understanding of the political situation... the religious developments... and the cultural backgrounds. With the aid of Bible concordances, one can come to a reasonable understanding of the historical and cultural background *from the Bible itself*.<sup>328</sup>

While it is questionable to what degree this rule is being actually followed, the first part of this chapter reveals at least a tendency in limiting the historical aspect to the Bible only. More importantly however, what the statement reveals is the rationale behind the *Historical-grammatical Method*. Limiting historical research to what one can discover in and from the Bible only, alongside a suspicious attitude toward any external scholarly tools, while it may be in line with their negative attitude toward scientific methodologies, as the previous section demonstrated, is nevertheless still surprising and almost negating the meaning of the word *historical* in *Historical-grammatical Method*. The statement practically implies an almost complete negation of true historical investigation. It seems that the historical gap between the author, his time and his culture and the contemporary interpreter's time and culture is almost absent from their hermeneutical considerations. This negation of true historical investigation could indeed be one of the most defining features of their hermeneutics.

Thus it seems that the *Historical-grammatical Method* which opponents claim represents their method is in fact a title which stands for a hermeneutics where the contemporary readers' common sense and *their* plain reading is in charge of the hermeneutical process. The historical gap between the horizon of the text and the horizon of the reader is theoretically bridged by an assumption that there is a connection between the meaning then

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<sup>327</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 267. Italics original. Pipim elsewhere confirms the same idea: "Thus, when the canonical principle asserts that we must interpret Scripture in the light of Scripture, the implications are that: (1) the information needed to understand a given passage of the Bible can be found in the pages of Scripture itself..." (Ibid., 268).

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 267. Italics original. He further continues saying that one must be extremely careful in using scholarly tools such as dictionaries, handbooks or commentaries, because "many academic resources are based on speculative *reconstructions*" (Ibid.). Italics original.

and now; that is, the certain immediacy of meaning which the reader can discover naturally. Just as the inspiration of the text has been assured by an immediate activity, so it appears that the recovery of the meaning from the inspired text can be achieved by an immediate illumination activity. Such an immediate illumination activity logically tends to limit the historical research to using the Bible as the only source, because the cultural and time gap becomes in this model unimportant. All in all, the *Historical-grammatical* method of opponents appears to have strong signs of a positivist common sense theoretical foundations.

### **Functional Aspects of Opponents' Method**

This section on elements of the opponents' method will investigate what are the functional, that is, practical steps opponents follow in interpretation. I will argue in the following pages that the most important aspect of their hermeneutical approach is *the literal reading* principle. This principle, often also called *the plain reading* principle undergirds every other hermeneutical step opponents take in interpretation.

The purpose of this section is to show how the inspiration rationale and methodological assumptions find their functional expression in the form of hermeneutical principles or steps opponents take to interpret the Bible. This section therefore closely analyses the major principles or aspects of approach of opponents' of women's ordination.

There are five sections in this part. The first section will look at the opponents' most fundamental interpretative rule, the literal principle. The second section will analyse what can be termed their comparative aspect. In the third section the treatment will focus on the rejection of cultural conditioning aspect, which will be followed by a section on other general interpretative principles. Finally, the treatment will end with an examination of the normative role of Ellen White.

#### **The Literal Principle**

*The plainness of Scripture* assumption of the opponents' theological method finds its direct expression in a form of *the literal principle* in their hermeneutics. The emphasis on Scripture's plain, obvious and literal sense has also already been investigated when the chapter discussed the opponents' *historical-grammatical* method. This section will thus further develop their logic and show how the emphasis on plain and literal meaning finds its practical expression in their hermeneutical system.

Even a quick and rather general reading of the opponents' main publications and their individual arguments reveal that the literal principle is the most emphasised aspect of their interpretation. There are numerous articles and arguments which are based on the literal reading of the text as part one has already demonstrated. It is therefore not necessary to deal with those examples again here.

The literal reading aspect appears as the leading principle in many of their rules collections. Thus for example in Pipim's *Hermeneutical Decalogue* the principle appears as the first rule: "1. The Literal Principle. Interpreting the Scriptures literally means we must understand the Bible in its *plain, obvious, and normal* sense," which means that "we must understand the words just as we would interpret the language of normal discourse."<sup>329</sup>

Pipim of course is not alone in his emphasis on literal reading. Similarly Damsteegt has been advocating "a clear focus on the plain reading of Scripture" by claiming that this is the traditional Adventist approach as expressed by William Miller's fourteen rules of interpretation. Damsteegt quotes four rules of Miller as an example of plain reading among which the first is that "every word must have its proper bearing on the subject presented in the Bible," which is indicative of a literal emphasis, the point Damsteegt is trying to make.<sup>330</sup>

Don Neufeld's collection of rules of interpretation from 1974 also reveals a tangible emphasis on a literal or plain reading principle. While the sequence of his rules is a bit perplexing as it includes also some general assumptions, nevertheless, the literal rule appears twice in his list. Thus Neufeld's fourth rule says that "the words of the Bible must be given their proper meaning...according to their common acceptance..." This is further elaborated in his sixth principle which unambiguously says that "the Bible must be interpreted according to the plain, obvious, and literal import unless a figure is employed."<sup>331</sup> Explaining the rule, Neufeld believes that a remedy for confusion in meaning could be found in the use of the literal principle, which captures the true and natural sense of Scriptures.<sup>332</sup>

In the same publication as Neufeld, Hasel has also made clear that the hermeneutical "methodology is, rather, that of self interpretation of Scripture, with its emphasis on the literal meaning of the text..."<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 264 and 167. Italics original. Pipim further explains that "from the literal meaning of the Biblical text, we can derive appropriate principles for today's living. These principles must be faithful to the literal meaning" (Ibid., 167). Thus Pipim ends his chapter on literal meaning by saying that "the true Seventh-day Adventist method is a *principled approach to the literal meaning of the text* (Ibid., 176). Italics original.

<sup>330</sup> Gerhard Damsteegt, "Scripture Faces Current Issues," 24. Damsteegt's main hermeneutical point throughout the article is "accept it [Word of God] as it reads" (Ibid.). Interestingly enough, editors of the April's 1999 issue of *Ministry* magazine did not endorse entirely Damsteegt's position on biblical hermeneutics. See the Editorial Note on page 23 of the same article.

<sup>331</sup> Don F. Neufeld, "Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1974), 119.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 119, 120.

<sup>333</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Interpretation," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 184. Hasel's B. part of the article dealing with general principles of interpretation on pages 170-173 uses the rule of literal meaning (Ibid., 171) as the first interpretative rule for *Understanding Words*. Interestingly however, the passage on the literal meaning argues rather for contextual meaning as the determinant of the meaning of words. Hasel argues that this contextual meaning of words is more important than their etymological meaning.

Thus, there is a discernable emphasis on literal readings of the Biblical text, not only in Hasel's hermeneutics, but also in the collection of rules of interpretation of other leading opponents. The literal aspect of interpretation is the key foundation which characterises the opponents' methodology. It is the first and foremost rule in their hermeneutical Decalogue and therefore having a fundamental importance in how they approach the ordination debate including the major ordination texts.

Before the discussion moves on to the next foundational principle, it is important to observe and note at this place, that opponents understand the *literal* principle as the *plain*, obvious, natural or common sense of the words or the text. For them the literal sense and the plain sense is the same thing. Defining the *sensus literalis* as *sensus simplicis* however raises important questions as to why exactly they equate *literalis* with *simplicis*.

### The Comparative Principle

The second functional characteristic of the opponents' hermeneutics is their principle of comparative reading. Again as it was in the case of the literal principle, chapter two has already showed how comparative reading is followed in the opponents' biblical argumentation.

However there are also direct statements of opponents which when analysed will clarify this aspect. Gerhard Hasel in his article on general principles of interpretation for example claims that the concept that the Bible is its own interpreter "implies that one portion of Scripture interprets another" and that "in the process of comparing text with text..., one needs one text on a given subject to interpret another text on the same subject."<sup>334</sup> For Hasel, thus the *Sola Scriptura* concept leads to the comparative hermeneutical principle; this principle, however, only works when the texts under consideration discuss the same subject matter.

For Pipim on the other hand the comparative principle stands on the clarity of Scripture assumption, which has been mentioned already.<sup>335</sup> Raymond Holmes has also affirmed his belief in the comparative principle when he asked in the form of a rhetorical question: "Do we still believe that when all texts on a given subject are seen together, it is possible to arrive at propositional truth?"<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Interpretation," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 168.

<sup>335</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 38. While Pipim's hermeneutical Decalogue does not identify the comparative principle as such, it nevertheless contains the essence of it in his two principles: Canonical Principle (which claims that all information to understand the text is in the Bible itself) and Consistent Principle (which claims that the Bible is consistent with itself, with no part contradicting another). When these two principles are combined they add up to the comparative procedure. See Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 264 and 168-170.

<sup>336</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, "Slavery, Sabbath, War, and Women," 62. Holmes is here indirectly quoting one of the William Miller's rules of interpretation, set of rules which has historical significance for Adventism.

Thus opponents, whether they express the rule in a more direct or less direct manner, practically work with the principle of comparison extensively in their arguments. Thus Hebert Kiesler in his paper on "Ephesians Four and the Role of Women" presented for the *Commission on the Role of Women* in 1987, based the argument solely on the comparative principle or rule.<sup>337</sup> Similarly, Mario Veloso's paper presented for the same commission has extensively used the principle of comparison, in this case semantic comparison of words.<sup>338</sup>

There is therefore enough evidence in the writings of opponents to safely conclude that the comparative principle is one of the defining characteristics of the opponents' hermeneutics; and, as such, is widely used in their writings and arguments against the ordination of women.<sup>339</sup>

### The Cultural Conditioning Principle

Because the chapter has already presented the rationale of cultural conditioning in relation to inspiration and drawn out some of the theological and hermeneutical consequences of this rationale, it will be sufficient to provide only additional clarification on the rejection of cultural conditioning principle in this place.

The logic of the *full inspiration* concept coupled with the *absolute inerrancy* and *full authority* corollaries results in the rejection of cultural conditioning. However as the chapter has also demonstrated opponents have in praxis difficulty following through this rationale in its entirety. Nevertheless, the theoretical rejection of cultural conditioning in the rationale of opponents is a significant hermeneutical aspect which deserves special attention in this section.

For opponents the "cultural argument is a futile attempt to explain the lack of biblical precedent for ordaining women."<sup>340</sup> In fact, the leading opponents claim that the principle of "deculturalization," (some also call cultural conditioning) has developed in the Adventist

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<sup>337</sup> Kiesler has argued in his paper that the silence on the question of sex roles in the distribution of spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4 can be explained if one takes into account other biblical texts, such as 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 1 Corinthians 14:34f and 1 Timothy 2:8-15. His comparative methodology is evident from the beginning to the end of his paper. See Herbert Kiesler, "Ephesians Four and the Role of Women", 1987.

<sup>338</sup> Veloso's comparison principle appears when he tries to interpret the meaning of teaching prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:12. He argues that it is not a general prohibition of teaching for women, but a prohibition of authoritative teaching, based on what the word teaching means elsewhere. See Mario Veloso, "Exegesis and Theological Implications of 1 Timothy 2:8-15," 6-8.

<sup>339</sup> While this section has not mentioned it specifically, the comparative principle is one of the Miller's 14 rules and opponents' are drawing on this fact. Historical rules of interpretation by William Miller will be however analysed in the third part of this chapter and thus the fact that opponents build on Miller's rule will not be overlooked.

<sup>340</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 64.

Church only after the 1974 Bible Conference.<sup>341</sup> Opponents imply that the principle has not been part of the Adventist hermeneutics historically. Moreover, they argue that the cultural conditioning principle is "the seed or root which has produced the higher-critical or historical-critical method of approach to the Scripture."<sup>342</sup> Opponents in consequence collectively voice their concern by saying that "we are deeply concerned over claims that the Bible writers were heavily influenced by their culture ('culturally conditioned')."<sup>343</sup> A concern echoed in their collective affirmation, which is against any, even limited cultural restriction of the text in 1 Timothy 2:12-3:7.<sup>344</sup>

Interestingly, opponents are willing to acknowledge their agreement with most of proponent's hermeneutical stance, with the exception of using historical-critical procedures including cultural conditioning.<sup>345</sup> Thus for example while Bacchiocchi agrees with the principle of distinguishing "between biblical culture and biblical message" he nevertheless denies that cultural conditioning applies in the case of the ordination of women debate.<sup>346</sup> A very similar view is held by Gerhard Hasel who has also acknowledged the existence of "circumstantial or culturally conditioned" Scriptures, yet argues that these "are not necessarily of limited or temporal application" as for example is the case of footwashing in John 13 or Paul's instructions regarding women in Ephesians and Corinthians.<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 45. Holmes is claiming in his book that the principle of cultural conditioning works in the same manner as Rudolph Bultmann's demythologizing principle (67).

<sup>342</sup> Gordon M. Hyde, "The Mohaven Concil-Where It All Began," *Adventist Affirm*, Fall 1989, 43.

<sup>343</sup> [Editorial Board], "An Appeal to the World Filed Regarding the Ministry of Women in the Church," *Adventist Affirm*, Fall 1989, 6.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>345</sup> Mercedes H. Dyer, "Prologue," in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 8; and Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, "Theology or Ideology? Background, Methodology, and Content of *Women in Ministry*," in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 20, 27-28. Gerhard Hasel was against the cultural conditioning principle of interpretation too. See

<sup>346</sup> Samuele Bacchiocchi, "A Response to Some Pro-ordination Papers," 1-2.

<sup>347</sup> It is both interesting and revealing to quote in length Hasel's logic of his rule: "Is the circumstantial and culturally conditioned experience of Jesus washing the disciple's feet a time-limited or transcultural ordinance? Evidently what was an occasional event based on a practice of the culture of the past is intended as a binding practice for all times and all other cultural settings. The setting of John 13 has a relationship to the specific situations in Ephesus and Corinth, where Paul addressed the matter of the role of women in the church. The contexts usually appeal to the orders established by God at creation and the Fall. Instructions that have specific cultural points of reference can be have to made timeless validity for the life and practice of God's church throughout time." Gerhard F. Hasel, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women," 53. Hasel has expressed his negative attitude towards cultural conditioning in the same article on pages 1-10 and 50. A very similar logic on footwashing and ordination as in the statement above appears in his article: "Biblical Authority and Feminist Interpretation" on pages 21-22. See Gerhard F. Hasel, "Biblical Authority and Feminist Interpretation," *Adventist Affirm*, Fall 1989, 12-23.

One of the most comprehensive studies exploring whether culture could be used as a reliable source for interpreting Pauline passages on the role of women, from the camp of opponents, couldn't find enough conclusive evidence about what the culture regarding women in Greco-Roman world was like. Thus Mervyn Maxwell arguing that "Paul was an apostle, however, not a mere creature of his time, or a coward" and therefore he "would have gone contrary to the culture of his contemporaries" concluded his study with the following much revealing statement:

It seems to me in view of the evidence presented in this paper and in view of Paul's known courage and especially in view of his *inspiration by the Holy Spirit*, that we should pay attention to what Paul actually said about women and not assume that he was influenced by overriding elements in the Greco-Roman world.<sup>348</sup>

Maxwell's conclusion brings together in one statement not only the rationale of rejecting the cultural conditioning - inspiration by the Holy Spirit, implying that inspiration is above cultural or personal forces, but also the rejection of the principle itself and the emphasis on their main interpretative rule of literal reading (what Paul actually said) which is for opponents far more important than the culture behind the text.

Opponents of women's ordination therefore - it can be concluded - reject the principle of cultural accommodation either in its entirety or by denying its application or relevance for the ordination of women texts. All the major "ordination" texts of Paul, both in Ephesians and Corinthians have transcultural and timeless applications for opponents and are therefore not limited by cultural accommodation. It is the literal reading aspect which according to opponents should decide in the first place what the passage means and not an inconclusive or speculative cultural argument which in effects limits the full Biblical authority.

#### Additional General Aspects of Opponents' Hermeneutics

In his 1974 paper for the *Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics* Don Neufeld admitted that up until that time "no thorough or complete survey of Adventist hermeneutic has yet been attempted."<sup>349</sup> However since then, due to the intensification of the ordination debate and its related hermeneutical level, both opponents and proponents have summarised their hermeneutical understandings on more than one occasion. For this reason this section will provide only a selection of additional hermeneutical aspects of opponents and not a thorough treatment of each of their principles which appear in their writings.

Different summaries of hermeneutical rules of interpretation have appeared over the years in opponents' main publications and from these a selection of the *most used* or repeated

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<sup>348</sup> Mervyn C. Maxwell, "Women in the Greco-Roman World," *Commission on the Role of Women*, 1988, 19. Italics original.

<sup>349</sup> Don F. Neufeld, "Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 119. See also 121, where he repeats the same claim.



elements can be presented to characterise their methodology. Thus apart from the literal and comparative principle opponents mention the following principles of interpretation:

A. *Grammatical/Contextual principle* – pays attention to words, wordings and context in which words or larger units appear.<sup>350</sup>

B. *Sola Scriptura/Canonical principle* - The Bible is its own interpreter in its entirety. The information needed to interpret a passage is found in the canon itself. For opponents it also means that no external data, such as tradition, philosophy, history, science or culture should be used in the interpretative process.<sup>351</sup>

C. *Historical principle* – calls for a grasp of historical, cultural and political setting of a passage. Pipim insists this should be done from the Bible only.<sup>352</sup>

D. *Consistent/Unity principle* – acknowledges that the Bible is consistent with itself and therefore texts do not contradict one another. Thus a unity of authorship is assumed.<sup>353</sup>

Besides these four principles opponents also refer to *Christological, Cosmic, Practical, Typological, Communicative* and *Confirmative* principles as aspects of interpretation.<sup>354</sup> From these however only the Confirmative principle will be explored in the next section as it sheds important light on their methodology.

Summarizing the opponents' hermeneutical position Holmes has suggested that the Adventist hermeneutics uses "the historical-grammatical method, in which the history, the

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<sup>350</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 265-267. Also Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Interpretation," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 170-176 and rule number 3 in Gerhard F. Hasel, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women," 51-52. Also see Don F. Neufeld, "Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 119; rules number 4 and 5.

<sup>351</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 36; see his rule number 7. Also Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 268-269. And Gerhard F. Hasel, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women," 51, rule number 1 and 2. Also Don F. Neufeld, "Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 117-118, rule number 1. Also [Editors], "How to Interpret the Scriptures: Principles Drawn from the Writings of Ellen G. White," *Adventist Affirm*, Fall 1989, 19, the rule number 4b.

<sup>352</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 267. Also Holmes's principle number 4 in Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 36. Also Gerhard F. Hasel, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women," 53; principles number 8 and 9. And also Don F. Neufeld, "Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 119; rule number 5.

<sup>353</sup> Don F. Neufeld, "Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 118. Also Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 269-270.

<sup>354</sup> These principles are not treated in this section as they do not shed any significant light on opponents' hermeneutical stance. For more on these principles see Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 269-275; also Don F. Neufeld, "Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 120-122; also Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Interpretation," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 170-191; and [Editors], "How to Interpret the Scriptures: Principles Drawn from the Writings of Ellen G. White," 18-19.

context, the meaning of words, grammatical structure, and the essential unity and harmony of Scripture are part of the interpretative process.”<sup>355</sup>

#### The Confirmative Aspect – The Hermeneutical Role of Ellen White

The last significant element in opponents’ hermeneutics deserves analytical attention in the chapter. It is the perceived role of one of the Adventism’s founders Ellen White and her place in the hermeneutical matrix.

While Adventism generally regards the role and the ministry of Ellen White as having prophetic significance, opponents regard the role of Ellen White and her writings as having also theological-hermeneutical significance. Thus for example Samuel Pipim has unambiguously claimed that Ellen White is “Adventism’s *foremost* Bible interpreter.”<sup>356</sup> His hermeneutical Decalogue ends with a *confirmative principle* which “suggests that one must compare all interpretations to the insights of Ellen G. White.”<sup>357</sup> Pipim’s argument is that, just as other protestant traditions have their leading figures whose interpretative insights are normative, so Adventism has prophetically “inspired guidance to the meaning of the passage” in the form of Ellen White’s writings.<sup>358</sup> Pipim, after expressing his conviction of the theological-hermeneutical role of Ellen White, concludes his section with a question: “can anyone doubt the importance and urgency of the Spirit of Prophecy [Ellen White] in the hermeneutical enterprise?”<sup>359</sup>

Opponents thus explicitly express their conviction of the hermeneutical significance of Ellen White as being the final guidance to the meaning of the text and final judge of the interpreters’ insights. In effect, it is her writings, or in practice the opponents’ understanding of her writings which controls the final hermeneutical outcome.

In their affirmation of the theological-hermeneutical role of Ellen White, opponents however go even further. Because opponents accept the premise that “Ellen White’s writings are in complete agreement with the Bible,” they can further claim that the Sola Scriptura principle does not apply in her case. Damsteegt’s passage on this point is worth quoting in its length here:

The phrase ‘the Bible and the Bible only’ as the basis for our faith and practice found expression with Ellen White and with the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers many times. However, each time Mrs. White used this phrase she contrasted the teaching of Scripture

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<sup>355</sup> Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 36. For a similar summary see Don F. Neufeld, “Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement,” in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 121-122. Here Neufeld quotes E. J. Waggoner, an important Adventist leader from 1890s, in order to show how his rules have historic validity.

<sup>356</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 301. Italics original.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*

with the traditions of men which are not in harmony with the Word of God. Nowhere in her writings do we find her contrasting this phrase with the testimonies and messages God gave her.<sup>360</sup>

Interestingly, it seems that Damsteegt is advocating here a view that the Sola Scriptura concept applies only to traditions which are not in harmony with the Bible, yet because Ellen White is in “complete harmony” the principle does not seem to apply in her case. If this interpretation of the Damsteegt’s quotation is correct, then it would put the opponents’ hermeneutical understanding of Ellen White on the fringes of Protestantism if not beyond it. The Sola Scriptura ceases to be *Sola* both epistemologically (as the sole source of revelation) and hermeneutically (as the final judge of interpretations) if indeed Ellen White is taken outside the normative sphere of Sola Scriptura.

In addition to the hermeneutical significance of Ellen White, opponents also clarify her theological significance. Thus Damsteegt suggests that her writings are “leading people to a better understanding of the Bible.”<sup>361</sup> Similarly, Pipim believes that her function is to “‘specify’ what is truth (when they are not sure)”<sup>362</sup> Elsewhere, the same author illustrates the theological role of her writings by an illustration of the telescope (Mrs White writings) which helps people to focus on stars (truths revealed in God’s word). “And in some cases, we see clearly some of these stars of God’s truth that were hiding in obscurity.”<sup>363</sup> Opponents thus seem to imply that theologically the Bible in itself is not sufficient enough to uncover all truths, some hiding in obscurity and therefore needs to be supplemented by Ellen White’s “telescopic” insights.<sup>364</sup>

Opponents’ writings on the ordination of women topic indeed manifest a general and tangible tendency in using Ellen White writings in both her implied functions – hermeneutical and theological. It is therefore not surprising that they suggest using Ellen White writings alongside the Bible as the means of solving theological controversies in the church. Damsteegt’s statement on this point can thus serve as a fitting summary of the opponents’ position on the role of Ellen White in interpretation: “In reading the complete Ellen White manuscript, one cannot but be impressed with the thought that studying the Bible together is

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<sup>360</sup> Gerhard P. Damsteegt, “The Priesthood of All Believers,” in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 112. The previous quote on the page is also from the same article, page 113.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 113.

<sup>362</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 275.

<sup>363</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, “Understanding the Spirit of Prophecy: Some Key Questions and Principles,” *Adventist Affirm*, Fall 2000, 25.

<sup>364</sup> While the opponents’ “telescopic” concept of Ellen White can be interpreted as having primarily “aiding” function, helping *blinded* human interpreters to see more clearly the “stars”, the concept has also implications regarding the nature of the Bible and the nature of Ellen White writings.

the real answer to our conflicts.”<sup>365</sup> The confirmative principle of the role of Ellen White is then an integral aspect of opponents’ hermeneutics.

### Conclusion

This section has investigated the most fundamental aspects of the opponents’ method. The *literal or plain reading* principle is the first and foremost aspect of their reading practice and is controlling every other step in the hermeneutical process. This aspect is further supported by other principles – the *comparative, rejection of cultural accommodation* and the confirmative aspect of *using Ellen White writings* in a normative hermeneutical way. All these principles together form the very essence of the practical hermeneutical approach of opponents.

One of the claims of opponents which cannot be overlooked, when it comes to theological method and principles of interpretation is that their method, that is their principles of interpretation represent the traditional, historic, centrist, time-honoured and midstream Adventist hermeneutics.<sup>366</sup> Opponents are confident that their hermeneutics represents the essence of Adventist approach to Scripture and as such is faithful not only to the historical hermeneutical heritage of Adventism, but also to its theological heritage.

### Summary and Conclusion of Chapter II

Chapter II has investigated how various individual theoretical and functional aspects of the opponents’ position work together. The comprehensive look at the opponents’ position covered three main areas of biblical arguments, theological arguments and their hermeneutical stance. Biblical and theological arguments of opponents were covered together in the first part of the chapter while their hermeneutical apparatus was analysed separately in the second part of the chapter.

The biblical arguments of opponents, the chapter has shown, are based on three key points: The disputed ordination texts use non-figurative language; they are easy to understand and they should be interpreted literally.

1 Timothy 2:9-15 alongside with 1 Timothy 3:1-7 are the central texts for opponents. 1 Timothy 2 provides the hermeneutical vantage point to Genesis 1-3 from where a permanent

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<sup>365</sup> Gerhard P. Damsteegt, “A Look at the Methods of Interpretation in *Women in Ministry*,” in *Prove All Things: A Response to Women in Ministry*, ed. Mercedes H. Dyer (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Affirm, 2000), 55.

<sup>366</sup> For the “traditional” claim see Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 264. For the “historic” claim see Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 36-37 and [Editors], “How to Interpret the Scriptures: Principles Drawn from the Writings of Ellen G. White,” 18-19. For the “centrist” and “time-honoured” claim see Gerhard F. Hasel, “Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women,” 50, 54. And for the “midstream” claim see Don F. Neufeld, “Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement,” in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 121.

validity of the male headship principle is argued. The analysis is mainly based on semantic considerations and on general theological and theoretical assumptions about the universal applicability of Scripture. The reasoning follows deductive logic from the New Testament back to the OT. Rigorous literalistic reading of "husband of one wife" is followed to interpret 1 Timothy 3, the second backbone texts of the opponents' case. The meaning for them is unequivocal and obvious. The implication of the text is that gender qualifications for church ministry come first while spiritual gifts serve as secondary qualification.

Opponents find further Scriptural evidence for their case in 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 which is explained primarily through contextual reading. The main argument according to opponents is that Paul's call to subordination is a call not to challenge male leadership. The reference to "the law" shows that subordination is a divine arrangement from creation and not a cultural norm. Permanent validity of the principle of headship and subordination is also affirmed by 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 according to opponents. Neither of the two passages in Corinthians is problematic and could be understood by deductive reading.

According to opponents the two texts of Ephesians 5:21-23 and Galatians 3:26-29, which are used by proponents to support their case, have either no bearing on the subject of ordination (Galatians 3) or confirm a one way and not mutual subordination (Ephesians 5). Both these texts talk about salvation and ontological equality but not church order.

The second group of arguments which the chapter has analysed are theological. These are based on a headship and subordination principle, the role women held in the Old Testament and New Testament and the representative role of elder/pastor.

The first theological argument is based on the logic of affirming first equality of being, and secondly recognizing sexual and hence functional differences between men and women. These two theological principles are visible from the manner and the order of creation and from Paul's use of Genesis 1-3. The double principle of ontological equality on one hand and sexual difference on the other is established in Genesis 1 and 2 and not in Genesis 3 as the New Testament biblical evidence also confirms according to opponents.

The argument from the role women held in the Old Testament suggests that while women in the Old Testament held roles in education of children and in private religious life, they nevertheless were not entrusted with priesthood roles and equally the lack of circumcision was a sign that the functional headship role was reserved to men. In the New Testament, Jesus' attitude toward women was not conditioned by the culture of the day. Jesus gave them opportunities and treated them as persons. However the fact that he appointed no female apostle points to a theological reason behind. The New Testament church understood this principle and reserved the roles of elder/pastor to males who given their gender can represent the fatherhood of God consistently.

The second part of the chapter has moved from specific biblical and theological arguments to the opponents' hermeneutical rationale which undergirds such argumentation. Part two has been further split into several subsections which have investigated first opponents' inspiration view, then their methodology and finally its functional aspects.

Critical to understanding the opponents' hermeneutical method, the chapter has argued, is their concept of inspiration. The opponents' rejection of the dictation model is not fully mirrored in their actual theory since their description of inspiration still retains a strong verbal emphasis as well as employing the terminology of infallibility and inerrancy. In terms of terminology opponents prefer to use the word "verbal" and abstain from using "dictation", "mechanical" or "thought" inspiration. Importantly, their idea of inspiration follows deductive logic which begins with the divine inspiring agent and its attributes. The human and divine aspects in the final product of inspiration-the Scripture are indivisible. Christ's sinless humanity furthermore points to Scripture's sinless human nature which for opponents means that there were no distortions in the original autographs.

Central to the opponents' understanding of inspiration becomes the notion of "full inspiration". The implications of this notion are wide and control the basic functioning of their methodology. There are four corollaries of *full inspiration* for their hermeneutical thought. (1) Full or universal *applicability* of Scripture means that the message or teaching of Scripture is universally applicable and is not limited culturally. The implication of full inspiration for universal applicability further means that there is no dichotomy between essentials and debatable aspects of biblical message, such as the theological message and its accompanying historical details. (2) Since Scripture is fully inspired it also has "full" *authority*. Biblical authority is understood as directness or literalness. Opponents therefore reject concepts of "flow" or "plot" and prefer words like "directive" and "literal road map" to describe the biblical message. Opponents demand a plain "thus says the Lord". Moreover, biblical authority means that *sola not prima scriptura* should be the main hermeneutical principle. Crucially, such a theoretical consideration has implication for not using extra biblical sources in interpretation. (3) Absolute or full *inerrancy* is the third corollary of the full inspiration rationale. For opponents the Bible is without sin. Scripture is infallible in all of its messages; it is an unerring standard and an infallible guide. Hence opponents reject any notion of mistakes, errors or inconsistency in Scripture. Furthermore, when it comes to Scripture's trustworthiness there are no discrepancies in theological, scientific, historical or geographical details. (4) The logic of "full inspiration" for opponents excludes any *cultural conditioning* idea. Inspiration assures that objective information with a minimal impact of historical or cultural factors is passed on to the inspired agents. Scripture is thus not affected by human prejudice or pride. God bypassed the effects of sin on writers under inspiration. This same logic also applies to the readers under illumination whose reading is referred to mostly as plain. Indeed, any

cultural, personal or historical distortion would imply limited inspiration and therefore limited biblical authority. The divine accommodation of the message was not compromising the truth. God did not accommodate the message to the level of cultural opinions. All four corollaries of full inspiration have significant impact on the opponents' hermeneutical thought.

The actual investigation of the opponents' method was subdivided into three main sections addressing the problems of opponents' view of the reader's and textual horizons, the description of their method and finally the description of its functional aspects.

Since hermeneutical considerations cannot avoid questions of presuppositions the chapter has investigated the opponents' perception of the role of reader's presuppositions. Significantly opponents hold that God can eliminate the individual subjectivity of readers. In addition biblical texts themselves have also power to shift one's presuppositions. Opponents however do not explain how the process works. Given this perspective, for opponents the inspired writer becomes the most appropriate interpreter of the text. Opponents assume that the writer can speak independently of the reader's interpretation.

Claritas Scripturae becomes the opponents' underlying perspective concerning the horizon of the text. Claritas Scripturae means that Scripture is sufficiently clear and that every Christian can understand the "basic" message (which also includes the ordination issue). The ideas of "trajectory," "plot" or "flow" are all against the idea of clarity of Scripture. Since there is an agreement between the meanings then and now it means that the reader has almost a natural ability to understand the original meaning.

For opponents the question of hermeneutical method becomes a matter of affirming the doctrine of biblical inspiration. The main dividing line between various methods is for opponents whether a method affirms and follows full inspiration of Scripture. Methodology is thus judged from the perspective of the theory of inspiration. Viewed from this angle, opponents recognise only two methodological alternatives: The Historical-grammatical method which according to them represents the traditional Adventist plain reading and the liberal/moderate Historical-critical method which is based on finding principles instead of plain meaning and which denies the full trustworthiness of Scripture. Opponents thus ultimately divide the methodological alternatives according to the criteria of full or limited inerrancy.

From the outset, opponents reject the proof-text method because of the literalistic manner in which it takes texts out of their context and not surprisingly the historical-critical method. The historical-critical method is based on principles of scepticism, doubt and reason and as such reduces the divine in Scripture. Because the humanistic assumptions which the method follows cannot be separated from the actual procedures the method should not be used to study Scripture. However opponents do not hesitate to use lower critical methods which allegedly do not rely on the principle of criticism. However their application of Troeltschian

definitions narrows their theoretical base without which they end up practically using some of the historical-critical procedures.

The preferred method for opponents is the “historical-grammatical” method. They argue that at the heart of the method is the grammatical sense which is the natural, normal sense of words. The meaning of words is to be interpreted just as readers interpret the language of normal discourse. Opponents sometimes refer to it as the “common sense” approach or “Reformation” method. They argue that since God spoke in the language of the listener or reader there is a correlation of meaning between then and now. The historical investigation according to opponents is to be done only from Scripture alone without using extra-biblical resources.

The last section on opponents’ method investigated its specific functional aspects or characteristics, sometimes entitled the principles of interpretation by opponents. The analysis in chapter two has drawn attention to several key aspects of their method. The main hermeneutical aspect is *the literal reading* principle. Opponents appeal to William Miller’s rules as the basis for the literal principle. They equate the literal rule with plain, obvious, natural and common sense meaning of words. *Literalis* means *simplicis* to opponents. The second hermeneutical principle opponents follow is the comparative principle. The comparative principle stands on the clarity of Scripture perspective. It is based on collecting and comparing texts which are thought to be talking about the same topic. However opponents do not discuss how one knows that the right texts have been collected and compared. It is assumed that the reader has the ability to identify the right texts to compare. The third major hermeneutical characteristic of opponents is a complete rejection of cultural-conditioning. Critical to opponents’ case is the actual application of this aspect to Pauline texts. For opponents Paul’s conclusions regarding women were not influenced by conditions in the Greco-Roman world which means that his message is not conditioned. Finally opponents insist that the hermeneutical task of interpretation of Scripture in Adventist context must end by comparing ones’ finding to the writings of Ellen White. Her writings are taken as having normative and confirmative function. For opponents the work of Mrs. White has a theological-hermeneutical significance. The opponents’ interpretation of Ellen White at the end confirms their reading of Scripture, maintaining that White’s work is in complete agreement with the Bible and she is exempt from the application of the Sola Scriptura rule. Practically then the opponents’ hermeneutical process is based on literal and comparative reading, rejection of cultural conditioning and normative use of Ellen White writings.

Overall, chapter two has aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis and abstraction of opponents’ thought. The opponents’ hermeneutical thought may undoubtedly invite further and additional questions about possible epistemological and meta-hermeneutical assumptions



that are invisibly operating behind their reading. Nonetheless, the position and thinking of opponents had to be first synthesised before it can be further theoretically appraised.

## CHAPTER III

### SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF PROPONENTS' BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND HERMENEUTICAL POSITION

#### Introduction

Chapter Three will follow a very similar format to that of Chapter Two. Thus, the aim of the chapter is to systematically analyse and synthesise the biblical, theological and hermeneutical position of Adventist proponents of women's ordination.

Structure wise the chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first part biblical and theological arguments of proponents will be examined and arranged into a coherent system. The analysis will begin with investigating first the biblical arguments and then it will proceed to examine the main theological arguments. The second part of the chapter will move from biblical and theological bases to hermeneutical and methodological matters. Part two will be divided into several subsections covering first the proponents' view of biblical inspiration which will then directly lead to the section on their methodology and finally to the section on the functional aspects of their hermeneutical method or as sometimes called principles of interpretation.

Chapter Three, just as chapter Two, will not investigate every type of argument employed in the debate, nor will it investigate every theological or biblical argument. Finally, Chapter Three is limited to the analysis and synthesis and therefore will not provide assessment at this stage.

#### Structured Analysis and Synthesis of Biblical and Theological Arguments

##### Biblical Arguments

In this part, the presentation will start with the key biblical argument used by proponents in the debate which is Galatians 3:26-29. This will be followed by 1 Corinthians 11:1-3, 1 Corinthians 14:33-36, Ephesians 5:21-33 and concluded with 1 Timothy 2:11-15. Although opponents mention most of these texts as their exegetical evidence, proponents interpret them from their own point of view arguing that none of them is prohibiting women from serving as pastors and elders. All should be viewed in the light of a broader context of the New Testament especially places like Galatians 3:28 and 1 Peter 2:5, 9-12.

## Galatians 3:26-29

At first glance, the text in Galatians says nothing about the question of ordination of women. This fact is admitted by proponents, yet the implications of Galatians 3:28 have direct consequences to the question of gender equality in ministry, as they claim. The key factor for proponents, when interpreting Galatians 3:26-29, is that it "is not merely a statement on equal access to salvation"<sup>1</sup> as opponents try to see it. In fact, verse 28 in the proponents' view clearly teaches what can be called a horizontal redemption. Proponents here employ the terminology of *vertical* and *horizontal* salvation in order to highlight relational and practical consequences of Christ's salvation.<sup>2</sup> William Johnsson makes in this regard a distinction between the exegesis of the passage and its theological interpretation. He argues that while exegesis is not complicated or difficult and establishes the idea of oneness with Christ through baptism, drawing out the theological implications are more problematic. Nonetheless, readers of the text must go beyond the vertical dimension (God-man oneness) to discuss horizontal theological and practical implications (human to human oneness). Thus while the text does not remove distinctions among race, sex or social conditions, the text attacks human barriers and prejudice that deny the oneness in Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>

The key verse in the passage thus becomes verse 28. However, verse 28 is only a logical continuation of verses 26 and 27 which both speak about vertical salvation in Christ. Verse 28, on the other hand, goes beyond the relationship God-man and speaks about man-man relationships (horizontal level). Proponents at this stage argue that if Galatians 3:26-29 was only about salvation in Christ (vertical salvation) then verse 28 is an unnecessary insertion by Paul, since the equal salvation of Jews, pagans, slaves and women has been clearly understood and accepted by the New Testament church at that time. There was no need for Paul to reiterate this fact. Verse 28 therefore signifies practical implications for equality based on verses 26 and 27.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>1</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 281.

<sup>2</sup> See Edwin Zackrison's article on vertical and horizontal salvation which heavily draws on the text in Galatians, "Inclusive Redemption," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 155-177. Horizontal redemption concerns "with how we, as redeemed people, are to view and treat one another," while vertical level of salvation "has to do with how we think God views us" (Ibid., 161). The former is based on the latter.

<sup>3</sup> William G. Johnsson, "Galatians 3:28, 29-Its Significance for the Role of Women in the Church," *Commission on the Role of Women Papers*, Fall 1987, 1, 8, 9 and 13.

<sup>4</sup> Edwin Zackrison, "Inclusive Redemption," in *The Welcome Table*, 176, 177.

by using the rare terms 'male-female' (arsen-thely) instead of 'husband-wife' (aner-gyne), Paul establishes a link with Gen 1:27 and thus shows how the Gospel calls us back to the divine ideal, which has no place for general subordination of females to males.<sup>5</sup>

Davidson's link with the divine ideal is a crucial concept for proponents, because Galatians 3:28 this way provides a general framework for the story of redemption in the Bible. Galatians 3:28 calls the church back to the ideal of equality which was present according to proponents in Genesis 1. In Genesis 3 this ideal of equality was broken and replaced by submission. The idea of salvation or redemption in itself, for proponents, presupposes a perfection-fall-restoration concept. Thus the relationship between the fall (Genesis 3) and restoration, including practical matters (Galatians 3:26-29) is important for the proper understanding of salvation.<sup>6</sup> In this context Galatians 3:28 plays a very important role and according to proponents, it points the New Testament church to "the full meaning of redemption"<sup>7</sup> – redemption which includes both vertical and horizontal aspects.

When properly understood, in the context of vertical and horizontal redemption and in the context of the "big picture" of perfection-fall-restoration of the Bible, Galatians 3:26-29 becomes a "Magna Charta of true biblical equality".<sup>8</sup> The text implies a generic application and "is of a universal force wherever the gospel reaches."<sup>9</sup> Proponents conclude: "In the light of such a statement, how can woman be excluded from the privileges of the gospel?"<sup>10</sup>

### 1 Corinthians 11:1-3

The interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 is approached by proponents from three major interpretative perspectives: Contextual interpretation, semantic interpretation and historical-cultural interpretation.

#### Contextual Interpretation

Proponents arguing from the context of 1 Corinthians 11 see the initial statements in verses 3, 8 and 9, which seem to imply hierarchy and a submission relationship between man and woman in the light of verses 11 and 12 which on the other hand seem to reject gender hierarchy. For some proponents the text in 1 Corinthians 11 is an example of Paul's "tendency

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<sup>5</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 281.

<sup>6</sup> Edwin Zackrison, "Inclusive Redemption," in *The Welcome Table*, 158.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 175, 176.

<sup>8</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 281.

<sup>9</sup> G. C. Tenney, "Woman's Relation to the Case of Christ," 20. The article was first published in *Review and Herald*, 24 May 1892 and then reprinted in *Review and Herald*, 5 June 1894.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

to think things through out loud.”<sup>11</sup> Paul develops his thought gradually, first by apparently endorsing a hierarchy only to the end in rejecting it.

Proponents insist that the problem with the passage in 1 Corinthians 11 starts when explanations insisting on Paul’s initial comments say little or nothing about his “subsequent redirection of his own line of thought.”<sup>12</sup> The passage thus must be seen in its full context including verses 11 and 12. These verses present a picture of mutual interconnectedness with no hierarchy. There is only chronology, but chronology does not establish or suggests priority. Thus when read in its context, 1 Corinthians 11 “establishes equality and mutual dependence.”<sup>13</sup>

### Semantics

The second type of interpretation present in the proponents’ argumentation involves linguistic procedures. Here proponents try to attack suggestions that Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 presents a headship principle which translated into the cultural situation of that time meant for women to wear head coverings. Opponents insist that head covering is only a cultural application, but the main issue for Paul was the principle of headship, which still applies today.

Proponents arguing from a linguistic perspective note that the Greek term κεφαλή- “head” used by Paul in this passage, does not have the meaning of “authority”. In fact, “head” is an idiomatic term, which means that it can carry a variety of meanings. It is in this context that the following conclusion is made: “Recent scholarship suggests that the Greek word, κεφαλή, was never used to mean ‘authority,’ ‘superior rank,’ ‘leader,’ ‘director’ or anything similar in Paul’s day.”<sup>14</sup> Proponents accept the “source” or “source of life” as the meaning of “head” in 1 Corinthians 11. This is supported in many different places, such as Colossians 2:19, Ephesians 4:15 or Colossians 1:18.

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<sup>11</sup> David R. Larson, “Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination,” in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 122.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Larson in his short interpretation of 1 Corinthians focuses only on the contextual explanation, which according to him is sufficient to explain the passage. Beside using the immediate context for interpretation, he also points out the broader context of the New Testament, especially passages like Galatians 3:28, which are in accordance with his conclusion in verses 11 and 12.

<sup>13</sup> Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, “Who’s in Charge of the Family?” in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 203.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 200. Prinz-McMillan argues that “In fact, a survey of the most complete Greek-English lexicon found more than 25 possible figurative meanings for this word (besides its literal meaning of the physical head of one’s body) and not one included any definition that suggested authority or rank... Other researchers surveying lexicons have reached similar conclusions, nothing that at least seven major Greek dictionaries do not list ‘leader’ or ‘authority’ as a meaning for *kephale*, especially during the period of Paul’s writing.” (Ibid., 200-201).

Interpreting κεφαλή as “source” is also supported by how the Septuagint translated the Hebrew term ראש. Septuagint translators translated “head” in a number of different ways. However, “where it meant a leader or chief, the Septuagint Translators chose a specific word meaning *ruler, commander, or leader*, rather than using *kephale*.”<sup>15</sup>

Utilizing the meaning “source of life” the passage for proponents becomes much clearer: “But I want you to understand that Christ is the *life source* of man, and the man is the *life source* of woman, and the God is the *life source* of Christ (verse 3).”<sup>16</sup> Reading the passage this way says then nothing about authority or submission and neither teaches any headship principle.

### Historical-cultural Interpretation

One of the most recent attempts to interpret 1 Corinthians 11 by proponents promotes an explanation which is based on historical realities surrounding the writing of the passage. The emphasis of this approach is “on what caused Paul to write his counsel.”<sup>17</sup> Background information centers on false teachers and heretical teachings. Proponents understand this heretical teaching to be Corinthian “protognosticism”.<sup>18</sup> Among the teachings Gnostics endorsed were: (a) creation is a byproduct of an inferior development in the cosmos; (b) physical being was of no value; (c) gender distinctions should be ignored, because male and female belong to the world of “fallenness”; (d) the Gnostic female was no different from the Gnostic male.<sup>19</sup>

This Gnostic teaching influenced some in the Corinthian congregation. Women were encouraged to cast aside traditions and conventional worship customs as they witnessed to gender distinctions. These distinctions however, to Gnostics, referred to physical reality, an inferior byproduct of creation and as such should be abolished. Head covering fell into this traditional category and was under the attack of Gnostic heresy. This is the context from which Paul’s counsel should be viewed. Proponents make it clear at this stage that “Paul is not in any sense of the word addressing the issue of male-female relationships.”<sup>20</sup>

According to proponents Paul is using a six-point response in order to tackle the heresy. Paul’s arguments are summed up by Richards: (a) Paul argues that tradition is important - verses 2 and 16; (b) Paul argues that hierarchy is important – verses 3 and 7-9. In

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>17</sup> Larry W. Richards, “How does a Woman Prophesy and Keep Silence at the Same Time? (1 Corinthians 11 and 14),” in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 315.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. It is called protognosticism because Gnosticism was not fully developed until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 316.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

this view, κεφαλή does not mean “source”, but is used in the sense of authority; indeed, for Paul it is important to establish gender distinctions as a result of the good creation; the point however, for Paul is “not to put woman down, but to counter the Gnostic position.”<sup>21</sup> (c) Paul points to the relationship between head covering and honor – verses 4-6. The uncovered head of a woman was an indication of dishonor. “She was openly flaunting her independence”<sup>22</sup> supporting a heretical interpretation of human existence; (d) Paul’s phrase “because of angels” implies a connection between head covering and authority– verse 10<sup>23</sup>; (e) Paul argues for equality and mutuality – verses 11-12. These verses address the gender issue in terms that transcends time and culture: “in the Lord”. “Man and woman are equal and mutually dependant;”<sup>24</sup> (f) Paul finally appeals to common sense as the means against the heresy – verses 13-15. Proponents thus overall imply that not only the historical context indicates the presence of Gnostic heresy but also that the passage relates to husband-wife relationship and does not imply general subordination of women.

Arguing from the historical background, proponents are able to identify not only historical reasons for writing the counsel as a Gnostic heresy trying to deny traditional understanding of the goodness of creation and role distinctions in the family, but also find principles<sup>25</sup> which should help better understand 1 Corinthians 11.

### **1 Corinthians 14: 33-36**

The passage in 1 Corinthians 14 becomes important for proponents because it mentions submission and calls women to silence. Proponents here focus their attention to four main points in order to adequately explain Paul’s advice.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 318-319. The approach of proponents who suggest historical-cultural interpretation significantly differs at this point with the previous two interpretations (contextual and linguistic). Proponents holding this view accept that *kefale* was used in the sense of authority and even hold that Paul argued for subordination thus indicating that the passage contains subordination theology. Where however proponents of the third view differ from opponents is that proponents do not regard subordination presented in 1 Corinthians 11 as a universal principle applicable within the church. For them, accepting the authority of men must be seen only in the context of marriage. This is the case also in 1 Corinthians 14 and Ephesians 5. The main reason for Paul to argue by authority, rank and subordination was not to teach or endorse the headship theology, but to counter the Gnostic heresy. The whole counsel of Paul is seen from this perspective.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 319.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 320. “Paul’s conclusion is that women did have authority to worship by having the proper head covering, and did not have authority by the maverick action of the Corinthian women of casting the custom aside.” (Ibid., 320-321).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 321.

<sup>25</sup> Larry Richards mentions among the principles: 1. Men and women are equal human beings (v. 12); 2. As equal human beings they are still distinct with special functions and positions; 3. The gender subordination discussed in 1 Corinthians 11 is specifically that of wives and husbands. See Larry W. Richards, “How does a Woman Prophecy and Keep Silence at the Same Time? (1 Corinthians 11 and 14),” in *Women in Ministry*, 322.

## Context

Proponents begin to argue that Paul's statement of prohibition is an abrupt interruption of his thought; which, given its context, seems to be inharmonious not just with the immediate context but also Pauline thought in general.<sup>26</sup> The first thing that becomes clear from looking at the immediate and broader textual context is that Paul is addressing the issue of order in worship service and not men-women relationships. Paul is particularly concerned with speaking in tongues and women who were disrupting the church service in Corinth.<sup>27</sup>

Secondly, the context also indicates that whatever is said in 1 Corinthians 14 is said in the context of husband and wife relationship, particularly in the context of certain Corinthian wives and not men-women in general. This is clear from a "contextual indicator"<sup>28</sup> in verse 35. James Cox in addition adds that given the hermeneutical rule that no text should be used unless it speaks explicitly or implicitly to the subject matter, 1 Corinthians 14 should, given its context, not be used in the debate about ordination of women. The context for Cox just as for other proponents while dealing with the proper conduct in worship service, "at no point does even hint at the question of the ordination of any person, male or female."<sup>29</sup>

## Silence

The second issue under consideration of proponents is Paul's call for silence. Here proponents make two points: silence mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14:34 is a particular silence while "husbands' prophecies were being tested, and did not indicate a total silence in the worship service."<sup>30</sup> Secondly, silence in the passage of 1 Corinthians 14 is not required only of women-wives, but also of men. This is clear from verses 28 and 30. Women "along with the men, are to keep silence in those instances when order is best preserved by the silence."<sup>31</sup> Similarly concludes Prinz-McMillan: "Paul recommends that *all* be 'silent' if it creates

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<sup>26</sup> William Richardson, "An Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36," Commission on the Role of Women Papers, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, "Who's in Charge of the Family?" in *The Welcome Table*, 207. Prinz-McMillan makes the following conclusion based on Paul's use of the Greek word *laleo*, which is the same term used to describe speaking in tongues (which was disorderly): "This link may suggest Paul was concerned that a particular type of speech, prevalent particularly among the women, would add further chaos to the already disorderly worship service." (Ibid., 207).

<sup>28</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 276.

<sup>29</sup> James J. C. Cox, "Some Notes on 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 for the Commission on the Ordination of Women in the Pastoral Ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," Commission on the Role of Women Papers, 2-3. For Cox the text is a first-century application of a principle that in worship everything should be done orderly. For this reason the text should not be turned into a general rule about women for our time. (Ibid., 6). Much of what applies to 1 Corinthians 14, according to Cox, also applies to 1 Corinthians 11. (Ibid., 7-8).

<sup>30</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 277.

<sup>31</sup> Larry W. Richards, "How does a Woman Prophecy and Keep Silence at the Same Time? (1 Corinthians 11 and 14)," in *Women in Ministry*, 324.



confusion..."<sup>32</sup> Silence is thus used by Paul in a specific context and does not indicate a general prohibition for women. The concern for Paul is worship order and not submission and the headship principle as opponents interpret the silence.

### Submission

There are three observations made by proponents regarding Paul's use of submission in the passage. The first is that "in the first place, the specific context is one of subordination of wives to their husbands, not to men in general."<sup>33</sup> The context for subordination is that of marriage in 1 Corinthians 14.

The second point proponents make in regard of subordination is that in verse 34 where the submission is mentioned Paul does not mention to whom one should submit. This, as proponents observe, is at odds with other New Testament places where submission is mentioned and may indicate that Paul is asking "for the women's submissive behavior for the sake of order."<sup>34</sup> Thus the idea of order in the worship service is the reason for submission.

Lastly, proponents focus on the broader context of subordination in Pauline writings. They observe here that for Paul subordination or submission is "something all Christians should be willing to do."<sup>35</sup> In fact, Christians are called to have submissive attitude toward others. This for proponents means that "the word clearly refers to an attitude regarding one's own submission, not to what one should be insisting on for the other person."<sup>36</sup> This perception of submission by proponents thus differs from the opponents' view which holds that Paul's reference to subordination refers to the headship and subordination principle.

### The Law

Proponents - like opponents - have come up with more than one interpretation of "the law" in verse 34. For some the "law" means a Jewish custom.<sup>37</sup> For others the "law" refers to the Roman law.<sup>38</sup> James Cox in addition argued that  $\delta \nu\omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma$  does not refer to the written

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<sup>32</sup> Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, "Who's in Charge of the Family?" in *The Welcome Table*, 209.

<sup>33</sup> Larry W. Richards, "How does a Woman Prophesy and Keep Silence at the Same Time? (1 Corinthians 11 and 14)," in *Women in Ministry*, 325.

<sup>34</sup> Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, "Who's in Charge of the Family?" in *The Welcome Table*, 209.

<sup>35</sup> Larry W. Richards, "How does a Woman Prophesy and Keep Silence at the Same Time? (1 Corinthians 11 and 14)," in *Women in Ministry*, 325.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>37</sup> David R. Larson, "Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination," in *The Welcome Table*, 132. Larson admits that "we do not have today a complete picture of what Paul was saying in these (1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:11, 12) passages and why he was saying it. We suspect that...to some extent he was appealing to Jewish custom." (*Ibid.*, 131-132).

<sup>38</sup> "There was no Jewish or scriptural law demanding women's silence, but the Romans could have interpreted this activity as illegal." Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, "Who's in Charge of the Family?" in *The Welcome Table*, 209.

Torah, but to current oral interpretation of it.<sup>39</sup> The most recent interpretation of ὁ νόμος however links the law with Genesis 3:16 the place where submission is introduced after the fall. "It seems likely that Paul is alluding to Genesis 3:16, the foundational Old Testament passage prescribing the submission of wives to the headship of their husbands."<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Richards emphatically comments on the "law" by saying that "this is apparently a reference to Genesis 3:16, where submission is a result of the fall."<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, William Richardson - pointing to Paul Jewett's analysis of the passage and the term - concluded that Paul clumsily referred to rabbinic interpretation of Genesis 3 rather than to Genesis 3 as being a prescriptive law.<sup>42</sup>

Although proponents differ in their interpretations regarding the meaning of the law in verse 34, one can see that none of the interpretations links the law with the creation order in Genesis 2 as opponents do it. The link to Jewish or Roman law, Genesis 3:16 or its interpretation is significant because the law in 1 Corinthians 14 thus does not refer to the headship-subordination principle established at creation. There is no such allusion or reference to a headship principle made by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 according to proponents.<sup>43</sup>

### **Ephesians 5: 21-33**

Ephesians chapter five is an important place for proponents. Although the chapter is the only New Testament passage containing both the word "head" and "submit"<sup>44</sup> it nevertheless contains significant points for the pro-side in the ordination debate.

First, proponents observe that the passage is written in the context of husband-wife relationship and not men-women relationships in general.<sup>45</sup> This indicates that whatever is said by Paul in Ephesians 5 is applicable in the context of marriage only.

Secondly, the word κεφαλή is explained by some proponents to mean "source of life"<sup>46</sup>, as it was in the case of interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11. Some proponents however

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<sup>39</sup> James J. C. Cox, "Some Notes on 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 for the Commission on the Ordination of Women in the Pastoral Ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," 12-13.

<sup>40</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 276.

<sup>41</sup> Larry W. Richards, "How does a Woman Prophecy and Keep Silence at the Same Time? (1 Corinthians 11 and 14)," in *Women in Ministry*, 325.

<sup>42</sup> William Richardson, "An Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36," 7-8. Richardson uses Paul Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) as the basis for his conclusion.

<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, James Cox concluded his study of the passage by saying that he was personally frustrated by spending so much time and effort on it when in fact it does not have any positive contribution to the ordination of women discussion. James J. C. Cox, "Some Notes on 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 for the Commission on the Ordination of Women in the Pastoral Ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," 20.

<sup>44</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 274.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, "Who's in Charge of the Family?" in *The Welcome Table*, 210.

argue that "the pairing of *kephale* with *hypotasso* ('submit') seems to indicate a ranking of relationship, and not the idea of origin or source."<sup>47</sup> Still, others have pointed out that the idea of "origin" or "source" is not sufficient content for this expression while on the other hand the word also means more than authority. The debate between whether "head" points to origin or authority is misplaced since in Ephesians 5 headship idea finds its reality in "servanthood" and "service".<sup>48</sup>

Despite the various views about the meaning of "head" the most important line of thought for proponents centers on the so called "household codes". According to proponents, Paul's passage - starting in verse 21 and ending in verse 33 - according to proponents, resembles Roman laws of the 1<sup>st</sup> century called "household codes". "These laws defined the ways in which families should live together to be considered good citizens."<sup>49</sup> While household codes in Ephesians 5 keep their form similar to the Roman codes, they nevertheless differed from Roman household codes in a very important way. While Roman household codes promoted one-way submission and established hierarchy, Paul's household codes promoted two-way mutual submission and established reciprocity instead of hierarchy.<sup>50</sup>

An in-depth study on *Haustafeln*<sup>51</sup> passages (Colossians 3, Titus 2, 1 Peter 3 and Ephesians 5) John Brunt has argued that in the discussed passage of Ephesians 5:21-33, verse 21, which contains the word *υποτάσσω* and *ἀλλήλοις*, plays a pivotal role since it is contextually and linguistically a heading for the whole passage. Importantly, Brunt points out that these two words do not appear together except in 1 Peter 5:5 where however they are separated and appear in different clauses. Therefore the juxtaposition of "submitting" and "one another" is unprecedented. According to Brunt such a unique combination means that "submit" does not have a hierarchical connotation of authority as it would ordinarily have, but rather reciprocity and mutuality.<sup>52</sup>

Also for Larson and others, the theme of mutual submission must be the vantage point from which everything else what Paul says and writes elsewhere must be interpreted. It is "the heading under which Paul fits everything else."<sup>53</sup> Paul's language in Ephesians 5 is the

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<sup>47</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 274.

<sup>48</sup> John Brunt, "The New Testament *Haustafeln* Passages," *Commission on the Role of Women Papers*, 35-36.

<sup>49</sup> Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, "Who's in Charge of the Family?" in *The Welcome Table*, 210.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> German: household tables or codes.

<sup>52</sup> John Brunt, "The New Testament *Haustafeln* Passages," 33-34.

<sup>53</sup> David R. Larson, "Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination," in *The Welcome Table*, 128. Also John Brunt, "The New Testament *Haustafeln* Passages," 36.

language of “*mutual* not unilateral submission. It is the language of reciprocity, not hierarchy; participation, not subordination in the usual sense.”<sup>54</sup>

David Larson in his interpretation of Ephesians 5 goes even further and names the principle behind the text:

The principle is the universal requirement of dispassionate logic that ‘Equals in equal circumstances ought to be treated equally.’ Paul doesn’t *cite* the principle; he *applies* it... The mutual submission of husbands and wives is, according to this passage, the reciprocity of equal partners.<sup>55</sup>

This picture of mutual submission, equality and reciprocity is further supported by what Richard Davidson says about verse 22. Davidson observes here that “submit” in verse 22 is in the middle voice indicating that “the wife’s submission is a voluntary yielding in love, not forced by the husband.”<sup>56</sup> It is thus not an oppressive or demanding submission, but rather a voluntarily, free submission.

In conclusion, proponents argue that Ephesians 5 presents the ultimate ideal for marriage relations as equal partnership.<sup>57</sup> Mutual submission is the main theme for Paul and thus the passage “gives us a sense of moral direction,”<sup>58</sup> or as Brunt expressed it: “this *Haustafel* gives theological grounding to a new degree of mutuality...”<sup>59</sup> Proponents therefore emphasise that while *Haustafeln* passages and particularly Ephesians 5 are not speaking directly to the matter of ordination of women, they nevertheless provide the church with a sense of direction and orientation toward mutuality and equality.<sup>60</sup>

### **1 Timothy 2: 1-15**

1 Timothy 2 is one of the most important texts used in the debate and so this leads proponents to exegete the text from contextual, semantic and historical perspective. Contrary to opponents, proponents maintain that the passage contains some of the most difficult statements made by Paul. George Rice recognises four difficulties with the passage which he specifically identifies as difficulties with vocabulary, syntax, synchronization with other Pauline passages and the difficulties arising from the cultural and historical context.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>56</sup> Richard M. Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Women in Ministry*, 274.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>58</sup> David R. Larson, “Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination,” in *The Welcome Table*, 130.

<sup>59</sup> John Brunt, “The New Testament *Haustafeln* Passages,” 37.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>61</sup> George E. Rice, “1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Case of Domestic Policy,” *Commission on the Role of Women Papers*, 1.

## Context

The passage is understood by some proponents to be in the context of husbands-wives relationships. Davidson makes a 7-points list of evidence to support the marriage context after which he concludes that "Paul here addresses the relationship of husbands and wives and not men and women in general."<sup>62</sup> Other proponents further clarify the issue by saying that the context relates to attitudes in worship, especially when it comes to the key verses 11 and 12.<sup>63</sup> However this worship setting from the context of verses 8 and 9 (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ) cannot be forced to imply a public church service but rather a domestic setting. Consequently ἀνὴρ (and τοὺς ἄνδρας) and γυναῖκα should be understood as "husband" and "wife" respectively.<sup>64</sup> To opponents the context of 1 Timothy 2 refers to women's submission in the context of church ministry. Proponents find no such reference here.

## Semantic Explanation

Because verse 12 is at the heart of the controversy, proponents try to interpret the text in different ways than literally. First of all, ἡσυχία in the text is not a call to a total silence requirement for women or wives in the church. It is rather "rest" and "peacefulness"<sup>65</sup> pointing to a "quiet lifestyle".<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, the use of singular "woman" possibly indicates "a particular problematic woman in the crowd"<sup>67</sup> and does not relate to all women in the Ephesians' congregation.

Proponents argue that literal reading and translation do not provide a clear meaning.<sup>68</sup> What is however clear, is that the text (verse 11) does not say to whom to "submit". For

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<sup>62</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 280. To see his 7 arguments see page 279. It is necessary to say here that this emphasis on marriage context is not followed by other proponents. Others prefer to see the text in the broader context of the whole epistle, where instructions regarding public worship are discussed in the framework of heretical teachings. See for example Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, "Proper Church Behaviour in 1 Timothy 2:8-15," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 342. For Davidson however it is important to keep the text in the marriage context, because he accepts that the passage affirms the headship principle, however only in the context of marriage. (Id., 280).

<sup>63</sup> Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, "Proper Church Behaviour in 1 Timothy 2:8-15," in *Women in Ministry*, 342.

<sup>64</sup> George E. Rice, "1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Case of Domestic Policy," 5-6 and 12-13.

<sup>65</sup> Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, "Proper Church Behaviour in 1 Timothy 2:8-15," in *Women in Ministry*, 342.

<sup>66</sup> Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, "Who's in Charge of the Family?" in *The Welcome Table*, 213.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 212-213.

<sup>68</sup> That is why for example Vyhmeister discusses αὐθεντέω which she identifies as referring to "taking independent action, assuming responsibility;" rather than meaning "to occupy a position of authority" which is the usual translation. Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, "Proper Church Behaviour in 1 Timothy 2:8-15," in *Women in Ministry*, 342.

Vyhmeister, the natural understanding is that “women are to submit to the gospel...not to an unnamed person”<sup>69</sup> such as husband or elder.

When proponents move to verse 13 they make one additional syntactical note there. The argument made is that verse 13 is introduced by conjunction γαρ which introduces *an example* of what has just been said rather than *a reason* as opponents want to see it. The verse therefore contains no further support for submission and does not establish a theological link to the creation story.<sup>70</sup>

### Historical Macrocontext and Microcontext

Historical background, according to proponents, can clarify the meaning of Paul’s counsel in 1 Timothy 2. Especially, when the so-called macrocontext and microcontext is taken into the consideration. By macrocontext proponents understand “historical and sociocultural backgrounds of the three major world influences in the New Testament times: Jewish, Hellenistic Greek, and Roman. Microcontext,” on the other hand, “refers to the unique local factors like heresy, legalistic false teachers, and disorderly worship.”<sup>71</sup>

With regard to the local microcontext proponents point out that Paul is “correcting a false syncretistic theology in Ephesus, which claimed that woman was created first and man fell first, and therefore women were superior to men;” rather than “arguing for a creation headship”.<sup>72</sup>

The main weight of the historical-cultural interpretation lies in the fact that there was a huge difference between expected behaviour of women in Greek and Roman societies.

Matacio explains:

In Rome, women freely participated in public social events, conversing with men not their husbands without losing their reputations. But in classical Greek and Hellenistic culture

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<sup>69</sup> Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, “Proper Church Behaviour in 1 Timothy 2:8-15,” in *Women in Ministry*, 342.

<sup>70</sup> Richard M. Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Women in Ministry*, 280.

<sup>71</sup> Doug Matacio, “Contextualization and Women in the Church,” *Spectrum*, Summer 2003, 60. Matacio’s article is one of the latest attempts within the pro-ordination camp to explain the texts in 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 on the basis of historical context. Although there have been other attempts to use historical background to interpret 1 Timothy 2 these attempts are not mentioned in this place as they focus on local microcontext issues such as the already mentioned Gnostic heresy rather than the broader macrocontext relationships. See Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, “Proper Church Behaviour in 1 Timothy 2:8-15,” in *Women in Ministry*, 338-340; and in Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, “Who’s in Charge of the Family?” in *The Welcome Table*, 214-215. The latest attempt by Matacio is based on a groundbreaking article by a New Testament scholar Terence Paige: Terence Paige, “The Social Matrix of Women’s Speech at Corinth: The Context and Meaning of the Command to Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, 12.2 (2002).

<sup>72</sup> Richard M. Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Women in Ministry*, 280.

only the *hetairai*, intelligent, upper-class prostitutes...could approach, converse with, and otherwise consort with men at social gatherings.<sup>73</sup>

Differences between the two cultures are evident also from Paul's letters to Roman churches. Especially places like Acts 16:12-15, Romans 16:1, 3, 6-7 and Philippians 4:2-3 show a visible contrast to places like 1 Corinthians 19:19, 2 Timothy 4:19 or Colossians 4:15.<sup>74</sup>

These differences must be kept in mind when interpreting 1 Timothy 2. In an interesting manner, both Paul's passages, 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14, calling for silence of women, are addressed to Hellenistic churches. One is addressed to Ephesus (1 Timothy) and the second one to Corinth (1 Corinthians). Macrocontext thus may explain Paul's call to silence and point to the overall intention of the whole passage according to proponents. Paul advised women to remain silent in Ephesus and Corinth (Hellenistic churches) because he was concerned that the surrounding culture might link Christian women to *hetairai*. "Women were not to speak to or with men in public in Hellenistic churches because non-Christians in attendance might think they were sexually available."<sup>75</sup>

In conclusion, the text of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 says, according to proponents, nothing at all about "women serving in the ministry or as local church elders, much less about ordination... The question of whether women can be ordained to the gospel ministry must be answered on other grounds than the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15."<sup>76</sup>

### Theological Arguments

Nancy Vyhmeister's conclusions on 1 Timothy 2 at the end of the previous section - that the questions of women's ordination must be answered on other grounds than 1 Timothy 2 - can be also taken as a general conclusion about how proponents view biblical evidence. In the proponents' view the biblical material in itself does not contain a clear "thus says the Lord" on the question of ordination of women. Quite to the contrary, when taken without theological assumptions, just as it is, the Bible material in its exegetical form is rather silent on this issue.<sup>77</sup> According to proponents, what one can find in the Bible, however, are principles

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<sup>73</sup> Doug Matacio, "Contextualization and Women in the Church," *Spectrum*, Summer 2003, 60.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 61. In Hellenistic letters "Paul mentions women mainly in the context of simple greetings... The contrast is clear. The Roman letters commended women for working in ministry; the Hellenistic letters only convey greetings to or from women".

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, "Proper Church Behaviour in 1 Timothy 2:8-15," in *Women in Ministry*, 350.

<sup>77</sup> The understanding of raw exegetical material constitutes one of the major differences between the camps. While opponents demand a clear "thus says the Lord" from the Bible, the proponents approach the Bible from a principal point of view. They look for principles and the general direction of the Bible.

and a theological direction. This theological direction of the Bible becomes a very important trait of the proponents' hermeneutical approach<sup>78</sup> to the issue.

There are four main theological arguments (directions) used by proponents which they bring in support of women's ordination to the gospel ministry and which this section will cover in detail.

### Equality of Man and Woman

The first theological argument of equality of man and woman stands in direct opposition to the headship and submission argument hold by opponents.<sup>79</sup> The purpose of proponents' argumentation is to argue from the creation and fall story that ontological and functional equality are both established at creation and that submission of woman is the result of the fall.

### Creation-story in Genesis 1

Proponents begin their theological interpretation in Genesis 1:26-28 by looking at the concept of image of God. Here proponents argue that to be created in the image of God-to be created as "man" is to be created male and female.<sup>80</sup> Man and woman *together* embody the image of God.<sup>81</sup> The word אָדָם in the text means simply "human being", "mankind" or "humankind". In Genesis 1 it is not a proper name. In fact *adam* will be sexually distinguished for the first time only in Genesis 2:23. And even here in Genesis 2 the sex of this being does

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<sup>78</sup> Although the methodological discussion is reserved for the next chapter, it would be helpful to bring out one key feature of proponents' theological arguments which might be clear by now from the way proponents (and opponents) approach exegetical material. The whole corpus of theology of proponents (including exegetical evidence) appears to be based on what can be called a *redemption perspective*. An explicit example of this is Willmore Eva's statement when he discusses a suggested interpretative method of his: "Hold the redemptive act of Christ and its implications as a thematic key to understanding the trust and progression of the Bible." Will Eva, "Interpreting the Bible: A Commonsense Approach," *Ministry*, March 1996, 5. On the other hand *creation perspective* appears to be the theological (and methodological) perspective of opponents.

<sup>79</sup> Richard Davidson from the pro camp recognises that the issue of headship/submission versus equality "lies at the heart of the fundamental differences between the two major proactive groups in the ordination debate." Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 259. This then obviously makes from the equality argument a starting theological point for every other theological argument of proponents, similarly as headship and submission constitutes a theological vantage point for opponents.

<sup>80</sup> Donna Jeane Haerich, "Genesis Revised," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 95.

<sup>81</sup> "The point is not merely that Man is created in the image of God and that Woman is also created in the image of God... The even more significant claim is that Man is not the complete image of God and that Woman is not the entire image of God but that *together* Man and Woman embody the image of God." David R. Larson, "Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 115. Similarly argues Fritz Guy: "Together...they were to bear and to be the human image of God..." Fritz Guy, "The Disappearance of Paradise," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 139.



not matter from the storyteller's perspective.<sup>82</sup> There is thus "no hint of ontological or functional superiority/inferiority or headship/submission between male and female" in Genesis 1:6-28.<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, verses 26-28 portray a picture of mutual responsibility and sharing of duties. This can be seen first in the way God pronounces His blessing using plural. God spoke to *both* in blessing. Secondly, the equal sharing of responsibilities can be seen in the instruction to subdue the earth which is again given to *both*. "Humans were to subdue the earth-not each other."<sup>84</sup> Both man and woman had to work together. Proponents thus conclude that when it comes to Genesis 1 "nothing in the description of everyday activities of man and woman even hints of separation of roles or functions."<sup>85</sup>

### Creation-story in Genesis 2

First of all, proponents point out that in order to understand Genesis 2 properly one has to follow closely the structure, intention, individual words and the plot in the whole story of creation and fall.

The structure in Genesis 2 takes the form of an *inclusio* or ring construction

in which the creation of man at the beginning of the narrative and that of woman at the end correspond to each other in importance. The narrator underscores their equal importance by employing precisely the same number of word (in Hebrew) for the description of the creation of the man as for the creation of woman.<sup>86</sup>

Because Genesis 2 is presented by opponents as the story of "yes, but..."<sup>87</sup> Proponents show that the very structure with the *inclusio* points not to a yes-but intention, but rather to the incompleteness-completeness intention of the author.<sup>88</sup> Proponents thus warn not to read too much into the story of Genesis 2, but simply follow the structure and the underlying intention of the author.

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<sup>82</sup> Donna Jeane Haerich, "Genesis Revised," in *The Welcome Table*, 100-101.

<sup>83</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 260.

<sup>84</sup> Donna Jeane Haerich, "Genesis Revised," in *The Welcome Table*, 97. Donna Haerich then continues: "Not only were they to subdue the earth, but as Genesis 1:26 explicitly states, 'Let them have dominion.' The plural pronoun stresses that man and woman were to work together in this activity of dominion...Clearly, God had in mind joint rulership of the planet." (Ibid., 98).

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>86</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 261.

<sup>87</sup> "We are told that, lurking in this story, women will find a qualified 'Yes, you are created equal, but the real truth is you were actually created for 'man.' Yes God gave you dominion, but from the beginning it was His intention to establish male headship and female submission." Donna Jeane Haerich, "Genesis Revised," in *The Welcome Table*, 98.

<sup>88</sup> "The movement in Genesis 2, if anything, is not from superior to inferior, but from incompleteness to completeness." Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 261.

A proper understanding of Genesis 2 also requires a proper understanding of the key terms and expressions. First, the name *adam* in Genesis 2, as it was also in Genesis 1, means “human being”. Thus for example when the text mentions the warning regarding the tree, which is said to be given to *adam* in verse 16, proponents see this as a reference to “human being” in general. One can see a pattern established in Genesis 1, where instructions are given in the plural indicating that *both* were given the instructions.<sup>89</sup>

Expressions used in the description of the creation of woman constitute the second main battle field in Genesis 2. While opponents highlight the *difference* (sexual and functional), proponents highlight the *equality* in all areas including functional. The key expression *help for him* instead of indicating a subordinate or assistance position indicates equal status. While *ezer* suggests beneficial relationship,<sup>90</sup> *neged* suggests suitability and fitness. Even the English translations of NKJV, NEB and RSV indicate that “she is ‘an help’ who ‘goes before’ him in the sense that she is uniquely ‘proper,’ ‘suitable,’ ‘appropriate,’ or ‘fitting’ for him.”<sup>91</sup> There is no hint of subordination or inequality present in the expression *help for him*. This view of proponents is further supported by the interpretation of the term *rib* in verse 22. *The rib* in the story is a reminder of woman’s equality in value rather than her subordination.<sup>92</sup> Equality can also be seen in the naming of the woman-*ishshah* and in the expression *flesh of my flesh*. In the first instance, *ishshah* is a derivate from *ish* indicating that woman is a partner and a counterpart of man.<sup>93</sup> In the second case man’s poetic exclamation

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<sup>89</sup> Donna Jeane Haerich, “Genesis Revised,” in *The Welcome Table*, 101-102.

<sup>90</sup> Davidson says that even the English translation “help” or “helper” can be misleading because English “helper” suggests and subordinate, inferior or assistant. No such connotation is however present in the Hebrew word *ezer*. For Davidson, this is “a relational term describing a beneficial relationship, but in itself does not specify position or rank.” Richard M. Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Women in Ministry*, 262. In the similar note Donna Haerich says: “Ezer...is used more than 20 other times in the Old Testament, but never is used as a subordinate or inferior.” Donna Jeane Haerich, “Genesis Revised,” in *The Welcome Table*, 103. Equally argues Larson: “An ‘help meet’ for Man (is) an expression that highlights her equal partnership with him.” David R. Larson, “Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination,” in *The Welcome Table*, 117.

<sup>91</sup> David R. Larson, “Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination,” in *The Welcome Table*, 117-118.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>93</sup> Donna Jeane Haerich, “Genesis Revised,” in *The Welcome Table*, 104. Opponents here argue that the naming of woman by man is an indication that he occupies a leading role. On the other hand proponents stress that *Ishshah* is not a proper name, it is only a generic identification, which for proponents does not point to any leadership or headship role. For proponents there is a difference between the naming of woman in Genesis 2 and the naming of woman in Genesis 3. In Genesis 3 Adam names his wife and calls her *Eve*, which in this case is a proper name and probably indicates the leadership or ruling of the man. The naming in Genesis 3 however occurs after the fall, and as such it is thus a post-fall experience of the humankind. For the debate on this, from proponents’ point of view, see Richard M. Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Women in Ministry*, 263-264.

*flesh of my flesh* is "At last! I see me! I see one fully and completely my equal."<sup>94</sup> The expression stresses equality and close union. Woman is man's second self.

Richard Davidson makes a fitting conclusion to Genesis 2 highlighting the proponents' position: "There is nothing in Genesis 2 to indicate a hierarchical view of the sexes. The man and woman before the Fall are presented as fully equal, with no hint of headship of one over the other or a hierarchical relationship between the husband and wife."<sup>95</sup>

### The Fall-story in Genesis 3

The story of the Fall further reveals what the story of creation has already revealed about the equality of man and woman. Genesis 3 in the first 6 verses uncovers a dynamic picture of a woman who functioned as a spokesperson for the human couple. Indeed, "the prominence of woman's role indicates that she was not at all inferior or subordinate to the man."<sup>96</sup> In a surprising contrast, it is the man who in Genesis 3 follows the woman.<sup>97</sup> Woman is the full partner of man and not a mere assistant.

When Genesis 3 moves to the description of consequences, proponents argue that this is the place where subordination appears for the first time in the Bible. God's original order becomes distorted and inequality between man and woman appears. All this is the consequence of the sin however.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 264. Richard Davidson who is a professor of the Old Testament at Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary comes to this conclusion after addressing and discussing the main points of opponents based on the creation story.

<sup>96</sup> Fritz Guy, "The Disappearance of Paradise," in *The Welcome Table*, 140.

<sup>97</sup> Guy is here using a very colourful language to illustrate the point: "He apparently follows his woman without question or comment...He does not theologise; he does not contemplate...More like a sheep than a shepherd, he simply takes the fruit and eats...of the two, she was the more perceptive, thoughtful, and analytical one." (Ibid., 141).

<sup>98</sup> There is a difference of opinion within the pro camp when it comes to how exactly should the part describing God's pronouncement in Genesis 3 be understood. On one hand there are those who like Fritz Guy argue that "Genesis 3:16 predicts what will happen in this falling away from the divine plan, rather than specifying the divine will for the women." Fritz Guy, "The Disappearance of Paradise," in *The Welcome Table*, 137. In other words, for some proponents Genesis 3 is a mere description of consequences, but not a prescription for the relationship between man and woman for the post-fall conditions. On the other side of the spectrum within the proponents' camp are those who like Richard Davidson see God's pronouncements after Adam and Eve sinned as not a mere description but a prescription for the couple to help them adapt to a new situation. "There is a normative divine sentence announcing a subjection/submission of wife to husband as a result of sin." Richard M. Davidson, "Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture," in *Women in Ministry*, 269. Davidson holds the view of "normative consequences" because as he believes the setting after Eve sinned is in the form of a "legal process" and "trial punishment." (Ibid., 264). In an interesting collision of ideas Davidson on one hand sees one positive element (of hope) in Genesis 3:16 in the word *to rule* indicating that the rule of husband should be that of servant leadership and not tyranny (Ibid. pp. 268-169). Fritz Guy on the other hand believes that "it would be remarkably odd if the prediction that 'he shall rule over you' (Gen 3:16b) were the one positive item in a long list of negatives." Fritz Guy, "The Disappearance of Paradise," in *The Welcome Table*, 149. Davidson is however able to hold on to his view of normative divine sentences without actually compromising on proponents' overall argument by limiting the normativeness of Genesis 3 to the marriage setting only. "The context of Gen 3:16 is

## The Flow of the Entire Story

One of the key elements in properly understanding Genesis 1-3 lies according to David Larson in how we understand the *plot* of the story and not only the individual words or phrases. Opponents according to Larson do not discover the *flow* of the biblical story. Presenting woman as subordinate and different in function “is like a still slide, or a video picture that has been frozen in place. It suggests that Woman has always been subordinate in roles and functions and that she always will be.”<sup>99</sup>

Opponents in their interpretation appear to miss the plot of “the great play” or “saga of salvation”. This saga in the view of proponents is made up from three parts. (1) Man and woman were created as equal partners; (2) because of sin the equal partnership has been distorted and replaced by subordination; (3) salvation in Christ and His victory brings the healing, a process which includes restoration of equal partnership.<sup>100</sup> It is this third part of the story—redemption which gives a sense of direction for the ordination debate. According to proponents it is the task of Christians today not only to reiterate the words of previous generations but also to discern and follow the direction in which God was leading them. Discern and move in the direction of Scripture is what should matter to Christians today.<sup>101</sup>

## The New Testament Attitude Toward Women

Jesus’ treatment of women against the background of the 1<sup>st</sup> century society, theology of spiritual gifts and the analogy of the body constitute the three key pillars upon which proponents build their teaching about women from the New Testament.

### Jesus’ Treatment of Women

One of the major factors in the teaching of the New Testament about women and their role is how Jesus treated them. Proponents develop this argument against the background of the cultural and historical conditions of the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish society. Women in that society

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specifically that of marriage...The text indicates a submission of wife to husband, not a general submission of woman to man.” Richard M. Davidson, “Headship, Submission, and Equality in Scripture,” in *Women in Ministry*, 269.

<sup>99</sup> David R. Larson, “Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination,” in *The Welcome Table*, 124.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-126.

<sup>101</sup> To be a Christian today is not to reiterate the words and deeds of previous disciples. It is to discern the direction in which God was leading them and to go further in that same direction than they could travel. The plan of salvation moves toward the restoration of the equal partnership of Man and Woman. This is the direction in which God led previous generations. This is the direction in which God is leading us now. This is the direction in which we should now move. *Ibid.*, 126-127. In addition to the overall framework of creation-sin-redemption format of the biblical story, Larson provides two NT examples of the general redemptive direction of the Bible. He sees the direction in 1 Corinthians 12 where Paul is employing the metaphor of the “body”. Structure of the “body” suggests a different mode of organization than hierarchical. In Ephesians 5 is another landmark of the Bible’s general direction. Paul’s usage of the idea of mutual submission-“one to another” is illustrative of this direction as well. See pages 127-130.

played only subordinate roles and this applied also to the religious sphere. In the Temple women had their own court; they could go beyond the court for gentiles, but not to the court for males. Accordingly, Jewish women "were not permitted to touch the Scriptures; and they were not taught the Torah itself...A rabbi did not instruct a woman in the Torah."<sup>102</sup> In fact, first century Rabbi Eliezer wrote that "Whoever teaches his daughter Torah is like one who teaches her lasciviousness."<sup>103</sup> In addition, "women did not count for the minimum number required for worship" and "they could not bear witness."<sup>104</sup> Rabbis of Jesus' time did not enter into an association with women, let alone allowed women to travel with them.<sup>105</sup>

Despite these cultural/religious restrictions placed on women in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine, the New Testament presents Jesus' attitude in a completely different light. Jesus ignored the limitations of culture and showed a new pattern for the church in treating women.<sup>106</sup>

If however, Jesus treated women equally in all spheres of life and ministry, why is there no female apostle among Jesus' disciples? To this crucial objection of opponents, proponents answer with a similar question: "Why only *Jewish* men?"<sup>107</sup> Proponents imply that it was perhaps for the same reasons that Jesus didn't select slaves or gentiles as his apostles.<sup>108</sup> Jesus respected certain cultural feelings of people to whom he ministered, despite the fact that he went against the many cultural barriers of that time.

### New Testament Teaching on Spiritual Gifts

One of the key events after Jesus' leaving, in the life of the disciples and the early church, was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is seen in the

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<sup>102</sup> Evelyn Stagg and Frank Stagg, *Women in the World of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), quoted in Jo Ann Davidson, "Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 175.

<sup>103</sup> Mishnah *Sotah* 3:4, quoted in Jo Ann Davidson, "Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation," in *Women in Ministry*, 175.

<sup>104</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, "Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation," in *Women in Ministry*, 175.

<sup>105</sup> Halcyon Westphal Wilson, "The Forgotten Disciples: The Empowering of Love vs. the Love of Power," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 185.

<sup>106</sup> Both Jo Ann Davidson, "Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation," in *Women in Ministry*, 157-186 and Halcyon Westphal Wilson, "The Forgotten Disciples: The Empowering of Love vs. the Love of Power," in *The Welcome Table*, 179-196 read and evaluate in detail the key encounters of Jesus with women. They both point out the revolutionary treatment of Jesus with women in fairness and equality. Jesus allowed women to follow Him, He allowed them to sit at His feet when He was teaching, even after His resurrection, Gospel writers mention 5 resurrection appearances of Jesus with Mary which shows Mary's prominence as a witness of Jesus' resurrection.

<sup>107</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, "Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation," in *Women in Ministry*, 176. Italics original.

<sup>108</sup> Halcyon Westphal Wilson, "The Forgotten Disciples: The Empowering of Love vs. the Love of Power," in *The Welcome Table*, 186.

New Testament as a direct continuation of Jesus' ministry. This ministry of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the New Testament in bestowal of spiritual gifts upon disciples. Women were among the disciples who were waiting for the outpouring of the Spirit and thus women were equal recipients of spiritual gifts alongside with men. For proponents this is highly significant because on the day of Pentecost "the Spirit has also revealed His will about women. He came upon women as well as men... Furthermore, most of His gifts came to men and women alike."<sup>109</sup>

Because the Bible witnesses that God gives spiritual gifts to whomever He wishes we "must avoid the heresy that individuals or religions control God's authority in any way."<sup>110</sup> Similarly, because Christ is the only authority over the spiritual gifts and calling to ministry "men are not called by God to serve as spiritual overseers of women."<sup>111</sup> The overseeing model of controlling is rather a papal concept than biblical. For proponents thus, there is only one conclusion possible: "One's place of ministry is decided solely upon the recognition of spiritual gifts bestowed... There is no other valid criteria, including gender, as stated by Paul in Galatians 3:26-28."<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ralph E. Neall, "Ordination Among the People of God," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 254. In his article Robert Johnston, a New Testament scholar, argues that "in three of the lists (1 Corinthians 12:28; 12:29-30; Ephesians 4:11) apostles stand at the head; in the remaining lists apostleship does not occur. By placing apostleship among the charismatic gifts Paul completes his 'democratization,' making it available to anyone to whom the Holy Spirit should choose to distribute it. These gifts are not limited to one gender... It was God who called men and women to charismatic ministry." Robert M. Johnston, "Shapes of Ministry in the New Testament and Early Church," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 48. Johnston shows that even apostleship was available to women as a spiritual gift. He further argues that in the NT two types of ministry appear. One which can be called charismatic ministry to which a person was called directly by God by the bestowal of a spiritual gift; and appointive ministry which was in the hands of leaders who selected and appointed people by laying on of hands. It was the later which became dominant and hierarchical in the church as time passed and also restrictive toward women. Johnston however shows that both ministries must be seen as one really, based on the calling of the Holy Spirit and thus based on spiritual gifts. Therefore "we cannot pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and at the same time deny the laying on of hands to any, man or woman." (Ibid., 53).

<sup>110</sup> Joyce Hanscom Lortz, "Spiritual Gifts and the Good News," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 224.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 229. Lortz, based on the understanding of spiritual gifts in the NT switches the whole argument in the debate and argues that "women should not have to prove that others should allow them to use their gifts as God calls. The burden of proof is on individuals who would restrict in any way the spiritual gifts of women. They must show that by so doing they are not discriminating against God's Word and against their sisters in Christ." (Ibid., 231).

<sup>112</sup> Halcyon Westphal Wilson, "The Forgotten Disciples: The Empowering of Love vs. the Love of Power," in *The Welcome Table*, 189. The argument of the spiritual giftedness of women as the only criterion for ministry is strongly voiced by all key proponents. See thus for example David R. Larson, "Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination," in *The Welcome Table*, 131; where he says that "Gifts for Ministry—not gender—must be the deciding factor. 'Gifts, not gender!' is the only moral mantra."

## Analogy of the Body

The analogy of the body used in the New Testament by Paul is an additional argument build upon the spiritual gifts argument. Proponents highlight that the analogy of the body points to a church structure which is based on equality and mutual cooperation rather than on submission and hierarchy which both are implied by the headship and submission theology of opponents.<sup>113</sup>

In summary, the argument of the New Testament attitude toward women is first based on Jesus' revolutionary treatment of women. Jesus invited women to be his followers and disciples. In accordance with the pattern that Jesus established, the Holy Spirit confirmed the significant place of women in the early church by giving the same gifts to women and men. This theology of spiritual giftedness regardless of gender and additional metaphors such as the body metaphor in the New Testament lead proponents to only one conclusion: "Fallen humanity, not Creator God, has the problem with male/female roles and with whom is to be blessed (ordained/set apart) or not to blessed."<sup>114</sup>

## Theology of Ordination

One of the most covered arguments in the debate by proponents is based on the understanding of ordination.<sup>115</sup> Proponents see this issue as one of the key issues for the proper understanding of women's roles in the church. Thus for example Alden Thompson a well known Adventist scholar said after the defeat proponents suffered at the world church body administrative gathering session-General Conference in 1995 when their proposal for ordination of women was voted down by delegates of the session: "I believe we erred by focusing on the ordination of women rather than on the question of ordination itself... We must ask what the Bible teaches about ordination itself."<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> See for example David R. Larson, "Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination," in *The Welcome Table*, 127.

<sup>114</sup> Joyce Hanscom Lorntz, "Spiritual Gifts and the Good News," in *The Welcome Table*, 235.

<sup>115</sup> There have been more than 20 main studies and articles published on the topic of ordination from the proponents' view in the last 27 years. Although proponents mostly published their views in the form of individual studies, there was one book published specifically on the issue of ordination (Norskov V. Olsen, *Myth and Truth about Church, Priesthood and Ordination*, Riverside, CA: Loma Linda University Press, 1990) which shows how important this issue is for proponents.

<sup>116</sup> Alden Thompson, "Utrecht: A 'Providential' Detour?" *Ministry*, October 1997, 19. At the end of his article Thomson calls for a comprehensive study on the whole concept of ordination in the Scripture (Ibid., 21). Interestingly enough, or maybe even as a historical irony the church scholars have been calling for the comprehensive study on ordination since 1978. In that year the church asked some of its best scholars to write essays on the topic. These studies had been published in 1978 in the supplement of the February issue of the *Ministry* magazine. The title of the supplement "Needed-A Theology of Ordination" is quite telling about the necessity for such a study. Raul Dederen in his crucial study (which still today belongs to one of the main studies done on the theology of ordination in Adventist church) declared that: "We have no elaborate doctrine of the ordination to the ministry." Raul

The topic of ordination is however not that simple according to proponents. First, the Bible does not say much about it and secondly the terminology and the past hierarchical tradition do not really help in clarifying the issue.<sup>117</sup> So in order to understand ordination, proponents argue one must consider the following aspects of it: terminology, history and the related concepts of service/ministry (function versus status), priesthood of all believers and laying on of hands.

### Terminology

When one turns to the Bible regarding the terminology for ordination, he or she is left with confusion that arises from the fact that there is no direct Hebrew or Greek word equivalent for ordination. The most influential King James Version translates more than 20 Hebrew and Greek words with English "ordain".<sup>118</sup>

The apparent confusion is solved when one looks at the etymology of the term "ordain". Here, as proponents point out, "ordination" comes from Latin *ordinare* meaning "to put in *ordo*," where *ordo* means "row, rank, or order. *Ordo* and *ordinare* referred to a special status of a group, such as senators, distinct from the plebs. This means that the Latin term conveyed the connotation of authority, status and rank, which however is not present in the New Testament.<sup>119</sup> Proponents thus warn that "to build a case for ordination on the basis of KJV usage of the word 'ordain' is rather shaky."<sup>120</sup> In fact, with the Latin background of "ordination" one can understand, to a certain degree, why the concept of ordination developed to a hierarchical model in the post-apostolic time; a model which is utterly foreign to the NT.

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Dederen, "A Theology of Ordination," *Ministry*, February 1978, 24M. Nonetheless, the situation since according to Thompson has not improved much.

<sup>117</sup> Thus for example Russell Staples, the former chair of the Department of the World Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary says: "The difficulty for the church, of course, is that Scripture makes no clear statements either mandating or forbidding the ordination of women." Russell Staples, "To Ordain or Not," *Ministry*, March 1987, 15. Similarly Nancy Vyhmeister in her conclusion to her study on ordination in the NT stated that "there was practically nothing" on how the NT church organised ordination. See Nancy Vyhmeister, "Ordination in the New Testament?" *Ministry*, May 2002, 26. Accordingly argues Ralph Neall: Jesus gave "no instructions at all about ordination or church organization." Ralph E. Neall, "Ordination Among the People of God," in *The Welcome Table*, 254.

<sup>118</sup> Norskov V. Olsen, *Myth and Truth about Church, Priesthood and Ordination*, 122-125. Olsen, who is a church historian and a former president of Loma Linda University in California, in his book, lists the most common Hebrew and Greek terms which are translated in KJV with "ordain". He's also published an article on the issue of ordination. See Norskov Olsen, "Called to be a Minister," *Ministry*, April 1995, 11-17, 28.

<sup>119</sup> See Nancy Vyhmeister, "Ordination in the New Testament?" 24 and Norskov Olsen, "Called to be a Minister," 11-12. Both authors show on selected Biblical examples that the NT does not convey the meaning of authority or status, as does the original Latin word for ordination.

<sup>120</sup> Norskov Olsen, "Called to be a Minister," 12.



## History

Looking at the history in the context of ordination also helps, according to proponents, to clarify the Adventist theology of ordination. The church fairly early started to develop a hierarchical understanding. Thus already in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus or Cyprian of Carthage (1<sup>st</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century) the presbyters and bishops are authorities who guard the church against heresies.<sup>121</sup> The earliest description of ordination in the *Apostolic Tradition* by Hippolytus from the early third century also confirms the shift in the field of ecclesiology.<sup>122</sup> With the coming of the sacerdotal concept of priesthood, emphasised by Augustine in the fourth century, the church moved another step toward ecclesiology which sees the church as a hierarchical body. As a result, sharp distinction between laics and clerics developed.<sup>123</sup>

The hierarchical understanding of ordination remained in the church until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Reformation brought a new understanding of ordination based on the New Testament text of 1 Peter 2:8-9. The concept of the priesthood of all believers was stressed, diminishing the difference between laics and clerics to a functional difference. As a result ordination was attached to mission or function rather than the person of a minister.<sup>124</sup> The radical reformation took the concept of priesthood of all believers even further by democratising the church organization and by having only laypeople as leaders.<sup>125</sup>

What the historical developments on ordination show, according to proponents, is that "a call, not ritual ordination, is the only theological prerequisite for holding the office of ministry" in the protestant heritage.<sup>126</sup> If the Adventist church wants to be faithful to its protestant theological roots then the overwhelming evidence that women have been called to the ministry in the Adventist church by various, often leadership gifts cannot be ignored and must be adequately acknowledged by the church.

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<sup>121</sup> Ralph E. Neall, "Ordination Among the People of God," in *The Welcome Table*, 258-259.

<sup>122</sup> Some of those changes involved using a new terminology in regard to bishops: "high priest", "high priesthood" and "authority to remit sins". Other developments included a distinction between bishop and presbyter and the fact that only bishop could ordain presbyters. See Norskov Olsen, "Called to be a Minister," 15.

<sup>123</sup> Norskov Olsen, "Called to be a Minister," 15.

<sup>124</sup> Daniel Augsburger, "Clerical Authority and Ordination in the Early Christian Church," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 96. Making the above conclusion, Augsburger goes on to state that the present "Adventist ordination that is valid worldwide reflects a later, Augustinian concept of ordination" (Ibid.). This conclusion is based on the fact that the ordination in Adventist church has a worldwide effect without really connecting the ordination to the mission aspect.

<sup>125</sup> Ralph E. Neall, "Ordination Among the People of God," in *The Welcome Table*, 260.

<sup>126</sup> Norskov Olsen, "Called to be a Minister," 16. Similarly Augsburger says in his conclusion on the historical developments: "The essential qualification for the task is the endowment of the Holy Spirit, not ordination." Daniel Augsburger, "Clerical Authority and Ordination in the Early Christian Church," in *Women in Ministry*, 96.

## Related Concepts

There are three concepts related to ordination which according to proponents need to be explored in order to gain an adequately complex understanding of ordination.

*The Concept of Ministry/Service.* The first concept will show, in the view of proponents, that in the New Testament the concept of ministry is connected with function rather than status. The authority is not the primary issue in the NT.<sup>127</sup> The issue in the New Testament is spiritual call to the ministry, which is recognised officially by the church in by commissioning (ordination). It is important for proponents to stress that ordination does not convey authority over others because ordination is widely perceived by opponents as giving authority.<sup>128</sup> The fact that the Adventist church restricts some of its ordinances (sacraments) to ordained church elders and pastors is not due to the idea that pastorate carries sacramental status or special authority. This is an erroneous idea. "The restriction is a matter of order, not a sacramental matter."<sup>129</sup> In fact, as Sakae Kubo insist,

because women already serve as ministers, ordination is a moot issue... Women already serve as ministers, perform baptisms and marriages, and administer the ordinances... The fact is that the battle has been already won... It is completely illogical to say to women, 'you can serve as ministers but you cannot be ordained'.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Alden Thompson, "Utrecht: A 'Providential' Detour?" 21. Similarly Olsen says: "The concept of ministry in the New Testament does not use words that imply hierarchy, primacy, rank, power, authority, and dignity." Norskov Olsen, "Ministry: A Place for Men and Women," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 238.

<sup>128</sup> See Roger Dudley, "Ordination of Women: A Question of Status or Function?" *Ministry*, October 1985, 21, 28. Dudley being a proponent argues that perceiving ordination as conveying authority has rather to do with a sociological perspective than a theological. Opponents on the other hand stress that indeed "biblical ordination is associated with authority." [Gerhard Damsteegt], Letters, *Ministry*, February 1998, 3. Similarly Marjorie Lloyd from the opponents' camp believes: "Ordination gives a certain status, a certain position with certain privileges." Marjorie Lewis Lloyd, "What Happened to the Call?" *Ministry*, February 1978, 40. Interestingly enough, Mrs. Lloyd who is the author of more than 18 books, called her article "What Happened to the Call?" not realizing that it is precisely "the call" which according to proponents is the key determinant for ordination and which according to proponents has been evidenced in many cases of Adventist woman. Proponents actually argue that "the call" is there and yet the church still has not opened the door for recognition of that call. Mrs. Lloyd believes that the call to the professional ministry of women has not yet been manifested, but this is probably due to her assumption that ordination conveys authority and status. In this case thus, the article becomes a prime example of how underlying assumptions about "ministry" and "ordination" (whether function or status) influence the very attitude toward the topic of ordination and indeed the ordination of women.

<sup>129</sup> Raul Dederen, "A Theology of Ordination," 24M. Dederen actually believes that it is due to this fact of restricting ordinances that some misunderstand the concept of ordination by reading into it status and authority elements. In another place Dederen acknowledges that when it comes to practice of ordination in the Adventist church, the church has indeed "gone beyond what one finds in the Scriptures." Raul Dederen, "The Priesthood of All Believers," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 21.

<sup>130</sup> Sakae Kubo, "Four Reasons Why Women's Ordination is a Moot Issue," *Spectrum*, 28/3 (Summer 2000): 37. Kubo is a well-known retired Adventist scholar. He has been a professor of New Testament at Andrews University, dean of Walla Walla School of Theology, president of Newbold

If the concept of ministry (and ordination) is based on the function rather than sacerdotal status then ordination of women indeed makes sense to proponents.

*Priesthood of All Believers.* The concept of the priesthood of all believers as found in 1 Peter 2:8, 9 once again goes against the *high* view of ordination which conveys special status and authority to its holder. To proponents the "belief in the priesthood of all believers affirms women's ordination."<sup>131</sup> The concept of headship and submission argued by opponents as the key theological obstacle for ordination of women goes directly against the concept of priesthood of all believers, because as proponents see it, the latter teaches no distinctions between a minister and a layperson while the former implies hierarchy, authority and exclusiveness.<sup>132</sup>

The concept of priesthood of all believers not only means that every believer has a direct access to God but also that "every member shares the responsibility to proclaim the gospel."<sup>133</sup>

Such an ecclesiology, such an understanding of the nature and the mission of the church, no longer possesses roadblocks to women serving in any ministry. It in fact demands a partnership of men and women in all expressions of the ordained ministry.<sup>134</sup>

*Laying on of hands.* The concept of the laying on of hands which is used during the ordination service, in the Old Testament conveys the idea of special blessing (Genesis 48:14).<sup>135</sup> In the New Testament the laying on of hands was used during the consecration

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College in England and president of Academic Affairs and dean of the Atlantic Union College in Nebraska.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>132</sup> This perception of proponents is nicely illustrated in Raymond Holmes's book *The Tip of the Iceberg* in which he says: "Women who are asked to participate in worship services, whether by praying or exhorting, do so on the basis of the authority delegated by the male pastor who holds the ecclesiastical office and whose spiritual authority is derived from Christ." Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 145. Holmes's statement is probably one of the strongest and clearest logical conclusions on the headship and subordination principle. The logic and the theological implications of that statement are in clear contrast with the theology of priesthood of all believers. Thus Holmes's conclusion is more in line with Catholic theology than Protestant.

<sup>133</sup> Ralph E. Neall, "Ordination Among the People of God," in *The Welcome Table*, 253.

<sup>134</sup> Raul Dederen, "The Priesthood of All Believers," in *Women in Ministry*, 23. Dederen continues: "The recognition of the priesthood of all believers implies a church in which women and men work side by side in various functions and ministries, endowed with gifts distributed by the Holy Spirit according to his sovereign will" (Ibid.).

<sup>135</sup> Particularly important is the using of the rite in the context of ministry introduction of Joshua and Levites. Both of these occasions were however only one time occasion and were not repeated in other installations of priests, kings or prophets. Similarly Levites inherited their functions by birth later and the rite was not repeated. See Norskov Olsen, "Called to be a Minister," 12. The idea of giving a blessing is also supported by Nancy Vyhmeister. See Nancy Vyhmeister, "Ordination in the New Testament?" 25.

service when the church commissioned people for special tasks. None of the occurrences of laying on of hands are in the context of ordination in a proper sense however.<sup>136</sup>

The concept of laying on of hands is thus tied to a special tasks and missions. But the rite in an ecclesiological setting also expresses the will of God through human agency. In this sense the "hands become a symbol of God's visible presence."<sup>137</sup>

Proponents at the end ask: "Should women receive the laying on of hands? Most definitely. The withholding of the laying on of hands may well be a refusal to recognize heaven's call."<sup>138</sup>

The theology of ordination when taken in its entire context including etymological, historical and biblical evidence leads proponents to only one possible conclusion and that is that "there is no conclusive theological argument to deny the ordination of women."<sup>139</sup>

### **Analogy of the Slavery**

One of the key theological points proponents make in the debate is the analogy between Paul's instructions regarding submission of women to their husbands and submission of slaves to their masters. This analogy according to proponents clarifies the ordination issue in more than one way.

First, one can find striking similarities between theological and sociological arguments used in support of slavery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century proslavery movement and theological and sociological arguments used in the ordination debate by opponents today. Secondly, comparing proslavery hermeneutical approach with the hermeneutical approach of opponents shows similarities and therefore uncovers a methodological inconsistency on the part of opponents.

Among the theological similarities between proslavery movement and antiordination movement proponents name the following: (1) Both proslavery protagonists as well as antiordination protagonists appeal to divine ordinance as the theological reason for both slavery and/or headship/subordination principle;<sup>140</sup> (2) Both sides appeal to the Old Testament

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<sup>136</sup> Norskov Olsen, "Called to be a Minister," 14. Olsen argues that all occurrences of laying on of hands are in the context of either "blessing" (Acts 6,) or consecration services for a special missionary task (Act 13:1-3). Even the injunction of 1 Timothy 5:22 is in the context of a local church and a specific situation there. Olsen concludes: "Thus the Timothy and Acts passages do not deal with church ordination as generally perceived. We cannot use them as a precedent for a concept that developed in the third century establishing a monarchical bishop and his role in performing the rite of ordination." (Ibid., 15).

<sup>137</sup> Keith Mattingly, "Laying on of Hands in Ordination: A Biblical Study," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 69.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>139</sup> Raul Dederen, "A Theology of Ordination," 240.

<sup>140</sup> Walter B. T. Douglas, "The Distance and the Difference: Reflections on Issues of Slavery and Women's Ordination in Adventism," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*,

precedent regarding either slavery or headship of males;<sup>141</sup> (3) Both sides appeal to the New Testament precedence – first, both protagonists of proslavery and antiordination argue from Jesus' silence on the issue of either slavery<sup>142</sup> or female apostles. Secondly, there are some clear texts such as Ephesians 6: 5-9, Colossians 3: 22-25, 1 Timothy 6:1-2 etc. in the New Testament that approve slavery. In a similar way some clear texts in the New Testament according to opponents teach that a woman should not be in authority over a man; (4) Slippery-slope argument – lastly both sides use a similar slippery slope logic argument. The proslavery movement argued that if slavery is abolished, soon all divine social laws will be in question. Similar arguments can be heard from opponents of ordination: If the church allows ordination of women it will soon allow homosexuality.<sup>143</sup>

All these theological similarities between the proslavery movement and antiordination movement are underlined in terms of the almost identical hermeneutical approach both movements used and use to argue their cases. Both the proslavery camp and the antiordination camp propound a high view of Scripture with resulting literalistic reading tendencies. This is a fundamental similarity as proponents argue. However, and this is the reason why proponents bring forward the analogy of the slavery argument, when it comes to the position the opponents of ordination take regarding the slavery a clear discrepancy in their methodology emerges. How could opponents fail to “embrace and use a liberalistic hermeneutic as far as slavery is concerned, while preaching and theologizing against women's ordination through the use of a literalistic hermeneutic?”<sup>144</sup> The point proponents make is that using the same methodology as proslavery people opponents should either accept slavery or reject their antiordination position regarding women. To keep both at the same time is methodologically and theologically inconsistent.

This point of proponents was confirmed by a logical conclusion one antiordination protagonist made regarding the relationship between slavery and ordination of women:

Only one governing principle should guide all discussions on church matters: What does the Bible say on this? ... The first great compromise with truth was when we went against the plain word of Scripture and condemned slavery. The Bible does not condemn slavery (Lev 25:44-46). In fact, it specifically endorses the role of the slave. The whole book of

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ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 382, 395. While proslavery protagonists used the text of Genesis 9:24-27 and Leviticus 25:44-46 as the places where the divine ordinance is clearly being taught, opponents use Genesis 1-3 as the place where God institutes subordination of women. (Ibid., 395).

<sup>141</sup> On one hand proslavery movement argued that Abraham had slaves and that the Israel laws favoured slavery, on the other hand opponents point to a male priesthood in the OT as the precedent for Christian church ministry. See Walter B. T. Douglas, “The Distance and the Difference: Reflections on Issues of Slavery and Women's Ordination in Adventism,” in *Women in Ministry*, 395.

<sup>142</sup> Jesus reversed polygamy and divorce but did not mention slavery.

<sup>143</sup> Walter B. T. Douglas, “The Distance and the Difference: Reflections on Issues of Slavery and Women's Ordination in Adventism,” in *Women in Ministry*, 395.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 384.

Philemon in the New Testament supports slavery. The cause of those advocating the ordination of women in our church began many years ago when the plain word of Scripture was ignored.<sup>145</sup>

This logical connection between the hermeneutical methodologies of proslavery and antiordination people and on the other hand the different theological conclusion proponents of ordination reach regarding slavery is according to proponents a clear illustration of a hermeneutical discrepancy opponents should acknowledge. This for proponents is also a sign that the case of opponents is methodologically and theologically unsustainable today just as the case of proslavery movement was unsustainable back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Summary

Systematic arrangement of the proponents' key biblical and theological arguments concludes part one of this chapter. The arguments investigated here do not come in the systematic order and thus the need to arrange and structure the key methodological and theological points of both sides was important in order to gain better clarity in the debate. When arguments are analysed and organized systematically suddenly the differences and divisions become more apparent. It is the aim of the next part to make the differences even clearer by analysing the hermeneutical matters behind the biblical and theological views of proponents.

### Analysis of Proponents' Hermeneutical Apparatus

The second part of Chapter Three will aim at systematic analysis and structuring of methodological and hermeneutical rationale of proponents. With this part, just as it was in the previous chapter, the thesis is moving one step deeper into the hermeneutical matters which operate theoretically behind the biblical and theological argumentation of proponents.

The pro-ordination *Committee on Hermeneutics and Ordination* which published the most influential book from the proponents' perspective is openly recognizing the need of clarifying the hermeneutical matters: "If only we would clarify our hermeneutics we would be

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<sup>145</sup> [James Hilton], Letters to the Editor, *Adventist Today*, March-April 1995, 20. Interestingly enough this reader of *Adventist Today* in his letter also says that "Any other consideration [except of what the Bible says]-economic, social or political should be ignored." (Ibid.). Edwin Zackrison in his proordination article however shows that this is one of the misunderstandings of people opposing ordination of woman have about the nature of the Bible and the role of the culture. As Zackrison shows "there was always a strong *political* element in this struggle between whites and blacks" and thus no Bible reading is free from political or cultural elements. Edwin Zackrison, "Inclusive Redemption," in *The Welcome Table*, 166. Italics original. Walter B. T. Douglas argues similarly in his article on similarities between the proslavery movement and the antiordination movement. Douglas citing historical statements shows how the theological argumentation of proslavery people was interwoven with the sociological and economical interests of slaveholders. See Walter B. T. Douglas, "The Distance and the Difference: Reflections on Issues of Slavery and Women's Ordination in Adventism," in *Women in Ministry*, 384-387.

able to decide whether the ordination of Seventh-day Adventist women ministers was acceptable."<sup>146</sup>

Unfortunately for the debate, the *Committee* provides no such clarification and more importantly no comprehensive systematization of the 11 proponent's hermeneutical system.<sup>147</sup> This part's outgoing position therefore is that there is a significant lack of systematic and all-inclusive treatment of the subject of the proponent's hermeneutics. Consequently, there is therefore a considerable need to provide such treatment for the sake of overall clarification. While proponents have discussed the subject of hermeneutics in many places, the discussions are rather scattered and done from the perspective of individual proponents. There has so far been no attempt to bring together those individual treatments and attempt to systematise them into a coherent and representative system. This gap in providing such across-the-board systematization is hoped to be bridged by this chapter.

To achieve this goal, part two is further divided into three main sections that will investigate the following subjects: *Proponents' concept of inspiration, proponents' method and the characteristics of their method*. All these aspects contribute to the proponents' overall hermeneutical apparatus.

Analysing the hermeneutical views of proponents means first of all sifting through a much larger body of literature with which inevitably comes also a wider spectrum of views than was the case with opponents who hold a more concise and unified perspective.<sup>148</sup> Therefore awareness of this spectrum will partially explain why the treatment will attempt to cover the position of proponents as comprehensively as possible by trying give a voice to various tendencies and representatives within their hermeneutical spectrum.

### Proponents' Theory of Biblical Inspiration

Raymond Cottrell, one of the outspoken proponents of women's ordination, recognises that before one can intelligently talk about hermeneutical matters one must consider first certain prerequisites.

Prerequisite and basic to a viable hermeneutical methodology is an accurate understanding of such matters as the relationship between the divine and the human

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<sup>146</sup> Nancy J. Vyhmeister, "Prologue," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>147</sup> The *Committee* has also recognised "that the issue of women's ordination hinged on more than a hermeneutical approach to certain passages of Scripture" (Ibid.). Therefore the book is not dealing primarily with hermeneutical issues. In fact the book does not contain a single chapter that would substantially attempt to clarify the subject. There is only one page in the introduction which summarises the proponent's hermeneutical approach in the whole volume.

<sup>148</sup> The volume of literature that had to be processed on a substantial level meant that more than 83,000 words of notes have been taken and considered in the preparation of this part of the chapter.

elements in Scripture, the nature of inspiration, the text and canon of Scripture, the progressive nature of revelation, and the unity of Scripture<sup>149</sup>

Cottrell acknowledges that hermeneutical questions cannot be discussed in a vacuum but must be considered within the larger framework of the topic of inspiration-revelation. While Cottrell in particular mentions five areas which make up the necessary framework for hermeneutical discussion, these five categories can be divided into two major ones: Inspiration and Revelation. In the first section on the proponents' hermeneutics therefore attention will be turned to inspiration dynamics and revelation views as they are understood by the proponents' side. There will be several subsections analysing different aspects of the proponents' inspirational stance.

### **Terminology and Definitions**

This section aims to establish the specific connotations proponents attach to their basic terminology of revelation and inspiration. While general unanimity about defining revelation and inspiration exists among proponents it is relevant for further discussion to establish the basic semantic framework of the proponents' definitions.

Peter van Bemmelen, in the comprehensive volume on Adventist theology published by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, defines revelation as God revealing "Himself in words and acts, through many different channels, but most fully in the person of Jesus Christ".<sup>150</sup> More particularly, Bemmelen distinguishes between general and special revelation, defining the first as "universal and accessible to all human beings everywhere, by which God is known as Creator, Sustainer, and Lord of the entire universe," while the second is "addressed to specific human beings," in which God reveals "Himself in a personal way to redeem humanity."<sup>151</sup> It becomes obvious that, for Bemmelen, revelation has both theistic and theological connotations. Both refer to God, one as Creator and the other as Saviour. Thus Bemmelen defines revelation as a theological and soteriological necessity, rather than as a general epistemic necessity for humanity.

Similarly, Raoul Dederen has attempted to define revelation as imparting of knowledge and information about God. Thus he sees revelation as "the supernatural communication of truths in propositional form." By propositional truths Dederen understands "statements that affirm truths necessary for salvation."<sup>152</sup> It could be argued thus that for

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<sup>149</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, "Ellen White's Evaluation and Use of the Bible," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1974), 147.

<sup>150</sup> Peter M. van Bemmelen, "Revelation and Inspiration," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 23.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 30. Also pages 26-33.

<sup>152</sup> Raoul Dederen, "Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics" in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 4.



Dederen revelation has two primary characteristics, it is theological, revealing truths about God and secondly, it is propositional, revealing principal statements or premises on which doctrines could be based.

Another significant publication on the topic of revelation and inspiration from proponents' side by Roger Coon approaches the definition of revelation from the perspective of distinguishing revelation from inspiration. In his articles "Inspiration and Revelation: What It Is and How It Works," Coon defines revelation as "*the content* of the message communicated by God to His prophet in the process of inspiration."<sup>153</sup> Thus revelation is the content while inspiration signifies the process.

In a slightly different way from all three previous authors Alden Thompson defines revelation as a kind of special input from God, or a message from him to His creatures.<sup>154</sup> Interestingly however Thompson narrows down his definition by distinguishing between revelation and spirit led research and by insisting that "not all Scripture was given by revelation" and therefore "Scripture becomes revelation to us in a secondary sense" only.<sup>155</sup> Thompson defines revelation rather narrowly as a supernatural "special input" or "a vision" by God, compared to Bemmelen, Dederen or Coon for who revelation has much wider and general connotations.<sup>156</sup>

Apart from Thompson's narrow definition of revelation, as Sakae Kubo observes a general unanimity exists regarding what revelation means.<sup>157</sup> Thus it could be said that proponent's definition contains primarily theistic, theological and propositional connotations.

Turning the attention to inspiration, it can be said that generally proponents perceive and define inspiration in the same sense as it has been already indicated above by Roger Coon as "*a process* by which God enables a man or woman of His special choosing both to receive and to communicate accurately, adequately, and reliably God's messages for His people."<sup>158</sup>

Thus for example Bemmelen, in line with Coon, suggests that inspiration is "*a process* in which the Holy Spirit works on selected human beings, to move them to proclaim messages

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<sup>153</sup> Roger W. Coon, "Inspiration/Revelation: What It Is and How It Works, Part 1: The Prophetic Gift In Operation," *The Journal of Adventist Education*, 44/1 (October - November 1981): 18. Italics original.

<sup>154</sup> Alden Thompson, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1991), 47.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 48 and 56.

<sup>156</sup> For Thompson the fact that "not all Scripture was given by revelation" is at the heart of his thesis in his book *Inspiration*. This shows how important definition of revelation is for the whole concept of Scripture and approach to it. See page 48.

<sup>157</sup> Sakae Kubo, "A History of Adventist Interpretation of Revelation and Inspiration," online edition.

<sup>158</sup> Roger W. Coon, "Inspiration/Revelation: What It Is and How It Works, Part 1: The Prophetic Gift In Operation," 17. Italics original.

received from God.”<sup>159</sup> Similarly Dederen defines inspiration as God’s “determining influence on the writers of the Old Testament and New Testament.”<sup>160</sup> Thompson also agrees with other proponents that inspiration is an enabling act of God: “inspiration is the Spirit’s special urging of a messenger to speak or write.”<sup>161</sup>

Thus, without going into any more examples,<sup>162</sup> proponents’ tendency in defining inspiration is to stress the enabling aspect of God’s Spirit (influence or urging) and the idea of a (divine) *process*, rather than the content of this process.

In summarizing the basic understanding of proponents, it could be concluded that revelation first of all has theological (soteriological) connotation and secondly it has also a distinct propositional connotation, meaning that in revelation God imparts propositional truths to his messengers. Inspiration is the process of revelation but not revelation itself. In comparison with opponents, it can be briefly pointed out here that the opponents’ language of inspiration appears to be more “radical”. Opponents refer to inspiration using the adjective “full” and while they reject the “mechanical” or “dictation” views, they do not reject “verbal” or “inerrant” terminology as is the case among proponents.

#### **Modus Operandi of Inspiration: Verbal versus Plenary**

Alberto Timm’s article on the history of Adventist inspiration recognises the large spectrum that has developed regarding the concept of biblical inspiration in Adventism.<sup>163</sup> This spectrum is clearly visible in the area of the modus operandi of inspiration that is whether inspiration could be perceived more mechanically or rather dynamically. However, when it comes to the use of the very terms “verbal”, “mechanical”, “plenary” or “thought” inspiration, there appears to be no unified approach among proponents.

Thus for example, for some, “verbal” and “mechanical/dictation” means the same because it suggests emphasis on *words* rather than the person under inspiration. Consequently

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<sup>159</sup> Peter M. van Bemmelen, “Revelation and Inspiration,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 34. Italics added.

<sup>160</sup> Raoul Dederen, “Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics” in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 8.

<sup>161</sup> Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*, 57.

<sup>162</sup> Further on how proponents define inspiration see for example: Jo Ann Davidson: “God’s Word: Its Origin and Authority,” *Ministry*, January 2003, 5-9; Ekkehardt Mueller: “Authority of Scripture: Approaching Revelation and Inspiration,” Biblical Research Institute document; Leon Mashchak, “God Means What He Says and He Says What He Means,” *Adventist Today*, January/February 1996, 8-10; Jo Ann Davidson, “Word Made Flesh: The Inspiration of Scripture,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 15/1 (Spring 2004): 21–33. For an overview of the Adventist history of inspiration see Alberto Timm: “A History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical and Prophetic Inspiration (1844-2000),” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 10/1-2, (1999): 486-542.

<sup>163</sup> Alberto Timm: “A History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical and Prophetic Inspiration (1844-2000),” 486. See also Sakae Kubo, “A History of Adventist Interpretation of Revelation and Inspiration,” Online edition. Kubo argues that the spectrum started from 1880s.

for this group “plenary” and “thought” inspiration was the same as the emphasis is on the *person*.<sup>164</sup> This approach tends to perceive inspiration as a dynamic *modus operandi* which works primarily on the inspired agent and his or her thoughts, giving the person under inspiration enough liberty to use expressions of his or her choice.

On the other hand there are those who prefer to distinguish more sharply between “mechanical/dictation” and “verbal” and between “thought” and “plenary”.<sup>165</sup> Thus it appears that there are at least two distinct tendencies emerging regarding the *modus operandi* of inspiration in the writings of proponents.

The first view altogether rejects any verbal, mechanical or dictation *modus operandi* both in defining and in analysing the inspiration process. This view is represented most visibly by Roger Coon, Raymond Cottrell or Alden Thompson. Thus, for example, from the outset of his book *Inspiration*, Thompson rejects the verbal inspiration and even suggests that it has been rejected by the leadership of the Adventist church already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>166</sup> Similarly, arguing more analytically Coon defends the plenary/ thought inspiration and rejects the verbal and mechanical in their entirety. Coon’s main objection against the verbal *modus operandi* is that it suggests a very mechanical, stenograph-like process which robs the writer of his personality and literary liberty.<sup>167</sup> In the same way Cottrell sees the effects of verbal *modus operandi* on the human writer for whom the framework of verbal inspiration “minimises or eliminates the human aspect of the process.”<sup>168</sup> There are also other proponents who tend to hold a similar position regarding the verbal *modus operandi* who however have not elaborated on their concept in such a systematic way as the three examples given above.<sup>169</sup>

The second approach that emerges among proponents is the view which semantically rejects verbal inspiration yet in its description and analysis of the process places stronger emphasis on the “apt words”. Richard Davidson for example argues that “though the Bible was not verbally dictated by God as to bypass the individuality of human author,” yet the

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<sup>164</sup> Roger W. Coon, “Inspiration/Revelation: What It Is and How It Works, Part 1: The Prophetic Gift In Operation,” 24-27. Also Raymond F. Cottrell, “A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture,” in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: Team Press, 1995), 80-82; and Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*, 50-51 and 268-269.

<sup>165</sup> Alberto Timm: “A History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical and Prophetic Inspiration (1844-2000),” 486-487.

<sup>166</sup> Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*, 50-51 and 268-269.

<sup>167</sup> Roger W. Coon, “Inspiration/Revelation: What It Is and How It Works, Part 1: The Prophetic Gift In Operation,” 24-27.

<sup>168</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, “A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture,” in *The Welcome Table*, 80.

<sup>169</sup> For example Fritz Guy, George R. Knight, Sakae Kubo or George Rice. Their publications and contribution will be mentioned later in the chapter.

human messenger is “divinely guided in his selection of apt words”.<sup>170</sup> Similarly, Jo Ann Davidson argues that “the Bible was not verbally dictated by God. When human messengers were instructed to record the words of God, they were divinely guided in the selection of apt words to express the revelation.”<sup>171</sup> Parallel tendency toward emphasizing the verbal aspect of *modus operandi* of inspiration can be detected in the writings of other proponents too.<sup>172</sup>

It has been shown already in Chapter Two that opponents too are reluctant to define inspiration in terms of mechanical *modus operandi*, yet they still end up with descriptions which tend to favour the *word aspect*. In this sense, the second position among proponents comes close to the position of opponents. On the other hand the first position of proponents which favours the *personal aspect* in *modus operandi* of inspiration could be clearly distinguished from the perspective of opponents.

In summary, there are two tendencies in the proponents’ camp regarding the *modus operandi* of inspiration. The first tendency rejects a verbal-mechanical-dictation concept both in terminology and in the analysis emphasizing more the *personal-dynamic* aspect in the inspiration process. The second tendency, while rejecting the terminology of verbal-mechanical-dictation model, nevertheless keeps emphasising the *word-mechanical* aspect of the inspiration process.

### **Nature of Inspiration: Divine and Human Incarnational Model**

The next step in understanding the proponents’ overall hermeneutical stance involves analysing the proponents’ view of the nature of inspiration. The so called *incarnational model* of inspiration is commonly<sup>173</sup> being proposed by proponents to be the best analogy for understanding the nature of inspiration. The model in its essence holds that “the inspiration of the Bible is like the incarnation of Jesus: a union of the divine and the human.”<sup>174</sup> Thus the

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<sup>170</sup> Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen, Commentary Reference Series, vol. 12 (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000), 63.

<sup>171</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, “Word Made Flesh: The Inspiration of Scripture,” 26.

<sup>172</sup> The chapter later discusses reliability and inerrancy concepts in relation to biblical inspiration. It is particularly in the area of reliability where certain tendencies toward verbal *modus operandi* can be detected.

<sup>173</sup> Proponents almost without exception argue for the incarnational model of inspiration and the nature of Scripture. For more see for example Alden Thompson, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers*, pages 17, 86-88; Ivan Blazen, “Women, Culture, and Christ: Hearing Scripture Yesterday and Today,” *Adventist Today*, January/February 1996, 5-7; Raymond F. Cottrell, “A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture,” in *The Welcome Table*, 63-90; William Johnsson, “Nine Foundations for an Adventist Hermeneutic,” *Ministry*, March 1999, 13-16; Jo Ann Davidson, “God’s Word: Its Origin and Authority,” 5-9; Ekkehardt Mueller, “Authority of Scripture—Approaching Revelation and Inspiration,” *Biblical Research Institute* unpublished document; and others.

<sup>174</sup> Robert K. McIver, “The Historical-critical Method: The Adventist Debate,” *Ministry*, March 1996, 16. McIver rightly observes that in the Adventist methodological debate “all agree on the divine/human or incarnational model of inspiration.” (Ibid., 16). Seventh-day Adventist proponents

analogy suggests that Scripture consist of a dual nature, divine and human just like Jesus' incarnated nature consisted of the two dimensions. While there exists general agreement about the incarnational analogy, at the same time, several explanations have been proposed among the proponents as to what exactly the model means. The various explanatory attempts of proponents can be subdivided into three major trends.

The first trend among proponents argues for the importance of keeping balance between the human and divine aspects of Scripture by emphasizing the *inseparability* of the elements. The proponents who belong to this group generally argue that the nature of inspiration cannot be studied by using an inductive methodology which tends to focus more on the traces of humanity in Scripture and consequently the construction is done primarily from the human data. Thus Ekkehardt Mueller for example argues that

the human and the divine in Scripture are not complementary. They are integrated. Consequently, different sets of tools in order to study the human side and the divine side of the Bible cannot do justice to its unified nature, the truly incarnational character of Scripture.<sup>175</sup>

The incarnational character of Scripture for Mueller means that the divine and the human aspects are unified and integrated into an inseparable unity. This as Mueller argues has significant consequences for how the question of inspiration should be approached in the first place.

Jo Ann Davidson and Leon Mashchak also argue similarly. Both hold that the incarnational analogy suggests that the divine and human elements are "virtually inseparable" and that one should not even attempt to balance them because they are inseparable thus constituting "an inseparable mixture" of divine and human.<sup>176</sup>

The position of inseparability of elements finds its clear expression also in Richard Davidson's contribution. Davidson is primarily arguing from a corollary of the *tota scriptura* principle to "an indivisible, indistinguishable union of the divine and the human". However the fact that "the elements in Scripture are inextricably bound together, is reinforced by

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generally reason from a Christological analogy back to inspiration. They in the majority of cases use either the 451 Chalcedonian creed (for example Cottrell) or Ellen White statements from the introduction to her *Great Controversy* 1888 edition, pages v, vi (for example Johnsson and Thompson) or 1919 edition, page viii (for example Jo Ann Davisson).

<sup>175</sup> Ekkehardt Mueller, "Authority of Scripture-Approaching Revelation and Inspiration," *Biblical Research Institute* unpublished document, 2. The document is available on the BRI page.

<sup>176</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, "God's Word: Its Origin and Authority," 6. Jo Ann Davidson writes that "the individuality of each writer is evident, yet the human and divine elements are virtually inseparable." See also Jo Ann Davidson, "Word Made Flesh: The Inspiration of Scripture," 21, 23, 26. Leon Mashchak, "God Means What He Says and He Says What He Means," 9. Mashchak argues that "the Bible is treated by biblical writers as an inseparable mixture of divine revelation and human transmission;" and that "we do not balance these factors, for they are inseparable." (Ibid.).

comparing the written and incarnate Word of God," that is by the basic incarnational-Christological analogy too.<sup>177</sup>

Thus, within the proponents' spectrum the first noticeable trend regarding the nature of inspiration proposes that in its nature, inspiration should be seen as a balanced union of the divine and human dimensions which are inseparable, integrated and inextricably bound together. This conclusion then further implies that discussing the separate contribution of individual dimensions in detail would go against the fundamental logic of affirming inseparability and the unity of elements. Thus proponents following the inseparability rationale regarding the nature of inspiration only generally acknowledge that the human aspect is visible in the personality and individuality of the writers which have not been suppressed by the divine influence while the divine factor is explained in terms of its influence on the minds of the writers.<sup>178</sup> The overall emphasis however falls on the trustworthy manner in which the inspiration worked and on the unity of the two aspects involved in the process and the result of inspiration.

The second trend in the spectrum of how the nature of inspiration is understood by proponents follows a slightly different explanation. This position maintains the importance of keeping balance between the two dimensions just as the first position does, yet at the same time accentuates the *distinctiveness* of the divine and human elements. This position is particularly visible in Alden Thompson's treatment of *Inspiration*. Thompson not only believes that the elements can be treated separately but also that in order to arrive to a truly incarnational inspiration theory, the search must begin with the human element, that is with the actual evidence, human phenomena, data, problems, differences and various experiences of human authors, that is with focusing on mediate activity in the inspiration.<sup>179</sup> For this purpose Thompson proposes to study "the parallel passages in Scripture which are by far the most significant ones for developing an adequate view of inspiration."<sup>180</sup> Thompson believes that

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<sup>177</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 62-63. It has to be however noted that Davidson is inadvertently suggesting that the literary structure in Scripture may or may not have come as a result of inspiration. So it may or may not be inspired (Ibid., 77). This admission is not entirely in line with his overall emphasis on inseparability of elements, because as the example shows Davidson is after all distinguishing between inspired or uninspired literary structure and thus suggesting what is from the divine and what from the human element.

<sup>178</sup> See for example Jo Ann Davidson, "God's Word: Its Origin and Authority," 6; and Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 62. Interestingly enough Richard Davidson also indicates that the literary structure may be just an inadvertent part of literary crafting of the human author, thus part of the human aspect. Davidson is however careful on this point and so his conclusion is that we don't really know (Ibid., 77).

<sup>179</sup> Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*. See specifically the "preface" (13-20), 51-53, 87-88, 173-186 and 241-252.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 247. See also page 250 where he also repeats the point: "the parallel passages are very useful in establishing the boundaries of any inspiration theory." Similarly see for example page 173 where he specifies the usefulness of studying the parallel passages in that they uncover minor and also

this approach represents a balanced approach to inspiration; and moreover, a truly incarnational model of inspiration with a realistic awareness of the mediate activity of the human element and affirmation of divine authority at the same time.<sup>181</sup> Thus Thompson's approach points to an emphasis of distinctiveness of the aspects rather than their inseparability.

Other proponents also see the nature of inspiration in a similar way including for example Raymond Cottrell, Ivan Blazen and William Johnsson. Cottrell for instance argues for the necessity of divine and human factors working together, but similarly to Thompson, he observes that the human is less known and therefore it requires further comment.<sup>182</sup> The overall framework which shapes Cottrell's understanding of the nature of inspiration is based on the Christological analogy of the incarnation of Jesus as expressed by the classical formulation of the Council of Chalcedon in 451.<sup>183</sup> Cottrell follows the formulation in suggesting that both aspects in inspiration therefore must be acknowledged yet "it is important to *distinguish* between the divine and human elements in the Bible."<sup>184</sup> Cottrell thus tends to approach the nature of inspiration through the lens of distinctiveness of natures.

Ivan Blazen also suggested that while primary consideration must be given to the divinity of the Word, the human vessel must also be properly acknowledged. Blazen consequently recommends "the inductive approach which, takes all the data of Scripture

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major *differences* in details which are the evidence of imperfect human element present in the inspiration.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 17. Thompson suggests that this balanced approach to inspiration is revealed in Ellen White's writings and her experience. Elsewhere Thompson calls this balanced incarnational theory, "a realistic theory" of inspiration which points to his emphasis on perusing the human rather than the divine (Ibid., 88).

<sup>182</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, "A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture," in *The Welcome Table*, 66.

<sup>183</sup> The central Christological statement from 22 October 451 which serves as the incarnational analogy for inspiration model reads: "one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly (*inconfuse*), unchangeably (*immutabiliter*), indivisibly (*indivise*), inseparably (*inseparabiliter*); the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union." The orthodox doctrine in other words maintains distinction of natures without confusion or conversion and on the other hand without division or separation. For the full text of the creed in Greek, Latin and English see Philip Shaff, *The Creeds of Christendom With a History and Critical Notes*, vol. 2 *The Greek and Latin Creeds With Translations*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 62-65; and for introduction to the creed see Philip Shaff, *The Creeds of Christendom With a History and Critical Notes*, vol. 1 *The History of Creeds*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 29-34. Interestingly some proponents confuse the Chalcedonian analogy by insisting that the incarnational view of Scripture "*blends* the human and divine." Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*, 88, italics mine, or that in Scripture we find "an inseparable *mixture* of divine and human." Leon Mashchak, "God Means What He Says and He Says What He Means," 8, italics mine. Neither of these views fully follows the logic of the Chalcedonian creed as the natures according to the creed do not blend or mix together.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 67. Italics mine. While as mentioned the emphasis for Cottrell falls on distinctiveness of aspects, the formulation of Chalcedon also emphasises "without division or separation" which is rather omitted by proponents who follow the distinctiveness approach to inspiration method.

seriously” as the right method for understanding inspiration.<sup>185</sup> This proposition is however based on the assumption that one can separate the elements and specify what each element contributes. Blazen hence while still maintaining the necessity of balance tends to approach the nature of inspiration through the perspective of separation of elements, that is focusing on mediate aspect in inspiration.

The distinctiveness approach to understanding inspiration is also assumed by both Richard Rice and William Johnsson, who emphasise the twofold character of Scripture and tend to distinguish between the individual contributions of each element. Rice, for example, implies that maintaining a distinction between divine and human in the nature of inspiration is fundamental for hermeneutically distinguishing between what is the essential message or permanent significance on the one hand and human culture or time bound applications on the other.<sup>186</sup> Johnsson also specifies to some degree the individual contribution particularly of the human element which could point to the tendency of seeing the dynamics of inspiration through separating the contribution of elements. Johnsson particularly specifies the influence of the human element on the language, transmission and unity of the biblical material.<sup>187</sup> In all this, Rice and Johnsson if not explicitly stating then at least implicitly assume distinctiveness of the elements and mediate inspiration view.

Significantly, Iris M. Yob when summarizing the contribution of various authors in the pro-ordination book *The Welcome Table* concludes that the humanity in the inspiration of God “is expressed in human words and preserved with the limitations of the grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and semantics of ancient languages and mind-sets.”<sup>188</sup> Yob’s conclusion is almost identical with Johnsson’s argument and thus fits and illustrates very well the analysis of the second tendency within the proponents’ spectrum.

The second explanatory position within the proponents’ spectrum hence approaches the problem of the divine and human components in inspiration in a different way from the first. Instead of focusing on the inseparability of the components and the resulting shying away from specifying the mediate activity of the human side of inspiration, it focuses on their

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<sup>185</sup> Ivan Blazen, “Women, Culture, and Christ: Hearing Scripture Yesterday and Today,” 5. The inductive approach to inspiration is in essence advocated also by Thompson in *Inspiration* and Cottrell in “A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture,” in *The Welcome Table*.

<sup>186</sup> Richard Rice, “Doctrine, Text and Culture: Biblical Authority and Cultural Conditioning,” Commission on the Role of Women Papers, 1988, 3.

<sup>187</sup> William Johnsson, “Nine Foundations for an Adventist Hermeneutic,” 14-15. In particular, Johnsson says that we must “candidly acknowledge the humanity of Scripture, with imperfections of language and concept, mistakes in copying and translation, lack of perfect order and apparent unity.” (Ibid., 15).

<sup>188</sup> Iris M. Yob, “A Table Prepared,” in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: TEAM Press, 1995), 292.



distinctiveness and even suggests that focusing on the human mediate activity in inspiration is a methodological necessity for properly understanding both the nature of inspiration and the hermeneutical process. Instead of rejecting the inductive methodology for approaching inspiration, the second position embraces inductive study of the human element in inspiration.

The last approach to understanding the divine and human nature of inspiration similarly to the first two tendencies proposes a balanced understanding between the divine and human elements by defining the balance *within the boundaries of inerrancy and errancy concepts*. This approach has particularly been followed by Roy Gane and Robert McIver. Especially Gane puts forward the argument of maintaining the balance between the divine and human elements by not undermining or overemphasizing either of the elements. Hence inadequate consideration of the human while considering only the divine leads to “unwarranted assumptions regarding the inerrancy of Scripture.” On the other hand fixating too much on the human and not giving due weight to the divine “undermines confidence in the authority of Scripture.”<sup>189</sup> Gane is thus attempting to avoid both extremes of inerrancy and errancy and by doing this he represents a different approach to the problem of inspiration compared to the first two propositions.

McIver follows similar logic by suggesting the importance of “avoiding one-sided *overemphasis* on the divinity of the Bible” or “*overstressing* either the human or the divine aspect.”<sup>190</sup> Hence both Gane and McIver represent an alternative explanation as to how the divine and the human elements work in inspiration. Their explanation proposes defining the nature of inspiration in terms of avoiding the extremes of inerrancy, on the one hand by overemphasizing the divine element or undermining the human; and errancy, on the other by overemphasizing the human or undermining the divine.<sup>191</sup> The approach represented by Gane or McIver could also be seen as defining inspiration in terms of *what it is not*. In other words, acknowledging the mediated activity of the human element in inspiration means that in its nature inspiration *is not* inerrant; on the other hand acknowledging the divine element in inspiration means that that in its nature inspiration *is not* errant. Thus the third option in the

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<sup>189</sup> Roy Gane, “An Approach to the Historical-Critical Method,” *Ministry*, March 1999, 5. Italics mine.

<sup>190</sup> Robert K. McIver, “The Historical-critical Method: The Adventist Debate,” 16. Italics mine.

<sup>191</sup> Interestingly, Samuele Bacchiocchi from the opponents’ side follows the same approach to the problem of the nature of inspiration. Bacchiocchi’s explanation is in fact the most systematic. As it has been already mentioned, while Bacchiocchi is a strong opponent of women’s ordination, his inspiration concept nevertheless comes very close to this proponents’ understanding. It also has to be said that Bacchiocchi has systematically clarified his inspiration understanding only in 2003, many years after he wrote his major works against the ordination of women. Bacchiocchi says that: “Ultimately both the errancy and inerrancy positions are extreme, heretical views that undermine the authority of the Bible by making it either too-human or too-divine. The solution to these extreme positions is to be found in the key word *balance*—a balance that recognises both the divine and human character of the Bible.” See Samuele Bacchiocchi, “Biblical Errancy and Inerrancy – Part 2,” *Endtime Issues*, No 102, 19 August, 2003, 23.

proponents' spectrum approaches the nature of inspiration from the perspective of avoiding the extremes of inerrancy and errancy.

In summary, all three explanations first of all place importance on maintaining the fundamental balance between the divine and human elements in inspiration. This could well be the most important discovery of the proponents' side concerning the nature of inspiration. Proponents however remain divided in how far one should attempt to pursue the explanation of particularly the mediate activity of the human element. While some proponents argue from the perspective of unity and *inseparability* of elements for not making the human the centre of methodological investigation, other proponents argue from the perspective of *distinctiveness* of elements in favour of making the human the centre of inductive methodological investigation, while still others argue from an alternative perspective of avoiding the extremes of *inerrancy and errancy*.

Comparing thus the proponents' understanding with the opponents' concept of inspiration, one could conclude that the most important overall difference between proponents and opponents appears to lie in that proponents do not use the language of full inspiration, and do not define inspiration as an immediate divine activity. Instead, a visible tendency among proponents exists to define and perceive inspiration as a mediate activity. The only difference among various approaches of proponents is how far this logic of mediate activity is pushed. But the difference from opponents' immediate and full inspiration rationale is tangible.<sup>192</sup>

### Inspiration and Reliability

The question of the reliability of the inspired writings has been a major point of argument in the publications of opponents. Opponents firmly advocate the view which takes reliability of the Bible to a point of claiming full inerrancy for the original autographs. Opponents thus reject limited inerrancy position and claim full trustworthiness for the inspired message in matters pertaining not just to salvation but also in matters pertaining to history, numbers or science.

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<sup>192</sup> This is not to say that proponents do not discuss the significance of the divine element in their treatment of inspiration. The divine element in the proponents' view worked primarily on the thinking, memory and attention of those under inspiration. Thus guiding their thought processes and through this influence effectively safeguarding the trustworthiness and divine character of the message. The difference from the opponents' treatment of the divine is particularly in that opponents tend to explain the workings of the divine in terms of *full* reliability leading to inerrant suggestions while proponents never explain the divine in inerrancy terms. For the proponents' treatment of the divine element see for example Roger W. Coon, "Inspiration/Revelation: What It Is and How It Works, Part 1: The Prophetic Gift In Operation," 17-32 (27); Raoul Dederen, "Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics" in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 1-15 (8); Raoul Dederen, "The Revelation-Inspiration Phenomenon According to the Bible Writers," in *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration: Adventist Theological Society Occasional Papers*, vol. 1, ed. Frank Holbrook and Leo Van Dolson (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992), 9-29 (17); Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 62-63.

From the outset it has to be said that the position of proponents has a definitive tendency to emphasise a respectful approach to inspired message of prophets on the one hand, yet not argue for the necessity of full inerrancy on the other. Particularly there are two versions of this tendency among proponents. The first position regarding biblical reliability holds that the inspired message is trustworthy beyond the salvific purpose also in matters of history without using the language of inerrancy and without specifying the historical details. The second position of proponents holds that the inspired message is trustworthy in its salvific purpose only, beyond which it could contain factual mistakes, discrepancies or human limitations in matters of science or historical details.

This dual perspective which is present among the proponents has been nicely documented by Alberto Timm. Timm's "A History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical and Prophetic Inspiration (1844-2000)" which provides a wealth of information about the spectrum of views existent within Adventism generally.<sup>193</sup> More specifically, Timm is exposing the problem of "trustworthiness-limited-to-salvation" and trustworthiness beyond salvific matters also elsewhere thus providing further evidence for the existing spectrum. Timm's own conclusion concerning the matter of full or limited trustworthiness is that the wholistic nature of Scripture "makes it almost impossible for someone to speak of the Bible in dichotomous terms as being reliable in some topics and not in others."<sup>194</sup> While Timm is hence arguing for trustworthiness not limited to salvific matters, he nevertheless rejects the concept of Calvinistic inerrancy.<sup>195</sup> Indeed Timm recognises that while many alleged gaps and discrepancies in Scripture can be well synchronised, yet "we have to realise that we cannot solve all the difficulties of the Scriptures."<sup>196</sup> Thus Timm's comprehensive overview and his own treatment of the subject of reliability nicely illustrate the first position of proponents within the spectrum. Scripture for some proponents is not limited to salvation purpose only, it is in fact accurate in other matters too, yet the Scripture is not inerrant in the Calvinistic sense of inerrancy.

The approach illustrated by Timm is also pursued by Jo Ann and Richard Davidson from among the proponents. Particularly Jo Ann Davidson is placing emphasis on truthfulness of Scripture in historical details by arguing that Jesus and the New Testament writers accepted

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<sup>193</sup> Alberto Timm: "A History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on Biblical and Prophetic Inspiration (1844-2000)," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 10/1-2, (1999): 486-542. See also Alberto Timm, "Verbal Inspiration Versus Mental Inspiration: A Historical Review of Adventist trends from 1919 to 1997," unpublished paper, Ellen White Estate 1997 and Alberto Timm, "History of Inspiration in the Seventh-day Adventist Church (1844-1994)," unpublished paper, 1994.

<sup>194</sup> Alberto Timm, "Understanding Inspiration: The Symphonic and Wholistic Nature of Scripture," *Ministry*, August 1999, 14. See also pages 13-15.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>196</sup> Alberto Timm, "How Reliable is the Bible?" *College and University Dialogue*, 13/3 (2001): 13.

the truthfulness of Scripture in its historicity.<sup>197</sup> For her thus “the argument suggesting that [canonical] literary writing precludes historical accuracy is false.”<sup>198</sup> While Richard Davidson also affirms his belief in the historical reliability of the Bible, his approach is more cautious as he suggests that “faith in the historical reliability of the Scripture and confidence in these points” may be needed in the face of “the apparent discrepancies between the Biblical record and the findings of secular history.”<sup>199</sup> Furthermore he is suggesting that “it may be sometimes necessary to suspend judgement on some seeming discrepancies until more information is available.”<sup>200</sup> Despite his more cautious treatment concerning historical reliability, Richard Davidson is convinced that the words of Scripture trustworthily and accurately represent the divine message.<sup>201</sup> Finally, it has to added, that neither of the two mentioned affirmations of historical reliability of Scripture argue for full inerrancy in historical matters. Neither Jo Ann nor Richard Davidson is implying belief in inerrancy in any way.<sup>202</sup>

The first version of proponents’ approach to inerrancy could be well summarised by Ekkehardt Mueller who takes the example of Jesus who “accepted the historical reliability of Scripture, including all the important events in Israel’s history” as normative. Furthermore, Mueller stresses that “although He [Jesus] must have known so-called discrepancies in Scripture He never focused on them, not even mentioning them.”<sup>203</sup> Mueller nicely illustrates the first approach to reliability among proponents in that he is not giving specific examples of what historical reliability means, he only talks about the “important events,” yet he

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<sup>197</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, “God’s Word: Its Origin and Authority,” 8. Also Jo Ann Davidson, “Word Made Flesh: The Inspiration of Scripture,” 28.

<sup>198</sup> Jo Ann Davidson, “Word Made Flesh: The Inspiration of Scripture,” 29. She repeats the argument on page 30 too.

<sup>199</sup> Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 72.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 73. Davidson is ready to acknowledge historical discrepancies between the Scriptural records and findings of secular history. Beyond that, Davidson is reluctant to talk about any other “internal” Scriptural discrepancies apart from “minor transcriptional errors in Scripture” (*Ibid.* 73).

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>202</sup> It is also true that Sakae Kubo is implying that Richard Davidson’s position comes indeed close to an inerrancy logic when he says: “Davidson is more specific than Gulley when he says, ‘Ellen White is not talking about the fallibility of Scripture, any more than she is implying sinfulness in the “imperfect” humanity of Jesus.’ ([Richard M. Davidson, “Revelation/Inspiration in the Old Testament: A Critique of Alden Thompson’s ‘Incarnational’ Model,” in *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration: Adventist Theological Society Occasional Papers*, vol 1, ed. Frank Holbrook and Leo Van Dolson (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992), 105-135], p. 112). The Bible must be inerrant because Christ was sinless in his humanity.” See Sakae Kubo, “A History of Adventist Interpretation of Revelation and Inspiration,” footnote 51. While Kubo is implying that Davidson’s logic of making analogous the perfection of Jesus’ sinless humanity with the humanity of Scripture through the incarnational model must make the Bible inerrant, Davidson’s emphasis in fact can easily be understood to fall on “not talking about”, that is on not focusing on issues of imperfections in Scripture. It appears that Davidson is more concerned with not making imperfections the centre of investigation and attention in the church rather than, as Kubo implies, concerned with inerrancy.

<sup>203</sup> Ekkehardt Mueller, “Authority of Scripture: Approaching Revelation and Inspiration,” *Ministry*, April 2000, 24 and 25.

nevertheless affirms the belief in historical reliability of Scripture beyond salvific purpose without inerrancy tendencies.<sup>204</sup>

The second version of the proponents' approach to reliability limits the scope of reliability to the salvific purpose only, beyond which the inspired document could contain mistakes, discrepancies or limitations in matters of science and history. While the first view of biblical reliability is showing differences from opponents absolute inerrancy view, the second option of proponents is much more divorced from the opponents' theory. From among the proponents who advocate this position is for example Fritz Guy, Sakae Kubo, Roger Coon, Alden Thompson, Iris Yob or Robert Johnston.

Fritz Guy from the perspective of a systematic theologian discusses the concepts of scriptural infallibility and inerrancy as having meaning only "as pointers to the sufficiency of scripture as a source of 'wisdom for salvation'." For Guy these concepts only muddle the discussion if used in other contexts. Alluding to F. F. Bruce, Guy suggests that even "talking about the 'factual reliability' of the biblical documents is problematic" and that "they tend to be mischievous when they are used to characterise scripture."<sup>205</sup> It is clear that Guy is reluctant to discuss factual reliability of Scripture beyond salvation matters. On the other hand Guy has no problem acknowledging the sufficiency of Scripture and its credibility in matters of "spiritual usefulness."<sup>206</sup>

Sakae Kubo is another example of proponents who argue in favour of limited reliability. Kubo is arguing from the history of Adventist debate of inspiration for the position which advocates reliability in matters of "faith and practice only". Kubo's main argument is that historically the majority of leadership has held limited concept of scriptural reliability.<sup>207</sup> Kubo further distinguishes between "the conservatives [who] believe in the infallibility of the Bible in matters relating to faith and practice but do not require inerrancy regarding matters that are peripheral and incidental to the message of the passage" and the ultraconservatives who "want to maintain a 'high' view of Scripture so that infallibility extends to everything including theology, history, science, chronology, numbers, cosmology, and astronomy."<sup>208</sup> Kubo argues that full inerrancy or reliability is an inference of the mind and is based on the

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<sup>204</sup> The fact that Mueller is mentioning Jesus' silence regarding "so-called discrepancies" also illustrates well the non-inerrancy tendency.

<sup>205</sup> Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically: Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1999), 146-147. Guy alludes to F. F. Bruce's *The New Testament, Documents: Are They Reliable?* (London: InterVarsity, 1960), 5, where Bruce is raising the question of "reliable as what?"

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 147. Guy writes: "It is the overall reasonableness and the spiritual usefulness of scripture that give it credibility."

<sup>207</sup> Sakae Kubo, "A History of Adventist Interpretation of Revelation and Inspiration," online edition, 1, 3 and 7.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

verbal concept of inspiration which has been historically rejected by the majority of Adventist leaders.<sup>209</sup>

The connection between full inerrancy and verbal inspiration has also been argued by Cottrell for whom the fundamentalist method is based on these a-priory presuppositions.<sup>210</sup> Cottrell himself rejects the fundamentalist presuppositions including the full inerrancy view and verbal inspiration concept.

Roger Coon has also proposed that when it comes to the "infallibility" and "inerrancy" issue "most of the discussion revolves around semantical considerations, and is rather closely associated with the verbal view of inspiration."<sup>211</sup> Coon in his analysis of how inspiration works is willing to acknowledge not only "minor inconsequential errors" which are not vital for the overall salvific purpose, but also "major mistakes" which needed immediate correction in the form of the Holy Spirit's intervention.<sup>212</sup> Coon's overall conclusion is that Bible writers were not infallible and hence the human language remains imperfect as the medium of communication.<sup>213</sup> Coon's position thus fits well within the second approach in the spectrum of proponents regarding biblical reliability.

Beyond Roger Coon, the view that Scripture is reliable only in matters pertaining to salvation has been further elaborated by Alden Thompson. Thompson is arguing that how one views trustworthiness of Scripture is dependent on how one sees the nature of Scripture. Thus "if Scripture is viewed as a philosophical treatise, a scientific document *or* a transcript" then one could expect precision in every area Scripture touches. "But if Scripture is more like a family letter or a letter from a dear friend..., then absolute perfection is not required."<sup>214</sup> Thompson is advocating the second view. He believes that when it comes to biblical reliability "it would help if we could see numbers, genealogies, and dates as interesting (even fascinating) rather than crucial-and leave at that."<sup>215</sup> For him the "all-or-nothing" position

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 10, 13 (endnote 7), 7, 16 (endnote 24) and 18 (endnote 36).

<sup>210</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, "A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture," in *The Welcome Table*, 80 and 82.

<sup>211</sup> Roger W. Coon, "Inspiration/Revelation: What It Is and How It Works, Part 2: Infallibility: Does the True prophet Ever Err?" *The Journal of Adventist Education*, 44/2 (December 1981-January 1982): 18. Coon's concept of reliability is thus allowing mistakes in the inspired writings. Nevertheless Coon maintains that we can have confidence in the overall purpose of the inspired writing because "if in his humanity a prophet of God errs, and the nature of that error is sufficiently serious to materially affect (a) the direction of God's church, (b) the eternal destiny of one person, or (c) the purity of a doctrine, then (and only then) the Holy Spirit immediately moves the prophet to correct the error, so that no permanent damage is done" (Ibid., 19).

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 24-29.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 29. For Coon only the Holy Spirit who inspired bible writers is infallible. The bible writers are not infallible.

<sup>214</sup> Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*, 219.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 214. At the beginning of the paragraph Thompson writes: "We should not require a higher level of precision for biblical numbers, genealogies, and dates than it is evident in Scripture itself." Elsewhere he repeats the argument by saying that "The evidence in Scripture suggests that we

regarding biblical reliability is not a biblical one.<sup>216</sup> One should indeed allow for flexibility in Scripture and even for a possibility that “well known and universally acknowledged” facts may be wrong. In Thompson’s view “an incarnational model allows for human imperfections in the lesser matters, arguing, for example, that the *fact* of Exodus is clear, but that the *number* which went out certainly is not.”<sup>217</sup> While Thompson’s position has been fiercely criticised from within Adventism, even by other proponents,<sup>218</sup> nonetheless in its essence it expresses one of the approaches of proponents to biblical reliability, namely a view which does not require biblical writers to be infallible in matters of science or historical details which in fact pushed the idea of a mediated view of inspiration to its logical conclusion.

A trustworthiness-limited-to-salvation view has also been expressed by Robert Johnston and Iris Yob from the proponents’ side. Yob in her summary chapter to the pro-ordination book *The Welcome Table* concludes that while proponents generally accept certain limitations of grammar, syntax, vocabulary and semantics, they also “reveal their confidence in the integrity of its message by approaching it as the inspiration of God.”<sup>219</sup> Similarly Johnston suggested that “Scriptures are reliable and trustworthy but not inerrant” because the details of the message “which are not an essential part of it, may have their origin in the culture or personality of the human messenger.”<sup>220</sup> Both Yob and Johnston express a confidence in the overall message of Scripture, yet still acknowledge the existence of difficulties and limitations in attendant details which stem from the reality of mediated inspiration.<sup>221</sup>

In summary, the analysis of the proponents’ perception of reliability has two sides to it. The one version of the argument maintains the trustworthiness of inspired writings in salvific, historical and scientific details, without arguing for inerrancy or without specifying what the details actually are. This is a more moderate view of a mediated activity of inspiration. This view tries to keep together the essence of the message and the accompanying

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should be cautious about placing too much weight on numbers and genealogies and on the dates linked with them” (Ibid., 217).

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 300 and 302. Italics original. See also Alden Thompson, “En Route to a ‘Plain Reading’ of Scripture: A Response to Samuel Koranteng-Pipim’s, *Receiving the Word*,” *Spectrum*, 26/4 (January 1998): 50-52.

<sup>218</sup> Frank Holbrook and Leo Van Dolson, ed., *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration: Adventist Theological Society Occasional Papers*, vol. 1, (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992). Proponents who criticised Thompson’s approach were Raoul Dederen and Richard Davidson.

<sup>219</sup> Iris M. Yob, “A Table Prepared,” in *The Welcome Table*, 292.

<sup>220</sup> Robert M. Johnston, “The Case for Balanced Hermeneutic,” *Ministry*, March 1999, 11.

<sup>221</sup> A similar view regarding inerrancy has been expressed by McIver, who however has not elaborated his position sufficiently. McIver says that “faith in the Bible that is based on its inerrancy is very fragile. It can be destroyed by only *one* discrepancy that cannot be explained to the satisfaction of the individual believer.” See Robert K. McIver, “The Historical-critical Method: The Adventist Debate,” 16.

historical details and claims that the message is trustworthy as a whole. The second version of the proponents' argument regarding reliability suggests a more radical interpretation of mediated activity. While the message in its salvific essence is trustworthy and reliable the accompanying historical or scientific details may not be fully reliable, but may reflect the humanity of the writer. In both these versions of reliability the united feature of the proponents' concepts of reliability is their overall tendency to move away from an absolute inerrancy view to more moderate positions however. In this sense they show a distinguishingly different approach to Scriptural reliability than opponents.

An additional observation may be made here about what both the opponents' and the proponents' immediate and mediate view of inspiration suggests about how much or how far the language in Scripture is accommodated. The question of language and its functioning is generally one of the key meta-hermeneutical issues. At this stage it may be important to notice how the different views of inspiration between opponents and proponents have also bearing on how they eventually perceive the functioning of language. If the nature of Scripture is the result of immediate activity of the divine Spirit then language will tend to be regarded as a very capable carrier of objective meaning which will remain divorced from any distortions. On the other hand, if the nature of Scripture is the result of mediated activity of the human element, then religious language will be seen as a culturally accommodated carrier of divine meaning. Thus, at the heart of inspiration and hermeneutical differences between the two camps may well lay deeper metacritical matters which may be shaping how the actual reading of Scripture is carried through - either literally or principally.

### **Inspiration and Cultural Adaptation**

There is a plethora of evidence in the writings of proponents - as it has been demonstrated already in the first part of Chapter Three - that the issue of cultural adaptation is one of the central issues for proponents in the ordination debate.<sup>222</sup> The fundamental issue from the point of view of proponents is to rightly discern which aspects in Scripture are temporal or cultural and which permanent or universal. It could even be argued that the central argument of proponents against opponents is that opponents fail to see the difference between

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<sup>222</sup> In addition to what is already in chapter three, for example Blazen argues: "Especially pertinent to current discussion concerning the ordination of women is the place and significance of the culture of biblical times for proper interpretation of biblical texts." See Ivan Blazen, "Women, Culture, and Christ: Hearing Scripture Yesterday and Today," 6. Similarly argues Richard Rice: "How then should Adventists resolve the issue of women's ordination to the Gospel ministry? This depends on their answer to questions like these: Does the fact that the biblical prototypes for Christian ministers were male rather than female represent a concession to the patriarchy characteristic of traditional cultures, or does it express a principle of permanent validity for the Christian community? Do these biblical passages that counsel against women as leaders of worship and religious instructors express a binding obligation on subsequent generations of Christians, or were they intended to prevent the early Christian community from creating a negative impression within the ancient Mediterranean world?" See Richard Rice, "Doctrine, Text and Culture: Biblical Authority and Cultural Conditioning," 21.



the universal and temporal-cultural aspects in Scripture when they argue against ordination of women.<sup>223</sup> Because the question of cultural adaptation is so central to the proponents' overall rationale, it needs to be explored in the basic framework of inspiration first in order to better understand the hermeneutical stance of proponents. This section therefore aims at analysing the understanding of the proponents' concept of interaction between culture and inspiration.

According to Arthur Ferch, "Seventh-day Adventists subscribe to the basic assumption that in Scripture we deal with supernaturally superintended materials given in a culturally conditioned context." There are thus "culturally conditioned pronouncements in Scripture which are relative to the "historical past".<sup>224</sup> Similar belief in cultural conditioning is affirmed by Raymond Cottrell who convincingly claims "the Bible cites many examples of historical and cultural conditioning."<sup>225</sup> Mentioning specifically the "headship" argument" (1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 2) of opponents, Cottrell is convinced it was the "cultural circumstances" which "conditioned" not only the author's personal practice, but also his inspired directive. Therefore the counsel is limited to a particular situation.<sup>226</sup>

While opponents may see this rationale as limiting the scope of divine inspiration, proponents view cultural conditioning as being in the service of divine revelation rather than being against it. Revelation, for Ivan Blazen, is heard within the matrix of culture, which is visible in the use of language, forms of communications and even argumentation of inspired authors who were influenced by a particular culture. Cultural considerations however do not "negate the plain significance of passages of Scripture." What is important for the

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<sup>223</sup> Richard Rice, "Doctrine, Text and Culture: Biblical Authority and Cultural Conditioning," 18. Rice writes: "In the thinking of those who favor women's ordination, its opponents fail to see that the biblical passages they cite to support their view reflect the cultural outlook of ancient times and do not express a permanent rule for Christian ministry."

<sup>224</sup> Arthur J. Ferch, "Three Pauline Passages on the Role of Women in the Life of the Church," Commission on the Role of Women Papers, March 19, 1985, 1 and 2.

<sup>225</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, "A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture," in *The Welcome Table*, 67.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-87. Cottrell here explores the "headship" argument in the context of cultural conditioning as he calls it several times. He for example writes: "Paul's directive here [in 1 Corinthians 10] was obviously culturally conditioned and applied only under certain circumstances" (*Ibid.*, 85). Similarly, he concludes at the end of his chapter by saying: "Beyond any question, Paul's personal conduct and his counsel, as a representative of Jesus Christ were both culturally conditioned to the circumstances in which he found himself and to which he addressed his teaching" (*Ibid.*, 87). See also Sakae Kubo who uses the argument of cultural conditioning with regard to 1 Timothy 2: "There are elements in Scripture directed at specific cultural situations;" Sakae Kubo, "An Exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 and its Implications," in *The Role of Women in the Church*, (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 101. The cultural argument has also been raised in his exegetical interpretation of 1 Timothy 2 by George E. Rice who suggests that "the cultural context of the first century Ephesus impacts upon what Paul said." See George E. Rice, "1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Case of Domestic Policy," 1.

contemporary interpreter therefore is to “properly discriminate” between “*culture* and *Christ*, the *human vessel* and the *divine treasure*.”<sup>227</sup>

The concept of cultural conditioning has been further explored more systematically by Richard Rice. Rice in line with other proponents affirms that a good deal of biblical material reflects various cultures. Rice however goes beyond general affirmation by specifying in what ways cultures affected the production of biblical documents. It is Rice’s view that contemporary cultures provided the inspired authors with “language and literary forms”, “illustrative material,” furthermore with a “conceptual framework, or cosmology” and occasionally even with “the content, not merely the background of theological ideas.”<sup>228</sup> While Rice is able to specify in what ways culture impacted the production of inspired documents he is still left with the task of distinguishing which aspects of the Bible fall into the cultural and which into the universal category. Here Rice openly admits that “the relations between biblical message and cultural context are highly complex” and therefore it is “notoriously difficult” to make this distinction.<sup>229</sup>

Another aspect that has been mentioned by proponents in connection with cultural accommodation is that culturally conditioned elements in the Bible may in fact contain incorrect information, errors or misunderstandings, arising from the cultural understanding of the inspired writer. This particular point has been highlighted for example by Alden Thompson, Robert Johnston and George W. Reid. The last mentioned for instance maintains that in the revelation process God did not correct every misunderstanding of inspired writers which they had adopted from their cultures. “Even inspired writers,” Reid argues, “while they received truth from God, were not, in the process of inspiration, purged of all incidental

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<sup>227</sup> Ivan Blazen, “Women, Culture, and Christ: Hearing Scripture Yesterday and Today,” 6. Italics original.

<sup>228</sup> Richard Rice, “Doctrine, Text and Culture: Biblical Authority and Cultural Conditioning,” 17. See also 4 and 6. With regard to cosmological views of Bible writers, Rice suggests that they “held archaic views of natural operations. They saw connections between things that seem quite unrelated to us” (Ibid., 6). Rice defines cosmology as “the concepts which form(ed their) fundamental perspective on reality” (Ibid., 6).

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 9 and 4. See also page 7 where he admits that in some cases it may be “much more difficult to differentiate between the theological content of a passage and cultural elements that lie behind its composition.” Significantly enough, this admission may be one of the most important points concerning the cultural conditioning concept for which proponents argue. The fact that Rice’s 22-page document on the one hand ably analyzes the influences of various cultures on the composition of biblical documents and on the other the impact of culture on present-day reader does still not solve the hermeneutical problem of making the distinction between the cultural and theological aspects. In fact, the paper does not provide an objective hermeneutical solution to this problem. While Rice identifies the problem, he nevertheless does not provide a solution to it. And since for proponents the major point of difference in the ordination debate is deciding which aspects of the message are temporal and which universal, failing to provide a satisfactory hermeneutical solution only means that the differences between opponents and proponents are bound to remain unresolved. For the simple fact in the debate is that what proponents identify as temporary, cultural or limited in application, opponents identify as permanent, universal or prescriptive for today. This problem will be analysed in the last chapter.

misbeliefs.”<sup>230</sup> Johnston has argued similarly, suggesting that God does “accommodate His message to popular opinions, even opinions that are in error.”<sup>231</sup> In line with both Reid and Johnston is Alden Thompson who also suggested that culturally conditioned elements in the Bible might be wrong because God accommodated His message to the level of the humanity of its writers.<sup>232</sup> The mediate activity of the human inspired agent is what is theoretically driving such considerations.

Finally, one must also note that not all proponents employ the terminology of cultural “conditioning,” “accommodation” or “limitation” and hence they do not raise the argument of cultural conditioning in their approach to the ordination debate. Some proponents even abstain from referring to cultural conditioning while some prefer to use different terminology.<sup>233</sup> But overall, the tendency in the writings of proponents is towards the acknowledging of cultural accommodation and hence this concept becomes the fundamental point of divide in the wider ordination debate.

In summary, from the above analysis of the concept of cultural conditioning, it could be concluded that the proponents’ understanding of cultural influences in the revelation and inspiration process contains the following aspects: a) in the minds of the majority of proponents there is no doubt that the inspired biblical documents contain culturally accommodated elements; b) cultural accommodation or conditioning is part of the inspiration and revelation process and is not against it; c) culturally conditioned aspects in the Bible are not universally applicable, instead they have temporal and local application; d) culturally conditioned elements in Scripture may in fact contain incorrect information, errors or misunderstandings arising from the culture of the inspired writer; and e) overall, even though it may not be easy, but it is nonetheless hermeneutically important to discriminate between the cultural and universal aspects in the inspired message in order to avoid misapplication of the biblical message.

### **The Nature of Revelation**

It has been recognised by proponents that views on biblical inspiration and revelation can significantly influence the interpretation process<sup>234</sup> and so it becomes vital to understand the proponents’ basic position on revelation as it undergirds their perception of Scripture and

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<sup>230</sup> George W. Reid, “Smitten by the Moon?” *Adventist Review*, April 28, 1983, 7.

<sup>231</sup> Robert M. Johnston, “The Case for Balanced Hermeneutic,” 12.

<sup>232</sup> Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*, 300.

<sup>233</sup> For example Raoul Dederen prefers to use the language of cultural “distance” and “gap” of the text from our culture. Nonetheless, for Dederen it is the task of hermeneutics to bridge this gap. See Raoul Dederen, “Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics” in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 1-2.

<sup>234</sup> Raoul Dederen, “The Revelation-Inspiration Phenomenon According to the Bible Writers,” in *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration*, 9-29. Also Raoul Dederen, “Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics” in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 1-9.

ultimately their approach to it. The analysis in this part will be organised within several sections. Each of these sections will treat the subject matter from a particular point of view thus helping to formalise the various approaches proponents employ in defining the nature and function of revelation.

The most widely held view among the proponents concerning the nature of revelation is that in its very nature revelation has propositional character. While proponents acknowledge that on its fundamental level revelation is God's self-disclosure through which He meets people, yet it is more than just encounter. God's self-disclosure comes in a propositional form and its purpose is impartation of knowledge and communication of actual information. This information according to proponents comes in the form of universal, timeless, eternal or permanent truths, principles or prescriptions that are being communicated to the human agent.<sup>235</sup> Proponents thus have a discernable objectivist and foundationalist understanding. It is not uncommon to find proponents to speak of "truth" being revealed in revelation or as Dederen suggested the function of revelation is to pass on doctrinal information.<sup>236</sup> Roger Coon sees revelation in a similar way also. His understanding of revelation has similarly strong doctrinal undertones.<sup>237</sup> Norskov Olsen has also confirmed the doctrinal character and

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<sup>235</sup> Proponents' propositional view of revelation is attested in the following works: Ivan Blazen, "Women, Culture, and Christ: Hearing Scripture Yesterday and Today," 6. Blazen for example argues that in revelation "permanent truth" is revealed and that it "presents principles relevant for all times" (Ibid.). Roger L. Dudley, "Ordination of Women: A Question of Status or Function?" 19-21, 28-29. According to Dudley the Bible contains "timeless truth" and "divine principles" which the church must distinguish from cultural norms (Ibid., 21). Richard Rice argues for a necessity of discovering in revelation "permanent significance" as opposed to elements which are applied. See Richard Rice, "Doctrine, Text and Culture: Biblical Authority and Cultural Conditioning," 1-22 (3). George W. Reid, "Smitten by the Moon?" 7. According to Reid, inspired writers "received truth from God". James J. C. Cox, "Some Notes on 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 for the Commission on the Ordination of Women in the Pastoral Ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," 1-20, (3). Cox's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14 is based on distinguishing between principles and applications. This logic thus works with "general and timeless prescriptions" pointing to a strong propositional concept of revelation behind. Richard Davidson has also made clear that "God has revealed Himself and His will in specific statements of truth" see Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 59. Even Thompson, while having more pragmatic view of revelation (see below), regards his casebook approach based on "eternal principles". See Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*, 111. Jo Ann Davidson has also acknowledged that revelation is more than encounter, it also contains "actual information". See Jo Ann Davidson: "God's Word: Its Origin and Authority," 5-9, (6); and Jo Ann Davidson, "Word Made Flesh: The Inspiration of Scripture," 21-33, (25). Probably the author who argued with the most clarity for propositional revelation is Dederen. See his Raoul Dederen, "Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics" in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 1-9; and Raoul Dederen, "The Revelation-Inspiration Phenomenon According to the Bible Writers," in *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration*, 9-29, (11, 15).

<sup>236</sup> Raoul Dederen, "Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics" in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 4.

<sup>237</sup> Roger W. Coon, "Inspiration/Revelation: What It Is and How It Works, Part 3: The Relationship Between the Ellen White Writings and the Bible." *The Journal of Adventist Education*, 44/3 (February-March 1982): 23-24. Coon applies the telescope analogy to explain the nature of Ellen White's function regarding the Scripture. He interestingly indicates that in her writings we have "no new topic, no new revelation, no new doctrine," yet "we do have a great deal of new information". While Coon questions the nature of White's revelation as revealing new doctrines, he retains his

even dogmatic sufficiency of the apostolic revelation. When reviewing the position of Reformers on *Sola Scriptura* he maintains with the Reformers that "no new revelation is necessary" because "the work of the apostles was adequate." The intrinsic validity of Scripture "with all inherent truth" is thus recognised by the witness of the Holy Spirit.<sup>238</sup>

The first understanding of proponents regarding the character of revelation thus works with a strong propositional concept in which revelation is God's self-disclosure packaged in the form of communication of objective and actual propositional truths or universal principles which readers recognise as doctrinal truths.

The logical implication of this conclusion is also that proponents reject the concept of encounter revelation which they see as inadequate and even threatening for the classical perception.<sup>239</sup>

A variation of this generally held view concerning revelation is however represented by some female proponents. Some female proponents have also employed the conception of metaphorical revelation to explain the nature of revelation. This view is coming particularly from female proponents and their pro-ordination book *Women and the Church: The Feminine Perspective*. The metaphorical view of revelation is based on two basic assumptions. First, Iris Yob is approaching it from the assumption of dichotomy between the finite and infinite suggesting that since "God is different from everything else we know" and since "God is Wholly Other" "even terms and categories stretched to encompass the Divine appear inadequate." For this reason "responsible and meaningful talk of God is largely, if not completely, metaphorical."<sup>240</sup>

The second assumption undergirding the metaphorical view has to do with inadequacy of literal language to represent God. Yob argues that "since literal language cannot represent

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propositional view with regard to White's revelation experience. On the other hand however from his explanation it is clear that he reserves a strong *doctrinal* connotation for canonical revelation.

<sup>238</sup> Norskov V. Olsen, "Hermeneutical Principles and Biblical Authority in Reformation and Postreformation Eras," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 54.

<sup>239</sup> See for example Raoul Dederen, "Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics" in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 1-9; Raoul Dederen, "The Revelation-Inspiration Phenomenon According to the Bible Writers," in *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration*, 9-29; At the end of his analysis Dederen concludes that "revelation was a disclosure of a Person, and the communication of data about God and man. Something was made *known*, something was said" (Ibid., 27). Jo Ann Davidson, "God's Word: Its Origin and Authority," 5-9, (6) and Jo Ann Davidson, "Word Made Flesh: The Inspiration of Scripture," 21-33. According to Davidson, "God does not just encounter human beings with glorious feelings, but with actual information" (Ibid., 25).

<sup>240</sup> Iris M. Yob, "Coming to Know God Through Women's Experience," in *Women and the Church: The Feminine Perspective*, ed. Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1995), 4.

God accurately or adequately, non-literal language may very well be our only means of cognitive and affective access" to God.<sup>241</sup>

Interestingly, Yob further suggests that metaphors must be evaluated for their "rightness to fit within our present understandings and [their] relevance to our experience."<sup>242</sup> Since the metaphors of those who wrote the Bible draw from their male experience with God "our collective metaphors have been predominantly masculine."<sup>243</sup>

The metaphorical view of revelation is thus a significant concept, especially for female proponents, which in effect hermeneutically justifies the need for gender revisions of the masculine images and illustrations of God in the light of the present experience of all believers including that of women.<sup>244</sup>

### **Summary of the Proponents' Inspiration and Revelation Concept**

The first section has attempted to systematically analyse the proponents' inspiration concept. This summary will therefore bring together the main findings.

The treatment in this part has first highlighted that there is a general concord among proponents regarding how they define revelation and inspiration concepts. Revelation contains strong theological-soteriological connotations as well as distinctive propositional connotations for them, while inspiration is primarily seen as a process through which revelation comes.

Looking further into how inspiration works the investigation has focused on the *modus operandi* of inspiration. Investigating the subject, the analysis has demonstrated that there exist two approaches in the proponents' camp to this subject. The first tendency rejects "verbal-mechanical-dictation" concepts both in the use of terminology and in the analysis, emphasizing more the *personal-dynamic* aspect in the inspiration process. The second

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 5. Yob further explains that "unlike literal language, metaphorical talk carries the implication that the knowledge it yields is suggestive and approximate, and therefore not necessarily infallible, exhaustive, or unrevisable. It is, however, sufficient for a faith seeking understanding."

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. She concludes by saying: "It [metaphor] gives God a form familiar to us so that we may know how to relate to him."

<sup>243</sup> Ibid. Yob therefore suggests that exclusively male metaphors of the Bible writers create an inadequate approach to God and a more inclusive theology based on the experiences of both women and men will create a richer picture of God.

<sup>244</sup> In this context, Estelle Jorgensen in the same volume as Iris Yob has suggested that the early church developed a radically egalitarian vision for males and females which is visible from the writings of Philo and the Gospel of Peter (page 39). However Paul, coming later, has taken the church back to male Jewish rabbinical traditions undermining the earlier vision of equality. Jorgensen sees it as a "theological retreat". It is interesting to notice that this kind of logic assuming the revelation can retreat makes sense within the metaphorical analogy which is flexible enough in suggesting that gender issues shaped the revelation one-sidedly. Hence theological retreats in this sense are possible because the contributors were males. In Jorgensen's example it was a male Jewish rabbi. See Estelle R. Jorgensen, "Women, Music, and the Church: A Historical Approach," in *Women and the Church: The Feminine Perspective*, ed. Lourdes E. Morales-Gudmundsson (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1995), 39-40.

tendency while rejecting the terminology of “verbal-mechanical-dictation” still keeps emphasizing more the *word-mechanical* aspect of the inspiration process.

Moreover, the analysis of the proponent’s inspiration concept had uncovered further diversification especially when it comes to how proponents understand the nature of inspiration. Proponents remain divided in how far one should attempt to pursue the explanation of particularly the human element. While some proponents argue from the perspective of unity and *inseparability* of natures for not making the human the centre of methodological investigation, other proponents argue from the perspective of *distinctiveness* of natures in favour of making the human the centre of inductive methodological investigation, while still others argue from an alternative perspective of avoiding the extremes of *inerrancy and errancy* when it comes to discussing the nature of inspiration of Scripture. However, the investigation has also discovered that all three explanations are united in emphasizing the fundamental balance between the divine and human elements in inspiration and acknowledges the reality of mediated activity of the human element. The section hence argues that this emphasis on maintaining the critical balance between the two natures of Scripture is the chief concern for proponents in their discussions of the nature of inspiration.

Analysing further the proponents’ view of inspiration, the section has examined the proponent’s understanding of reliability matters in connection with inspiration dynamics. The investigation discovered that the proponents’ perception of reliability has two sides to it. The one form of the argument maintains trustworthiness of inspired writings in salvific, historical and scientific details, without arguing for inerrancy and without specifying which details are accurate. This view tries to keep together the essence of the message and the accompanying historical details and claims that the message is trustworthy as a whole. This view presents a moderate approach to mediated activity. The second form of the proponents’ argument regarding reliability suggests a more radical explanation of human mediation. While the message in its salvific essence is trustworthy and reliable the accompanying historical or scientific details may not be fully reliable. These details may be limited by the humanity of the writer. In both these approaches to reliability the united feature of the proponents’ view of reliability is their overall tendency to move away from absolute inerrancy to a more moderate positions. In this sense proponents show a distinctively different approach to matters of reliability and inspiration than opponents.

The previous section has investigated the importance of cultural dynamics in inspiration. The analysis had demonstrated that what proponents call cultural accommodation plays a major part in their view of inspiration and consequently in their hermeneutics. The majority of proponents maintain there are culturally conditioned parts of Scripture which reflect the circumstances of the time of writing or the mindset of the author who was not free from cultural influences. The reality of cultural conditioning however does not mean that the

pertinent passages are not inspired, it only means that such culturally conditioned passages have limited cultural and historical application. It thus becomes central to the proponents' hermeneutics that a proper difference is made between culturally conditioned sections and universal principles which are always present in the inspired message. Finally, the part on proponents view of inspiration and revelation suggested that proponents generally believe in propositional nature of revelation which carries with it strong objectivist assumptions. A variation to this general view of revelation is the view of some female proponents who instead emphasise the metaphoric nature of revelation which allows them to pursue language gender revisions.

Looking at the overall picture, it can be concluded that the proponents' view of inspiration while not being altogether homogeneous in all its aspects, nevertheless exhibits common tendencies which distinguish it from the opponents' view of inspiration. In addition the proponents' understanding of inspirational dynamics is closely related to their view of the nature and function of Scripture and influences their perception of language. The conclusions can be used as a platform for further investigation of their hermeneutical logic.

Finally, concerning the inspiration and revelation debate in Adventist theology it should be noted that opponents or proponents' writings do not contain a systematically creative approach to the subject. In most cases they pursue a defensive approach. It appears that the context, which informs opponents and proponents' treatment of the revelation-inspiration subject, is a larger fundamentalist-liberal debate about the doctrine of Scripture. This fact is most visible in the apologetic language and allusions both sides make to the Enlightenment developments and historical-critical scholarship.<sup>245</sup>

### Proponents' Method and its Aspects

After investigating and summarizing the inspiration and the revelation concepts of proponents, the investigation will now proceed to directly examine proponents' position regarding the *method* and its *functional aspects*.

In order to properly analyse the main facets of the proponent's hermeneutical method, the section is structured into three subsections to enhance the comprehensiveness of the

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<sup>245</sup> For example Dederen who contributed significantly from among proponents to the revelation subject uses apologetic method when he discusses the propositional and encounter revelations. See Raoul Dederen, "Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics" in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 4-5; also in Raoul Dederen, "The Revelation-Inspiration Phenomenon According to the Bible Writers," in *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration*, 9-29. Alden Thompson's outgoing position and his thesis in his *Inspiration* has also been strongly influenced by the Enlightenment context, which brought scientific and rationalistic approach to inspiration and revelation debates. See Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*, 14-15. Similar Enlightenment versus Reformation or Liberal versus Fundamentalist (Evangelical) contexts informs the most of proponents' treatment of revelation.



analysis. Thus the investigation will begin with how proponents define hermeneutics including the *terminology* they use to describe their own method. The second section will look at the attitude of proponents towards the much-debated *Historical-critical method* and its use. Since opponents accuse proponents of employing critical methodologies for justifying their case for women's ordination, the section will need to investigate the proponents' attitude towards critical methodology. The last section will investigate individual characteristics of proponents' *hermeneutical method*.

### Definitions and Terminology

A leading proponent defined hermeneutics as "the science of *correctly* understanding the Scriptures, of observing *principles* whereby God's Word can be *correctly* and profoundly read." If "the science of hermeneutics" is not applied properly to Scripture it results in "a crass literal interpretation."<sup>246</sup>

Another leading proponent defined hermeneutics in an almost identical manner as "the science of interpretation." More precisely hermeneutics is "the study of the *basic principles and procedures...for accurately* interpreting God's Word."<sup>247</sup>

Also less known proponents who voiced their understanding of hermeneutics suggested that "hermeneutics is the science of *objective* literary interpretation." There are agreed *principles and procedures* of literary analysis, which must be consistently applied.<sup>248</sup>

All three examples showing how proponents generally define hermeneutics appear to have a threefold emphasis. First, the definitions perceive hermeneutics as a *scientific* endeavour which secondly, has certain *exactness or objectivity* to it. Thirdly, this scientific exactness is guaranteed by following *principles and procedures* of interpretation, which can produce "correct" and "accurate" interpretations. Proponents thus emphasise the scientific nature of hermeneutics, the objectivity of the interpretative process and sound principles or procedures of interpretation, which define the practice. These three characteristics form their basic understanding of what hermeneutics is about and how it should function.

There are, however, some proponents such as Johnsson and Eva who add to this scientific perception also an element of art. For both Johnsson and Eva hermeneutics is more

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<sup>246</sup> Raoul Dederen, "Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics" in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 2. Italics mine. The purpose of such hermeneutics according to Dederen is to determine the original thought of biblical writers.

<sup>247</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 60. Italics mine. For Davidson the aim of such hermeneutics is threefold: 1. To understand what the human writers intended to convey to their readers; 2. To grasp what the divine author intends to communicate and; 3. To learn how to communicate and apply the message.

<sup>248</sup> [Rockne, Dahl,] Letters, *Ministry*, February 1998, 3. Italics mine. Dahl, similarly to Dederen above, further suggests that "the fundamentalist/literalist line of reasoning is an outdated cultural interpretation, rather than being scientifically sound exegesis."

than just a science, in fact hermeneutics can also be seen as an art.<sup>249</sup> Without exhausting every single contribution of proponents, it is safe to conclude that proponents generally see hermeneutics as a scientific discipline which has its own set of designed rules or principles which when followed can produce correct and objective interpretations. Hermeneutics on the other hand transcends the category of exact science and could also be described as an art.

When it comes to the specific terminology of the proponents' preferred method rather than generally hermeneutics, proponents define also the spectrum of available methodologies from which then they argue for their method. From among proponents, especially Raymond Cottrell has systematically outlined the options available in the hermeneutical arena. For Cottrell there are five options available to interpreters of Scripture: (1) The Historical Method, (2) the Proof-text Method, (3) the Historical-grammatical Method, (4) the Fundamentalist Method and (5) the Historical-critical Method. Cottrell's preferred methodology is called the *Historical Method*<sup>250</sup> which accepts the dual divine-human nature of Scripture and which takes both the salvation history perspective and the historical context seriously.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> William Johnsson, "Nine Foundations for an Adventist Hermeneutic," 14. Willmore Eva, "Interpreting the Bible: A Commonsense Approach," 5. Johnsson for example says that interpretation is "more an art than a science" (Ibid.).

<sup>250</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, "A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture," in *The Welcome Table*, 78-83. Cottrell claims that the majority of Adventist bible scholars follow the *Historical Method* which is a research-level method (Ibid., 80). Most Adventists without theological training on the other hand follow the *Proof-text Method*. For Cottrell this method emphasises the modern reader's perspective. Consequently little or no attention is given to historical-cultural setting. Moreover, this method according to Cottrell is based on verbal similarity between proof-texts and so Scripture is functioning as a codebook in this method (Ibid., 82-83). Other Adventist scholars follow the *Historical-grammatical Method*, which according to Cottrell is the Adventist version of the Fundamentalist Method which is followed by evangelical Protestant scholars. Interestingly, Cottrell claims this method was not known among Adventist scholars before 1970. This claim is based on his own unpublished paper: "Architects of Crisis: A Decade of Obscurantism." For Cottrell the Historical-grammatical Method gained only limited acceptance among Adventist scholars because while it seems to investigate the Bible with scholarly procedures, it is based on fundamentalist proof-text principles and presuppositions. In addition this method, claims Cottrell, works with non-biblical assumptions about the revelatory process. While it rejects the dictation theory of inspiration it relies on a revelatory process equivalent to that theory (Ibid., 80-83). The *Fundamentalist Method* is the fourth option for Cottrell. Evangelical Protestant bible scholars follow this method, in his view. The method applies scholarly procedures within the framework of verbal inspiration. Thus the method eliminates, according to Cottrell, the human aspect of Scripture and ends up with inerrant view of inspiration. Cottrell links the emergence of the method with the 12 booklets called *The Fundamentals* published late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The other problem of this method for Cottrell is that it treats the Bible as if it was written especially with our time in view (Ibid., 80-82). The final methodological alternative for a bible interpreter, according to Cottrell, is the *Historical-critical Method*. This method is followed by liberal scholars. The method is based on seeing Scripture strictly as a human product. According to Cottrell, no real Adventist scholar follows this method because it is based on humanistic and naturalistic a-priori assumptions (Ibid., 80-81). The problem with all these methods except the Historical Method is their non-biblical presuppositions about the Bible which infect the process of exegesis with a hermeneutical virus (Ibid., 80). See also Raymond F. Cottrell, "The Historical Method of Interpretation," *Review and Herald*, April 7, 1977, 17-18 and Raymond F. Cottrell, "A Subtle Danger in the Historical Method," *Review and Herald*, April 14, 1977, 12.

<sup>251</sup> Interestingly enough, opponents accuse Cottrell of playing with names only. For them, Cottrell's *Historical Method* stands for a modified *Historical-critical Method*. Pipim for example claims

Other Adventist proponents have however used different terminology to describe their method. For example, Richard Davidson and Norskov Olsen prefer to use the term *Historical-grammatical* or *Gramatico-historical* method.<sup>252</sup> Still others use the term *Grammatical Method*<sup>253</sup> and yet still others insist on seeing their method in term of the *Wesleyan Quadrilateral*.<sup>254</sup>

It also has to be added that there are still other proponents who have not specified the terminology for the method they are using. For example, Raoul Dederen, who has been one of the leading thinkers in the proponent's camp and in Adventism generally, has not given any name to his method. This however does not mean that the major characteristics of his method cannot be analysed. It is therefore paramount to note that the investigation into the proponents' methodology will need to look beyond the terminology and attempt to analyse the characteristics which constitute their method.

Despite the varied terminology, which in fact fits well the spectrum of terms within conservative Protestantism<sup>255</sup>, there are certain discernable tendencies in the proponents' method, which indicate what the terminology in fact stands for. These characteristics of their method are analysed further down in this chapter and they in this sense become more important indicators of what the method means than the terminology used to describe the method.

Before however the investigation looks into those characteristics, the analysis will first look at the proponents' attitude towards the historical-critical method. This will further demonstrate how arguments based on terminology may lead to confusions even within the proponents' camp itself and thus the section will further support the contention that to understand correctly the method one needs to analyse its characteristics rather than just follow their terminology.

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that even other proponents acknowledge this fact: "Jerry Gladson correctly observed that Cottrell's 'historical' method, which is essentially the same as his own, is actually a modified use of the historical-critical method." Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 95, note 15. See also Jerry Gladson, "Taming Historical Criticism: Adventist Biblical Scholarship in the Land of Giants," *Spectrum* 18/4 (April 1988): 34, note 65.

<sup>252</sup> Norskov V. Olsen, "Hermeneutical Principles and Biblical Authority in Reformation and Postreformation Eras," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 52. Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 90. Sometimes Davidson refers to it as *Historical-biblical* method (Ibid., 90). Olsen while not claiming it directly, but implicitly agrees with what he perceives as the method of Luther who accepted the historical-grammatical principle of interpretation.

<sup>253</sup> Leon Mashchak, "God Means What He Says and He Says What He Means," 10.

<sup>254</sup> Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 137. David R. Larson, "What Adventists Can Learn from John Wesley," *Adventist Today*, January/February 1996, 11-13.

<sup>255</sup> See Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics*, Third Revised Edition, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1970).

## Attitude Towards the Historical-critical Method

It is impossible to overestimate the impact of the debate that has been raging for decades now, not only between the proponents and opponents of women's ordination, but generally also in Adventism and beyond it in conservative Protestant circles. The debate about the historical-critical method and its use in Adventist theology has emerged in the 1970s and goes well beyond the ordination debate and its hermeneutics and so it is beyond the scope of this work too. For these reasons the present section will not be able to cover all the contributions of all proponents but will present only the major facets of the proponents' attitude towards the historical-critical methodology.

In particular, three major attitudes seem to be present among the proponents. The first position, sometimes called *a moderate position*, among proponents suggests that certain critical methodologies can be useful if used apart from their naturalistic assumptions. The second position among proponents argues that the critical methodology should not be used in any of its form because it is impossible to separate the methodologies from their naturalistic presuppositions. Finally, the third position is suggesting that the discussion about the method should in fact be dropped as different people interpret the terminology to mean different things resulting in a rather confusing and unproductive debate.

The first position among the proponents is not altogether hostile towards the historical-critical method. Proponents in this group advocate a moderate use of historical-critical procedures which as they believe can be divorced from their naturalistic assumptions as formulated by liberal theology. Adventist proponent scholars like William Johnsson, Robert Johnston, Robert McIver, Jerry Gladson, Raymond Cottrell or Alden Thompson visibly represent this tendency among proponents.

Thus for example Robert Johnston, a New Testament scholar, suggested that exegesis welcomes any method that promises to be helpful including historical-critical methodologies. Adventist scholars can use the method because the debated critical methods are possible to use without any tendencies towards anti-supernaturalism. Johnston believes that Adventist methodology following the moderate use of historical-critical methods should be a *via media* between fundamentalism and sceptical modernism.<sup>256</sup>

Alden Thompson enriches Johnston's point by claiming that in 1981 Adventist scholarship has "tentatively affirmed" without any binding or official action that

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<sup>256</sup> Robert M. Johnston, "The Case for a Balanced Hermeneutic," 12. The author in fact argues that Adventists are already finding historical-critical method helpful because they use it to analyse the literary work of Ellen White.

Adventist scholars could indeed use the descriptive tools associated with the historical-critical method (e.g., source criticism, redaction criticism, etc.) without adopting the naturalistic presuppositions affirmed by the thoroughgoing practitioners of the method.<sup>257</sup>

Thompson thus along with Johnston believes that it is possible to utilise historical-critical methods without necessarily being influenced by naturalistic presuppositions which are often attributed to the method. Thompson's book *Inspiration* has in fact been widely regarded (and criticised) in Adventism by both proponents and opponents as representing the critical methodology.<sup>258</sup>

Besides Thompson, Robert McIver has also reported that the meetings between the church administration and Bible scholars, the so called Consultation I and II, in 1981 considered several historical-critical methodologies "helpful if used apart from their negative anti-supernatural presuppositions."<sup>259</sup>

Jerry Gladson, however, has argued more substantially on behalf of the moderate use of the historical-critical methods. The most important problem Gladson recognises regarding the critical method is the definitional problem. He argues that the method has gone through historical development and in its initial form it was primarily concerned with textual investigation. Only later it assumed more "liberal forms". Troeltsch's threefold demarcation of the method, which became the foundation of its classical liberal formulation, Gladson maintains, is only a rather later development.<sup>260</sup> In fact, Gladson believes, "it is a mistake,

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<sup>257</sup> Alden Thompson, "Are Adventists Afraid of Bible Study?" *Spectrum*, 16/1 (April 1985): 56 and 58. In fact Thompson's article is a book review of a New Testament Adventist scholar's book: Richard Rice, *Luke, The Plagiarist?* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1983). Thompson argues that Rice, himself a proponent, at that time a professor of NT at the prominent Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, uses "redaction criticism" as his method to justify the literary practices of Ellen White in comparing her with Luke's Gospel. Rice does not use the term historical-critical method or redaction criticism and for good reason, because "official Adventist publications have tended to reject any application of the method to Scripture" (Ibid., 56). See also Alden Thompson, *Inspiration*, 271-272; Alden Thompson, "Theological Consultation II," *Spectrum*, 12/2 (December 1981): 40-52. In addition to Johnston's argument about the use of critical methodologies with regard to Ellen White's literary practices, Thompson also affirms the same when he claims that: "With amazing alacrity, the pragmatic White Estate began producing 'source critical' studies in defence of Ellen White." (Ibid., 58).

<sup>258</sup> Frank Holbrook and Leo Van Dolson, eds., *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration*. The book contains nine studies. Three from proponents: Dederen, R. Davidson and M. Kis, and two from opponents: S. Koranteng-Pipim and G. Hase]. All studies are critical of Thompson's approach to inspiration which they equate with historical-critical method.

<sup>259</sup> Robert K. McIver, "The Historical-critical Method: The Adventist Debate," 14-15. The same fact is reported also by other proponents and used as part of their argument for a moderate use of historical-critical methodologies. See for example Sakae Kubo, "A History of Adventist Interpretation of Revelation and Inspiration," online edition, note 40 and 41.

<sup>260</sup> Jerry Gladson, "Taming Historical Criticism: Adventist Biblical Scholarship in the Land of Giants," 21. The author names the principle of methodological doubt, the principle of analogy and the principle of correlation as the three principles of Troeltsch (ibid.).

therefore, to confuse the practice of the historical-critical method with the complete adoption of Troeltschian principles."<sup>261</sup>

The real issue for Gladson, however, is to recognise that historical-critical methods can actually be separated from their narrow naturalistic presuppositions Troeltsch and after him other liberal scholars have attached to them. The real issue at stake, he argues, is whether scholars accept the inspiration of Scripture in principle or whether they accept a purely naturalistic view of Scripture. In this sense, he believes, most Adventist scholars recognise the necessity of divorcing the presuppositions from the method.<sup>262</sup>

Gladson's overall positive attitude towards the moderate use of the historical-critical method can also be illustrated from his interpretation of the *Methods of Bible Study* document which has been officially voted for by the church. According to Gladson, the document "seems to approve a cautious use of historical criticism," in fact the method was not rejected *in toto*, only its classical formulation which contains the naturalistic assumptions and conclusions was condemned in the document.<sup>263</sup> Interestingly, his interpretation is fairly isolated among Adventist scholars because the document also contains a sentence condemning "even a modified use of this method,"<sup>264</sup> which Gladson overlooks in his analysis of the document.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 24. According to Gladson it is a mistake Gerhard Hasel, a prominent opponent of women's ordination and an ardent opponent of historical-critical method made when he influenced the document *Methods of Bible Study* which was voted as an official document by the Adventist church. In fact Gladson's article deals extensively with Hasel's anti-historical-critical position. He demonstrates that Hasel's treatment of the method is confusing. On one hand he completely rejects the method which he keeps defining only in its Troeltschian sense and yet he is ready to use some of its aspects. Gladson presents numerous examples both from his dissertation and from his other published works how Hasel utilised the method. (On this point, Gladson arrived at the same conclusion as the dissertation in chapter 2, where the analysis dealt with opponents, including Hasel's attitude towards historical-critical method.) In addition, Hasel, according to Gladson, himself "acknowledges that today the 'method is so differently practiced that it is difficult even to speak of the historical-critical method'." According to Gladson, Hasel has therefore done a great disservice to the church by defining the method only in its narrow sense (Ibid., 24-25).

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 23 and 26. Gladson thus suggests that there are benefits from using moderate historical-critical methods for Adventist scholarship (Ibid., 27). Furthermore given the necessity of divorcing the presuppositions from the method and given that all Adventist scholars are committed to upholding the inspiration and authority of Scripture, Gladson boldly claims: "*All Adventist scholars use biblical and historical criticism, including Hasel.*" (Ibid., 26). Italics original.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>264</sup> The text of the *Methods of Bible Study* has been published in "Methods of Bible Study Committee (GCC-A)-Report," *Adventist Review*, January 22, 1987, 18-20. The critical passage addressing the historical-critical method reads as follows: "In recent decades the most prominent method in biblical studies has been known as the historical-critical method. Scholars who use this method, as classically formulated, operate on the basis of presuppositions which, prior to studying the biblical text, reject the reliability of accounts of miracles and other supernatural events narrated in the Bible. Even a modified use of this method that retains the principle of criticism which subordinates the Bible to human reason is unacceptable to Adventists. The historical-critical method minimises the need for faith in God and obedience to His commandments. In addition, because such a method de-emphasises the divine element in the Bible as an inspired book (including its resultant unity) and depreciates or misunderstands apocalyptic prophecy and the eschatological portions of the Bible, we urge Adventist Bible students to avoid relying on the use of the presuppositions and the resultant deductions associated with the historical-critical method." (Ibid., 18).

All the so far mentioned examples however generally illustrate the first attitude that is present among proponents towards the critical method. This view can be further illustrated from the writings of Raymond Cottrell and William Johnsson.

Cottrell - who had been an influential figure among proponents and generally in Adventism - in particular, has explicitly claimed that procedures of the historical-critical methods may indeed be used if divorced from their naturalistic presuppositions. In his argument for a moderate (divorced from naturalistic presuppositions) use of the method he goes beyond Gladson's argument by arguing that presuppositions are not part of it, they *precede* the use of it. According to Cottrell, "the method itself neither involves nor lends itself to any particular set of presuppositions. All presuppositions, liberal and conservative alike, are extrinsic to the method." For this reason, "the problem is clearly with the presuppositions, not with the method itself."<sup>266</sup> Cottrell thus observes that conservative scholarship studies such

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<sup>265</sup> Jerry Gladson, "Taming Historical Criticism: Adventist Biblical Scholarship in the Land of Giants," 30. Surprisingly however, even though he is not addressing the condemnation of "even a modified use of this method" in his analysis, he nevertheless mentions straight after the analysis that "*a modified version of the critical method is helping the church...*" (Ibid.). Italics original. Sakae Kubo commenting on Gladson's interpretation of the *Methods of Bible Study* observes that his view is surprising in the light of what the text says, also adding that "almost every other scholar has argued otherwise." Sakae Kubo, "A History of Adventist Interpretation of Revelation and Inspiration," online edition, note 40.

<sup>266</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, "Blame it on Rio: The Annual Council Statement on Methods of Bible Study," *Adventist Currents*, March 1987, 32-33. Cottrell's review of the already mentioned *Methods of Bible Study* contains an enthusiastic critique of the document's treatment of the critical method. Cottrell claims the presentation of the critical method in the document is based on confused reasoning which lead to significant misinterpretation of the method. According to Cottrell, the statement regarding the historical-critical method is inaccurate, false and unfairly questions "the integrity of a decided majority of Adventist bible scholars" (Ibid., 32). Cottrell maintains that the statement inaccurately assumes that word "critical" indicates a critical attitude towards inspiration of the Bible. He instead suggests that "critical" means "*against* the fallacies of human reason" (Ibid., 32). "Critical" is used in the sense of "careful discrimination between fact and fancy", between what the Bible actually says and what is merely a human opinion. The same point is repeated on page 33 where he repeats that the word critical means to discriminate between fact and fiction. The idea that "critical" means negative toward Biblical authority is based on uninformed thinking, Cottrell concludes. The *Methods* statement is also self-contradictory, according to Cottrell, because on one hand it condemns the method and on the other uses procedures which also historical-critical method uses - attention to historical setting, cultural and personal factors, literary genre, grammar, syntax, context and word meanings (Ibid., 32). "Conscientious use of these is what the historical-critical method is about!" (Ibid., 32). Furthermore, Cottrell points out that Adventist scholars began to use these procedures in 1930s. The majority of Bible scholars who now use the historical-critical method enter upon their study with presuppositions that affirm the inspiration and authority of the Bible (Ibid., 33). For this reason "no Adventist Bible scholar relies on the 'presuppositions and resultant deductions associated with the historical-critical method,'" claims Cottrell, against what the document tries to imply (Ibid., 32). Thus he concludes that those who voted the statement evidently did not understand the historical-critical method: "To condemn the method because of the defects of liberal presuppositions and conclusions, which are extrinsic to the method, is a gross *non sequitur*" (Ibid., 33). In the final analysis of the document he focuses on Gerhard Hasel, who, has influenced the statement in the document. According to Cottrell, the most ardent advocate of the statement against the historical-critical method, Hasel, even though he does not name him, reasons in a circle from his own presuppositions back to them again. He thinks his presuppositions are confirmed by the Holy Spirit and therefore sacrosanct. He practices the subjectivity of the proof-text method under the guise of following respectable historical method procedures. Therefore, the Annual Council statement makes his personal presuppositions "official" for the church, maintains Cottrell. For

matters as "authorship, literary form, historical setting, and transmission of the text," which also liberal scholars study under such procedures as "form criticism, source criticism and editorial (redaction) criticism." The ultimate difference between the conclusions of conservative and liberal scholars hence depends on "*a priori* presuppositions than on procedures they follow," Cottrell argues in his final analysis.<sup>267</sup>

Underlying all the analysis above is William Johnsson's acknowledgement that "the question must not be *whether* we will employ historical [critical] methods (because we already do to some extent) but *how far* we rely upon them."<sup>268</sup> Johnsson's statement can thus serve as a summary to the first position of proponents towards the historical-critical method which is detectable in their writings.

The second position which is also visible in the writings of proponents is based on a rather different view of historical-critical method. Richard Davidson and Roy Gane in particular have voiced this second approach from among the proponents' camp. In its essence the second view of proponents regarding the historical-critical method maintains that the method is unusable by conservative Bible scholars because its underlying naturalistic presuppositions from the beginning of the interpretative process influence the interpretation.

Thus contrary to the first view, Richard Davidson, for example, argues that it is not possible to remove anti-supernatural bias and use the method "because presuppositions and method are inextricably interwoven."<sup>269</sup> When it comes however to the actual procedures of the historical-critical method and the procedures his historical-grammatical method, he surprisingly finds significant overlap between the two sets of "tools".<sup>270</sup> What makes the

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all the above reasons, Cottrell's passionate analysis ends by a rejection of the *Methods* conclusions regarding the use of historical critical method: "In its present form the statement is altogether unacceptable" (Ibid., 33).

<sup>267</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, "A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture," in *The Welcome Table*, 81. See also page 80 and 84. For Cottrell's other published work on the interpretative methodology see his series of three articles: Raymond F. Cottrell, "From the Editors: Smoothing the Way to Consensus," *Review and Herald*, March 31, 1977, 18; Raymond F. Cottrell, "From the Editors, Smoothing the Way to Consensus-2: The Historical Method of Interpretation," *Review and Herald*, April 7, 1977, 17-18; and Raymond F. Cottrell, "From the Editors, Smoothing the Way to Consensus-3: A Subtle Danger in the Historical Method," *Review and Herald*, April 14, 1977, 12. Andrews University's James White Library, The Centre for Adventist Research contains an extensive collection of over 250 scholarly papers of Cottrell. The collection can be found under the title *Papers of Raymond F. Cottrell, Collection 238*.

<sup>268</sup> William G. Johnsson, "Seventh-day Adventist Presuppositions to Biblical Studies," an unpublished paper presented to Seventh-day Adventist members attending the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Convention, Chicago, Ill., October 29, 1975, 44, 45, cited by Jerry Gladson, "Taming Historical Criticism: Adventist Biblical Scholarship in the Land of Giants," 29-30.

<sup>269</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 96.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid. "Those who follow the historical-biblical method apply similar study *tools* utilised in historical-criticism. Careful attention is given to historical, literary and linguistic, grammatical-syntactical, and theological details."



difference for Davidson is whether the central principle of the historical-critical method, the principle of criticism is present in the hermeneutical process.<sup>271</sup> For Davidson the historical-biblical approach rejects the principle of criticism: "It *analyzes*, but refuses to *critique* the Bible."<sup>272</sup>

Thus, the main difference between proponents holding the first moderate view and Davidson seems to come down to the way the historical-critical procedures or tools are "tamed". Proponents holding the moderate view tame the historical-critical methodologies by replacing the naturalistic presuppositions with belief in biblical inspiration. Davidson on the other hand is also attempting to tame the methodologies, except he does it by pointing to the difference between *analysis* and *criticism*. For Davidson, and this is the major point of difference from the first group, accepting the supernatural element does not avert the essence of the critical method and hence does not do away with the biases which come with using it.<sup>273</sup> The only way the tools can become usable is by eliminating the principle of criticism and replacing it with the principle of analysis.

Davidson, throughout his analysis, becomes visibly more suspicious of the historical-critical method which also is due to the fact that his own view of it resembles Hasel's Troeltschian definition. For Davidson, similarly to Hasel, the method is based on the principle of analogy, correlation and criticism which is the Cartesian principle of methodological doubt. Problematic for Davidson is also the fact the methodology works with an external norm for evaluating the truthfulness of biblical data. The historical-critical research at the end therefore produces only probabilities.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid. Davidson writes: "Central to the historical-critical method is the principle of criticism, according to which nothing is accepted at face value, but everything must be verified or corrected by reexamining the evidence." Furthermore: "The presence or absence of the fundamental principle of criticism is the litmus test of whether or not critical methodology is being employed."

<sup>272</sup> Ibid. While as Davidson suggests the study tools may be the same, the historical-biblical method will *analyze* Biblical text "with a consistent intent to eliminate the element of *criticism* that stands as judge upon the Word."

<sup>273</sup> Ibid. He writes: "As long as this basic principle is retained, the danger of the historical-critical method has not been averted, *even though the supernatural element may be accepted*" (Italics added). In other words, what Davidson is saying is that accepting "divine inspiration in principle," as Gladson suggests (see above), will not undo the inherent dangers of the method. This is the most visible point of difference between the two attitudes present among proponents.

<sup>274</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "The Authority of Scripture: A Personal Pilgrimage," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 1/1 (1990): 45-48. Davidson also describes the tension historical-critical method creates in hermeneutics in words: "Scripture is locked in a life-and-death struggle" (Ibid., 42). Interestingly, Davidson has also been one of the contributing authors in the book published to respond to Alden Thompson's *Inspiration* which has been largely perceived as promoting historical-critical method. In his article he defines the historical-critical method in the Troeltschian sense mentioning the principles of analogy, correlation and criticism. See Richard M. Davidson, "Revelation/Inspiration in the Old Testament: A Critique of Alden Thompson's 'Incarnational' Model," *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration: Adventist Theological Society Occasional Papers*, vol 1, ed. Frank Holbrook and Leo Van Dolson (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1992), 106-109.

Moreover, Roy Gane has also expressed similar views to Davidson. Gane has indicated that he is not comfortable placing his work under the heading of the historical-critical method. He is concerned that the use of human tools may detect the working of the human element but they cannot identify the divine and so inevitably the research conclusions are thus being shaped by their presuppositions which in this case are humanistic. Interestingly, Gane is against the systematic use of even the research tools which however can be used for illumination of some aspects of the text or its background.<sup>275</sup>

Both Gane and Davidson represent within the proponents' camp a distancing approach to historical-critical method. The method is rejected because of its underlying naturalistic presuppositions which cannot be separated from the procedures. There is therefore no possibility of using the method in its so-called "moderate" form.

When observing the spectrum of the arguments present among proponents it becomes clear that one of the main problems of the debate has been the problem of actual defining what historical-critical method means. This has surfaced especially in Gladson and Cottrell's arguments. The differences among proponents concerning the historical-critical methodology eventually come down to how the method is defined. Generally speaking, proponents who hold a moderate view of the method do not define it in the Troeltschian sense, which proponents arguing for a complete distance from it, do.

This very problem of definition and terminology prompted some proponents to suggest that perhaps the term "historical-critical method" should be dropped altogether from Adventist vocabulary. Proponents such as William Johnsson and Robert McIver have raised their voice in support of dropping the terminology. Both of them admit that the terminology is too divisive and confusing, leading to a rather unproductive debate about Biblical interpretation.<sup>276</sup>

Before the analysis moves to the actual investigation of the proponent's method, the problem of definition should not be overlooked. It is precisely because of the terminology and delineation difficulty<sup>277</sup> that the analysis needs to investigate the actual characteristics or

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<sup>275</sup> Roy Gane, "An Approach to the Historical-Critical Method," 7-9.

<sup>276</sup> William Johnsson for example suggests that the term "historical-critical method" should be deleted from Adventist vocabulary because it prevents scholars from coming together. Johnsson furthermore suggests that Adventist scholars will not come together unless the term is deleted from debates about methodology. See Johnsson, William G. "Nine Foundations for an Adventist Hermeneutic." 16. Robert McIver has also suggested that deleting the word "historical-critical" and dropping the debate about it will focus Adventist scholars on how they might understand Scripture better. See Robert K. McIver, "The Historical-critical Method: The Adventist Debate," 16.

<sup>277</sup> There are also proponents who have not entered deeper into the debate about the presuppositions and procedure of the historical-critical debate. For example Raoul Dederen is a case in point. He has a rather suspicious view of the historical-critical method on one hand, yet on the other he acknowledged some benefits the research brought. Dederen predominantly sees the method from its scientific anti-supernaturalistic Enlightenment roots. Thus defined the method does not accept the Bible for what it is. On the other hand, the visible benefits for him lie in the area of historical research. See

tendencies of proponents' method in order to gain an accurate picture about how their hermeneutics works and how it differs from opponents' hermeneutics.

### The Aspects of Proponents' Method

This section will aim to analyse systematically the major characteristics of the proponents' hermeneutical method. These characteristics do not appear in any of their writings in a systematic or coherent form and so behind the analysis in this section is a thorough and careful investigation of the common features which stand out from various proponents' documents. In particular the section will present six main characteristics which when taken together paint a coherent picture of the proponents' hermeneutical approach.

#### Principle-based Reading

The first (and one of the most obvious) aspects of the proponents' method is the emphasis on principle-based reading. According to leading proponents there are two distinguishable hermeneutical approaches when it comes to the question of ordination of women. The first approach focuses on specific biblical statements and cases and can be termed a *literalistic* approach. The alternative to this approach is the *general principles* approach which focuses on general principles derived from central events and trends from the Bible as a whole.<sup>278</sup> Will Eva for instance argues from the example of the debated text of 1 Timothy 2 for the second approach. He suggests that this is the correct way of interpreting the Scripture.<sup>279</sup>

Sakae Kubo has argued similarly for the impossibility of reading 1 Timothy 2 literalistically: "This passage is an excellent case for application of hermeneutical principles. No one can apply the Bible literalistically in an absolutely thorough manner."<sup>280</sup> Kubo maintains *principles* must be derived from the total thrust of Scripture and through these read the specific cultural setting and advice.<sup>281</sup>

A New Testament scholar, John Brunt, has also raised the importance of principle-based approach. According to him, there are only two options available to the interpreter of the debated ordination passages of 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14. Either the *literalistic way* which however divorces the texts from their historical and literary contexts or the second

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Raoul Dederen, "Revelation, Inspiration, and Hermeneutics" in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 9-10.

<sup>278</sup> Willmore Eva, "Interpreting the Bible: A Commonsense Approach," 4; And Willmore Eva, "Should Our Church Ordain Women? Yes," *Ministry*, March 1985, 14. See also Arthur Ferch, "Three Pauline Passages on the Role of Women in the Life of the Church." He suggests there literal reading which disregards time or origin of the writing, principle-based reading which derives principles from words and larger historical context and principle-based reading which deduces underlying principles from the total revelation (Ibid., 1-2).

<sup>279</sup> Willmore Eva, "Should Our Church Ordain Women? Yes," 16.

<sup>280</sup> Sakae Kubo, "An Exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 and its Implications," in *The Role of Women in the Church*, 101.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 102.

option is to look at the texts in a *principled way*, seeking to understand the principles addressed by the author in the original setting. Brunt argues the Adventist theology has decided not to interpret the Scripture in a literalistic way. Therefore to interpret Scripture correctly, Brunt proposes, one must find *principles* addressed in the historical and literary contexts.<sup>282</sup>

It becomes important to note that all the examples above link the principle-based approach to contextual considerations (historical and literal) and to the total thrust of Scripture. The relationship among the three areas appears to be reciprocal, as it will be illustrated further. It is therefore important to notice that the principle-based approach does not stand isolated from contextual and the *tota Scriptura* considerations.

This relationship can be illustrated by referring to Larry Richards, who has suggested that understanding Paul's counsel in the context of his original setting will help the reader to understand his position in 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14. In addition, Richards argues it will help readers to discover the *principles* and apply them to our own time.<sup>283</sup>

From among the leading proponents Richard Rice has also spoken out for the principle-based reading of Scripture. For Rice, the possibility and even the necessity of identifying the permanent significance in the text arises from the twofold character of Scripture; for the divine points to the permanent while the human points to the applied elements.<sup>284</sup> Rice however admits that it is "notoriously difficult to recognise" which is which, which is cultural or applied and which is permanent or principal. Rice is willing to admit this constitutes "a tremendous challenge" for the interpretation process.<sup>285</sup> Despite these difficulties Rice believes the painful hermeneutical process of identifying the permanent principles in the text and separating them from cultural applications must be undertaken because the resolution of the ordination debate depends on it. It thus appears that the principle-based-cultural reading is at the heart of the ordination debate for proponents. On the other hand this approach may well constitute a problem in itself.<sup>286</sup> Julia Neuffer's illustrated this problem when she

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<sup>282</sup> John C. Brunt, "Ordination of Women: A Hermeneutical Question," *Ministry*, September 1988, 12-13. According to Brunt, to study New Testament in a principled way means to study the texts in their literary and historical contexts (*Ibid.*, 13).

<sup>283</sup> Larry W. Richards, "How does a Woman Prophesy and Keep Silence at the Same Time? (1 Corinthians 11 and 14)," in *Women in Ministry*, 315.

<sup>284</sup> Richard Rice, "Doctrine, Text and Culture: Biblical Authority and Cultural Conditioning," 1.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5. Rice uses the example of Bultmann who has struggled with this issue.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22. This is a significant identification on the part of proponents because it places the question of principle-based reading and cultural considerations (analysed later) right into the centre of their argument. The only problem with pursuing a solution based on principle-based-cultural interpretation is that it is "notoriously difficult" to do it. Rice here unwittingly identifies the core of the problem with such a resolution. In fact, it could be argued that if the resolution of the ordination of women's debate in Adventist theology depended on correctly identifying the permanent elements from cultural then there would be indeed very little hope for a satisfactory resolution. Rice's admission that it

suggested that because the biblical letters do not always contain all the information the reader may be perplexed as to whether the passage is based on a universal principle or local application.<sup>287</sup>

In an almost identical manner to Rice, Raymond Cottrell argues that the principle-application reading is important because it is based on correctly identifying divine and human elements in Scripture. Thus, confusing divine - which has eternal permanency to it - with human - which contains the cultural and conditioned application - leads to misinterpretation. For Cottrell, as for Rice, the correct differentiation between the two is fundamental to the whole hermeneutical enterprise.<sup>288</sup>

Beyond the above positions which all unambiguously affirm the presence of principle-based reading in proponents' interpretative method the cases of other proponents who have published on the subject of interpretation and emphasised principle-based reading could be mentioned, among whom there are for example Harwood, Gladson, Dybdahl, Blazen, Duddley Timm, Gane, Olsen or Davidson. Given space consideration, the views of these proponents will be analysed more succinctly.

In the context of the ordination debate, Ginger Hanks Harwood has pointed out that despite "our very best scholarship, Scripture does not provide a definitive 'Thus said the Lord,' on this question" and therefore interpreters must search for principles which could be applied today, rather than rely on "overt instruction".<sup>289</sup>

Jerry Gladson has also emphasised that specific counsels to the ancients should be distinguished from principles. Principles must be enunciated and applied from the review of the historical situation.<sup>290</sup> For John Dybdahl the alternative is between the pure or plain

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is "notoriously difficult" to decide which is which has been nicely illustrated in chapter two where opponents identify what for proponents is cultural as permanent. See how opponents interpret debated Pauline texts as opposed to proponents. The argument of universality of Paul's advice in 1 Timothy 2 for example has been one of the key arguments for opponents. Proponents have however argued from the particularity of the situation in 1 Timothy 2.

<sup>287</sup> Julia Neuffer, "First-Century Cultural Backgrounds in the Greco-Roman Empire," in *The Role of Women in the Church* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 75.

<sup>288</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, "A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture," in *The Welcome Table*, 67 and 85-87. Applying his principle-based approach Cottrell thus concludes regarding 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 2: "Beyond any question, Paul's counsel was culturally conditioned," that is limited to a particular situation. Principles on the other hand have universal application. (Ibid., 86-7).

<sup>289</sup> Ginger Hanks Harwood, "Women and Mission," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: Team Press, 1995), 273.

<sup>290</sup> Jerry A. Gladson, "The Role of Women in the Old Testament Outside the Pentateuch," in *The Role of Women in the Church* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 59-60. Gladson is arguing that conditions of women in the Bible reflect the socio-cultural fabric of the society of that time. One must therefore examine thoroughly these conditions in order to understand the principles behind. (Ibid., 53, 59-60).

reading of Scripture, which in his view does not exist, and identifying the eternal biblical principles which do not change and which transcend culture.<sup>291</sup> Blazen equally maintains that despite the fact that Scripture aims at needs in particular situations and uses cultural modes of expressions it nevertheless reveals permanent truth or principles for all times. For this reason, sound interpretation must properly discriminate between local and universal, temporary and timeless, policies and principles, Christ and culture, between what is timely and what is timeless.<sup>292</sup>

Similarly, Roger Dudley has argued that the church must always sift timeless truth from cultural norms and look for divine principles. The challenge for the church indeed is to discover those principles and apply them for people today.<sup>293</sup> Timm also perceives a constant dialogue between universal principles and specific application in Scripture.<sup>294</sup> For Gane proper interpretation is based on contextual reading (textual, historical, cultural, archaeological) which then helps the interpreter to understand the principles in the message.<sup>295</sup> Proponents thus affirm with almost one voice that literalistic method of interpretation is inadequate and outdated and instead they argue for the centrality of principle-based reading in the interpretative process.

On the other hand, principle-based reading for proponents does not mean necessarily a rejection of the literal meaning of Scripture, as opponents charge them with doing that. Ivan Blazen for example in this regard attempted to clarify the position of proponents by arguing that cultural-historical considerations and the resulting principle-based reading do not negate or relativise "the plain significance" of a passage.<sup>296</sup> Also Olsen in his analysis of the Reformers' method points out the importance of the literal principle of interpretation and literal meaning of passages.<sup>297</sup> One of the clearest expressions of the proponents' intention to take the meaning in its literal sense even when using principled reading of Scripture could be found in Richard Davidson's discussion on interpretation. Davidson suggests that the

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<sup>291</sup> John L. Dybdahl, "Culture and Biblical Understanding in a World Church," in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 423-424. For Dybdahl the reading is not pure or plain because the reader is always culturally biased. (Ibid., 423).

<sup>292</sup> Ivan T. Blazen, "Women, Culture, and Christ: Hearing Scripture Yesterday and Today," 5-6.

<sup>293</sup> Roger L. Dudley, "Ordination of Women: A Question of Status or Function?" 21.

<sup>294</sup> Alberto Timm, "How Reliable is the Bible?" 12.

<sup>295</sup> Roy Gane, "An Approach to the Historical-Critical Method," 5.

<sup>296</sup> Ivan T. Blazen, "Women, Culture, and Christ: Hearing Scripture Yesterday and Today," 6. Blazen, who holds a PhD in Practical Theology (Homiletics) from Princeton Theological Seminary writes: "Those who oppose the ordination of women often insist that those who support it are using cultural considerations to relativise or negate the plain significance of passages of Scripture. As one who has placed his entire reliance upon the Bible and its message, I wish to affirm that this is not the case" (Ibid.).

<sup>297</sup> Nørskov V. Olsen, "Hermeneutical Principles and Biblical Authority in Reformation and Postreformation Eras," *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 48-9.

Scriptures should be "taken in their plain, literal sense, unless a clear and obvious figure is intended."<sup>298</sup>

In summary, the first discernable characteristic of the proponents' interpretative method is their principle-based reading approach. Proponents almost without exception argue that the task of interpretation is to uncover underlying universal principles which then can be applied to the present situation of the reader. Furthermore, proponents insist that correct identification of principles in the most debated passages can lead to a resolution of the ordination debate. It can therefore be safely concluded that the principle-based approach to interpretation constitutes the first core element of their interpretative method.

### Contextual Historical-Cultural Aspect

The second core aspect of the proponents' method is closely linked to the principle-based reading. The contextual historical-cultural investigations constitute the second obvious hermeneutical emphasis of proponents' methodology. As already indicated in the previous section, it is difficult to separate the two. Instead, their relationship should be seen as reciprocal and mutual.

There is a plethora of evidence in the writings of proponents indicating that historical-cultural reading indeed forms the core of their approach to Scripture. One of the most influential pro-ordination books *Women in Ministry* for example addresses the issue of culture in three separate chapters.<sup>299</sup> In one of those chapters Walter Douglas claims that there are those who believe in the high view of Scripture, but at the same time "argue for the importance of the cultural and historical backgrounds and influences in which the Word of God was communicated and understood." Douglas goes on and claims that interpretation must acknowledge the reality of the cultural gap between the world of Biblical authors and the world of the readers. For Douglas this gap is critical to churches life and mission.<sup>300</sup>

Arthur Ferch has also acknowledged the necessity of studying both the literal words and the conditions for which they were given. The interpretation thus should discover thought patterns which are unlimited by the historical past and assist in correcting "culturally conditioned" pronouncements. Readers thus must study both the historical and cultural conditions as they interpret Scripture.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 65.

<sup>299</sup> Chapters 18, 19 and 20 are exclusively discussing the role of culture on biblical interpretation. See Nancy Vyhmeister, ed., *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998).

<sup>300</sup> Walter B. T. Douglas, "The Distance and the Difference: Reflections on Issues of Slavery and Women's Ordination in Adventism," in *Women in Ministry*, 379-380.

<sup>301</sup> Arthur J. Ferch, "Three Pauline Passages on the Role of Women in the Life of the Church," 2.

For Ivan Blazen, the task of interpretation has two main points: historical and theological. However, before interpretation can arrive at theological formulations, the reader needs first to begin with studying the historical circumstances. So the purpose of interpretation on some level is to discover the pristine historical meaning and only then to apply it. For this reason, for Blazen, it is fundamental that interpretation properly discriminates between culture and Christ.<sup>302</sup>

Another Old Testament proponent Kenneth Vine in his study has attempted to explain the legal and social status of women in the Pentateuch through the cultural context of the time. He argues that because the time and culture has shifted from the ideal in Genesis 1-2 the interpreter needs to reflect this ideal in the interpretation of the Pentateuch.<sup>303</sup>

Jerry Gladson, another Old Testament proponent in the same volume has also argued from the cultural-historical setting. In Gladson's view biblical genealogies are not definite historical records but reflect the conditions of patriarchal society. If the social fabric had been different they might have been traced through women. Thus in effect the social-cultural fabric determines Gladson's interpretation of the text.<sup>304</sup>

Walter Specht (in his work featuring in the same publication as Gladson and Vine, but analysing the situation in the New Testament) argued that, in order to fully appreciate Jesus' revolutionary treatment of women, the Jewish environment must be considered first. Specht suggests that a casual examination of the tradition in the Gospels does not indicate that Jesus was a revolutionary who vocally contested for the rights of women. However once the historical-cultural evidence is presented the picture is different.<sup>305</sup> Worthy of noting is Specht's suggestion, which is characteristic also of the other above mentioned proponents, that the readers can fully understand the text only if they read it against the historical-cultural realities of its time of writing. Thus visibly cultural and historical considerations are fundamental to the proponent's interpretative method.

Attempting to systematically analyse the biblical data regarding the role of women, Frank Holbrook argued that Paul's view in the New Testament was based on social dynamics and circumstances. Holbrook maintains the divine instruction preserves God's ideal yet it is

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<sup>302</sup> Ivan T. Blazen, "Women, Culture, and Christ: Hearing Scripture Yesterday and Today," 5-7.

<sup>303</sup> Kenneth L. Vine, "The Legal and Social Status of Women in the Pentateuch," in *The Role of Women in the Church* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 28, 32, 43, 44-45. Vine for example claims that even the genealogies which were given by the father's line reflect the (male dominated) culture of that time. (Ibid., 45).

<sup>304</sup> Jerry A. Gladson, "The Role of Women in the Old Testament Outside the Pentateuch," in *The Role of Women in the Church*, 53-54.

<sup>305</sup> Walter F. Specht, "Jesus and Women," in *The Role of Women in the Church*, (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 78 and 96. Specht also answers the question of why there were no women apostles by suggesting that there were social and cultural reasons which meant that it would not have been prudent for the church to appoint them. (Ibid., 95).



adapted to the cultural situation.<sup>306</sup> This treatment once again shows how cultural and historical considerations are important for the proponents' method of interpretation.

Furthermore, the dynamic can be illustrated by Edwin Zackrison according to whom good exegesis seeks to understand the context of the time, culture of the writer and the original setting. Analysing properly these factors will show that there are cultural reasons for not ordaining but not scriptural. The point, therefore for Zackrison is to recognise the cultural-historical aspects properly.<sup>307</sup>

The historical-cultural emphasis found in the proponents' interpretative method is also visible from the way they interpret the hotly debated New Testament passages of 1 Timothy 2, 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14. George Rice for example reflecting the general trend of the proponents to use historical-cultural reconstruction and explanation, believes that socio-cultural understanding of 1 Timothy 2 can save interpreters from both extremes of literalistic understanding on one hand and making the text altogether irrelevant on the other.<sup>308</sup> Will Eva commenting on the same text also maintains that in the final consideration space must be given to social and cultural concerns.<sup>309</sup> Thus for Eva the principle-based hermeneutics of proponents appeals to a careful understanding of the cultural and historical situation.<sup>310</sup>

Larry Richards' analysis of 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 also shows the same pattern of relying on historical-cultural explanation. According to him the reader must first understand the text of 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 in their original setting as far as possible. While the text may not always address the reader's specific needs it nonetheless contains universal principles which can be applied and which can be discovered with the help of the historical-cultural analysis.<sup>311</sup>

Raymond Cottrell's conclusion regarding the Pauline passages of 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 2 is also dependent to a significant degree on what he calls "cultural conditioning". Literary forms, social forms and anthropomorphisms in Scripture are all evidences of cultural conditioning according to him. There are indeed many examples of cultural conditioning. More specifically an example of cultural conditioning is the texts of 1 Corinthians 11 and 1

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<sup>306</sup> Frank B. Holbrook, "A Brief Analysis and Interpretation of the Biblical Data Regarding the Role of Women," in *The Role of Women in the Church* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 131-133, 135.

<sup>307</sup> Edwin Zackrison, "Inclusive Redemption," in *The Welcome Table*, 165, 168.

<sup>308</sup> George E. Rice, "1 Timothy 2:9-15: A Case of Domestic Policy," 1.

<sup>309</sup> Willmore Eva, "Should Our Church Ordain Women? Yes," 16.

<sup>310</sup> Willmore Eva, "Interpreting the Bible: A Commonsense Approach," 4-5.

<sup>311</sup> Larry W. Richards, "How does a Woman Prophesy and Keep Silence at the Same Time? (1 Corinthians 11 and 14)," in *Women in Ministry*, 315, 327-328. Richards identified the historical context of the Corinthian church to be the Gnostic heresy threat and therefore he interprets the text from this background. (Ibid., 315).

Timothy 2. For Cottrell beyond any question the directives of Paul regarding women are culturally conditioned.<sup>312</sup>

Finally, Richard Rice provides an insightful summary of the attitude of proponents towards the use of historical-cultural analysis when he recognises that "a good deal of the biblical material reflects the cultures that surrounded its composition and has no religious authority for Christianity today."<sup>313</sup> Rice's conviction is that the ordination debate could be resolved if the interpreters answered what is permanent and what is cultural in the message of the Bible.<sup>314</sup> The cultural-historical approach is thus fundamental to proponents' argumentation for the ordination case.

In conclusion, there is strong and wide evidence available - once relevant writings are analysed - that at its core, proponents' interpretative method depends, to a significant degree, on historical-cultural analysis of the background of the text. Alongside with the principle-based reading emphasis, the historical-cultural emphasis constitute the second main aspect of their hermeneutical method. The present chapter and the present section, it has to be added, has not been attempting to assess these characteristics yet.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Raymond F. Cottrell, "A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture," in *The Welcome Table*, 68, 85-87. Cottrell for example writes: "Cultural circumstances conditioned his personal practice and *his inspired directives* in such matters. Thus, such counsel was obviously limited to the particular situation in which it was given. It did not have universal application for all time" (Ibid., 86). And also: "Beyond any question, Paul's personal conduct and his counsel as a representative of Jesus Christ were both culturally conditioned to the circumstances in which he found himself and to which he addressed his teaching" (Ibid., 87). Given the nature of Cottrell's argument it becomes apparent that in order to assess whether Paul was "culturally conditioned," one must first reconstruct the historical-cultural situation at the time of the writing as correctly as possible, otherwise the interpreter runs the risk of identifying wrongly the culturally conditioned elements in the message of the author. In other words, the interpretation dependent to a significant degree on historical reconstruction of the original setting is only as good or correct as the historical reconstruction of the background is. This in effect creates significant questions concerning to what degree the type of hermeneutics based on historical-cultural analysis is dependent, or should be dependant on external consideration rather than on internal.

<sup>313</sup> Richard Rice, "Doctrine, Text and Culture: Biblical Authority and Cultural Conditioning," 4.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>315</sup> There is a potential weakness in the proponents' historical-cultural emphasis. In the context of properly reconstructing historical-cultural factors it is noteworthy to point out that despite the proponents' belief in the necessity and possibility of correct historical-cultural reconstruction there still remains certain vagueness and even ambiguity with regard to the procedure. Proponents' discussion of the meaning of the "law" in 1 Corinthians 14:34 illustrates well the potential weakness in the procedure. Sheryll Prinz-McMillan has suggested that in order to interpret correctly Pauline discussed passages the interpretation must explore the background which is fundamental for the final understanding of them. Based on historical analysis, she interprets the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34 and concludes that the reference to the "law" is a reference to the Roman law, as there is no such law in Scripture. See Sheryll Prinz-McMillan, "Who's in Charge of the Family?" in *The Welcome Table*, 208-209. However in the same pro-ordination book another author interpreting the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34 from the historical-cultural perspective concluded that the "law" refers to a Jewish custom. David R. Larson, "Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination," in *The Welcome Table*, 131-132. Moreover still another proponent, Larry Richards interprets the "law" to be "a reference to Gen 3:16, where submission is a result of the Fall." Larry W. Richards, "How does a Woman Prophecy and Keep Silence at the Same Time? (1 Corinthians 11 and 14)," in *Women in Ministry*, 325. Frank

## Broad Contextual Reading

Emphasis on broad contextual reading is the third main aspect of the proponents' method. Broad contextual reading in its essence is an emphasis on the principle of *tota Scriptura*. As such therefore it also encompasses assumptions about the unity and sufficiency of Scripture.<sup>316</sup>

One of the first examples of the proponent's broad contextual reading is found in Tenney's 19<sup>th</sup> century article which argues for a "total" reading of Paul's passages. George Tenney already in 1892 argued that variances in the Bible must be subjected to the Bible's main tenor. The Bible may be reconciled in all its parts if readers take the *tota Scriptura* view. Tenney argues there are broad fundamental principles which help readers to interpret Paul.<sup>317</sup>

For Arthur Ferch, interpretation of Pauline passages involves three basic options: Literal reading without recourse to time and origin; Principle-based reading based on words; and principle-based reading based on total Scriptural revelation. Ferch argues that the debated Pauline passages must be read by following the third option.<sup>318</sup>

Proponents thus use not only principle-based reading, historical-cultural but also broad contextual emphasis. The preference of Ferch for using principle-based reading based on considering the total Scriptural revelation is very typical of the proponent methodology.

David Larson's view of the interpretative process is another good example of a *tota Scriptura* emphasis. For Larson interpretation must not miss the overall *trajectory* of Scripture, the interpreter must detect the direction of biblical narratives. Indeed interpretation is like understanding the plot of a great play. According to Larson, the narrative thread never disappears entirely and so one must observe the constant movement in the story which moves

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Holbrook also interprets the law almost identically. For him the "law" in 1 Corinthians 14:34 is the books of Moses and particularly the Genesis 3 story. Frank B. Holbrook, "A Brief Analysis and Interpretation of the Biblical Data Regarding the Role of Women," in *The Role of Women in the Church*, 112 and 134. Similarly for Julia Neuffer the "law" could be the Pentateuch, the Old Testament or the Jewish system. Julia Neuffer, "First-Century Cultural Backgrounds in the Greco-Roman Empire," in *The Role of Women in the Church*, 77. In fact Larry Richards, Holbrook and Neuffer's positions on the law are just the opposite of Prinz-McMillan's. These examples expound the inherent problems with historical-cultural analysis. Critical assessment and evaluation of the proponents' epistemological presuppositions will be the focus of the last chapter.

<sup>316</sup> In other words, for the interpretation to work from the totality of Scripture perspective, it must assume some sort of homogeneity between its individual parts. This also however implies that Scripture must be regarded as sufficient to interpret itself given that it is a homogenous unit. If these two assumptions are not met a *tota Scriptura* emphasis cannot work.

<sup>317</sup> George C. Tenney, "Woman's Relation to the Case of Christ," *Adventist Review*, February 4, 1988, 20-21; first printed in *Review and Herald*, May 24, 1892; then reprinted in *Review and Herald*, June 5, 1894. Two of such fundamental principles are the principle of redemption and the principle of God being no respecter of persons (*Ibid.*, 21).

<sup>318</sup> Arthur J. Ferch, "Three Pauline Passages on the Role of Women in the Life of the Church,"

from creation to fall and to restoration.<sup>319</sup> In order however to observe the narrative trends and the trajectory proponents have to read Scripture in its broadest context.

Accordingly, Richard Davidson has argued for approaching the task of Scriptural interpretation from Scripture's metanarrative perspective.<sup>320</sup> According to him, the grand central theme of Scripture should be respected alongside with its other accompanying themes.<sup>321</sup> Ralph Neall also expressed similar views; for, for Neall, interpretation must involve tracing the trajectory of God's instructions and actions in the past. Because the Scripture is not addressing many questions modern readers face today, in order to arrive at a consensus, the interpretation must detect the broader trajectory of the Bible.<sup>322</sup>

One of the first proponent's books on the subject of ordination of women *The Welcome Table* nicely summarises the *tota Scriptura* emphasis in their introduction page to a hermeneutical chapter. The editors of the book begin explaining their method by suggesting that "Scripture must be studied as a whole" and the interpreters must "seek truth from the totality of Scripture."<sup>323</sup>

In summary, the above analysis points to a presence of a broad contextual reading emphasis, or *tota Scriptura* principle which alongside the principle-based and historical-cultural emphasis constitutes the third main facet of the proponents' hermeneutical method. The vocabulary of *trajectory*, *plot*, *metanarrative*, *grand theme*, *great play* or *totality of Scripture* formally exemplifies this distinctive feature of the proponents' method. A comparison of this aspect with the opponents' method may be appropriate at this place. Since opponents vehemently reject these notions as endangering the idea of full inspiration and full biblical authority, the contrast of their method to proponents is on this point indeed stark.

#### Rational Aspect

In addition to the principle-based, historical-cultural and broad contextual characteristics, the proponents' hermeneutical method exhibits also a discernable rationalistic tendency.

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<sup>319</sup> David R. Larson, "Man and Woman as Equal Partners: The Biblical Mandate for Inclusive Ordination," in *The Welcome Table*, 123-126.

<sup>320</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millennium," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 11/1-2 (2000): 102-119.

<sup>321</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 80. Davidson writes: "A powerful way to observe the beauty and unity of Scripture is to ask about every passage that one studies, What does this passage contribute to the understanding of the grand central theme of Scripture? The 'grand central theme' is thus an orientation point" (Ibid.).

<sup>322</sup> Ralph E. Neall, "Ordination Among the People of God," in *The Welcome Table*, 262, 265.

<sup>323</sup> "Part II: The Voice of Scripture, Principles of Interpretation," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: Team Press, 1995), 61.

Sakae Kubo has argued that reasoning in hermeneutical process is unavoidable. "Reason is God's precious gift to humankind," claims Kubo and argues further that therefore the question is not whether interpreters should use it or not, but how they should use it.<sup>324</sup> For him the alternative to not using reason is to be left at the mercy of emotions and feelings. Reason, Kubo argues, is not the enemy of Scripture, it is simply a tool for understanding it. Thus for Kubo, "reasoning itself is unavoidable."<sup>325</sup>

Kubo's rational emphasis is also supported by Fritz Guy. Guy's description of how theological thinking works places lots of emphasis on logic and rationality<sup>326</sup> For Guy as for other proponents Scripture remains normative because its scope goes beyond other disciplines, equally it remains relevant because it is different in that it provides the most direct knowledge of the self-revelation of God. Thus the role of Scripture is to supplement knowledge from science and other disciplines. In fact science is independent of revelation and supplements revelation.<sup>327</sup> Therefore Guy insists that in interpretation *Sola Scriptura* has always been an exaggeration. *Prima Scriptura* according to Guy better explains the interpretative dynamics and for that reason he is supporting the use of the Wesleyan quadrilateral which puts emphasis on Scripture, tradition, experience and *reason*.<sup>328</sup> There is therefore a distinguishable rationalistic component present in Guy's approach to Scripture.

David Larson has also followed Guy's emphasis on the Wesleyan quadrilateral. It is Larson's contention that the quadrilateral invites readers to form their "own interpretations of the evidence gathered from each [four sources]". In the final analysis thus, Larson claims, "if our interpretations of Scripture are sound, they will dovetail with our interpretations of tradition, reason and experience." Also vice versa.<sup>329</sup> Because the procedure requires assessment of evidences from different fields it predictably also implies a significant reliance on interpreter's logical and rational processes. It therefore is palpable that rationality is a significant component in the proponents' methodology.

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<sup>324</sup> Sakae Kubo, "A History of Adventist Interpretation of Revelation and Inspiration," online edition, footnote 62.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid. He also writes: "Reason is not subordinating Scripture but attempting to understand it;" and "having accepted Scripture, reason cannot be left on the shelf" (Ibid).

<sup>326</sup> Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically*, 101. Guy's book title is suggestive of the general tenet of his work. Chapter 5 is for example entitled "How to Think with Intellectual Integrity" (Ibid., 95).

<sup>327</sup> Ibid., 144-146.

<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>329</sup> David R. Larson, "What Adventists Can Learn from John Wesley," 11. Larson suggests that: "There can be a proper difference between what a portion of Scripture once meant and what it ought to mean for us today. For this reason, it is not correct to state that interpretations of the Bible are to be based on nothing but the Bible" (Ibid.) Furthermore the rationalistic emphasis is also seen from Larson's insistence on following the interpretative process of comparison of various evidences until the interpreter reaches appropriate equilibrium (Ibid., 12). This kind of interpretative process, as argued also in the main text, requires significant use of one's own intellectual and rational skills.

Richard Davidson's treatment of "Biblical Interpretation" in the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* also shows distinctive signs of a very scientific and rational approach. Particularly visible is Davidson's scientific approach in the way he describes the "specific guidelines for the interpretation of Scripture." Davidson's highly technical and detailed discussion of guidelines must sound rather daunting for an untrained person.<sup>330</sup> Interestingly enough Davidson admits that these guidelines are "dictated by common sense and the laws of language" by which he implies they appeal to basic human rules of logic and rationality.<sup>331</sup> It is, therefore, no wonder that even less profiled proponents would conclude that sound hermeneutics is based on an *objective science* of literary interpretation.<sup>332</sup>

### Principles of Interpretation

Before the discussion of the proponents' method is summarised their hermeneutical approach may be illustrated by a brief review of their major principles and rules of interpretation which are the visible practical steps of their method.

While various authors and documents from the proponents' side have contributed to describing the visible hermeneutical steps, there is only a summary of proponents' most often used steps provided at this place for illustrative purposes. The most visible practical principles of interpretation are the seven following:

1. *Sola Scriptura*. Scripture interprets Scripture, clear illuminates obscure. It is the most commonly used principle and hence could be regarded as the foundational principle of proponents.

2. *Tota Scriptura*. Interpreting Scripture in its totality is to proponents also very important. Holistic reading or totality of Scripture perspective assumes there is underlying

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<sup>330</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 68-87. Davidson's guidelines begin with *Text and Translation* procedures under which he discusses at some length textual studies and translations & versions. The second area involves *Historical Context* procedures where he discusses the reliability of biblical history, questions of introduction, historical backgrounds, seeming discrepancies with secular history and seeming discrepancies in parallel biblical accounts. The third main area involves *Literary Analysis* procedures where he discusses limits of the passage, literary types (prose and poetry at some length) and literary structure at some length too. The fourth area for Davidson involves *Verse-by-Verse Analysis* where the discussion focuses on grammar & syntax and word studies. The fifth area of guidelines involves *Theological Analysis* which contains further discussion of methods of theological study (the book-by-book approach, verse-by-verse exposition, thematic/topical study, the grand central theme perspective and literary structural analysis) secondly discussion of how to interpret problematic theological passages and thirdly discussion on Scriptures pointing beyond themselves (prophecy, typology, symbolism and parables). The last main area of guidelines for Davidson is *Contemporary Application* which further involves discussing Scripture as transcultural and transtemporal, scriptural controls for determining permanence and personalizing Scripture guidelines. Davidson's comprehensive and highly technical list of guidelines and procedures must leave an untrained person in biblical hermeneutics perplexed whether he or she could ever be able to follow such technically detailed and scientific sounding procedures.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, 68. According to him they also however in their essence encompass the grammatico-historical method and so they "also either explicitly or implicitly arise from Scripture itself" (*Ibid.*).

<sup>332</sup> [Rockne, Dahl,] "Letters," 3.

unity and harmony among the various parts of the Bible. This is sometimes referred to as the analogy of Scripture.

3. The focus on *Biblical principles* which transcend time and culture and which could be applied to the conditions of the reader is the third major rule of proponents interpretation. Behind this rule is the assumption that Scripture does not always address the questions of the present-day church and so there is a need to discover the movement and principles in the text.

4. *Attention to historical, cultural and social contexts.* Exploration of the background of the passage in another key rule of interpretation of proponents. This rule helps to distinguish between temporal and transtemporal, cultural application and transcultural principle.

5. *Attention to literary context.* Together with the previous rule, this is one of the most sophisticated and scientific procedures. Literary analysis for proponents involves semantic, linguistic, syntactical, grammatical and manuscripts examinations.

6. *Christocentric principle* is a thematic key. The redemptive act of Christ must be kept a thematic perspective.

7. *An attitude of faith, openness and learning* of the reader. Disciplined and informed mind and even skilled and knowledgeable mind of the reader are the necessary prerequisites of interpretation. This attitude particularly involves openness to the Holy Spirit's guidance and willingness to obey the truth.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> See Nancy J. Vyhmeister, "Prologue," in *Women in Ministry*, 3 and Nancy J. Vyhmeister, "Proper Church Behaviour in 1 Timothy 2:8-15," in *Women in Ministry*, 335. Also "Appendix 3: The Biblical Basis for Ordaining Women: A Statement Issued in 1990 by Time for Equality in Adventist Ministry (TEAM)," in *The Welcome Table: Setting a Place for Ordained Women*, ed. Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca Frost Brillhart (Langley Park, MD: Team Press, 1995), 314-315; Raymond F. Cottrell, "A Guide to Reliable Interpretation: Determining the Meaning of Scripture," in *The Welcome Table*, 64-79; Raymond F. Cottrell, "Ellen White's Evaluation and Use of the Bible," in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 143-161 and Willmore Eva, "Interpreting the Bible: A Commonsense Approach," 5. Furthermore Norskov Olsen for example deals with the subject from the perspective of the major 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformers. Analysing them he recognises (1) literal meaning, (2) consideration of historical and cultural context, (3) Scripture interprets scripture rule, (4) Christocentric principle, (5) the difference between law and gospel rule, (6) illumination of the Holy Spirit, the so called sola fide and sola gratia experience. See Norskov V. Olsen, "Hermeneutical Principles and Biblical Authority in Reformation and Postreformation Eras," *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 57-58. Jo Ann Davidson argues for *Christological principle* as the key to understanding the true intent of Scriptures. See Jo Ann Davidson: "God's Word: Its Origin and Authority," 9. James Cox has also discussed "two rather simple but basic, valid, time-honoured, and universally-held principles of Biblical interpretation:" (1) the interpretation should not accept or reject a text to affirm or to negate a position unless the text explicitly or implicitly speaks to that position, (2) a particular first century application should not be turned into a timeless prescription. See James J. C. Cox, "Some Notes on 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35 for the Commission on the Ordination of Women in the Pastoral Ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," 1-3. See also George R. Knight, *Myths in Adventism: An Interpretive Study of Ellen White, Education, and Related Issues* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1985) and George R. Knight, *Reading Ellen White: How to Understand and Apply Her Writings* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997). Also William Johnsson, "Nine Foundations for an Adventist Hermeneutic," 13-16. Richard Davidson has done one of the most "official" presentations of interpretative procedures and rules. Davidson divides his principles of interpretation into two main categories. The first category contains "foundational principles" and the second "specific guidelines". The first category includes: 1.

It could be concluded that the seven above-mentioned principles form the visible body of rules of proponents' hermeneutics which illustrate the practical functioning of their method. It has to be pointed out that these principles do not stand alone or isolated from the proponents' theoretical considerations and other aspects of their hermeneutical method or their concepts of revelation and inspiration.

#### Summary of Proponents' Methodological Aspects

This section has attempted to analyse the major facets of the proponents' method which - in effect - define the essence of their methodology. It has been argued that just attempting to reconstruct the proponents' method from following their terminology and definitions is not adequate as there are visible semantic differences among proponents. The section has therefore suggested that a better way to the reconstruction of their method would be to analyse the main characteristics of it that stand out.

The analysis in this section has thus shown that there are four such main characteristics in the proponents' method. In the first place the proponents' method is characterised by principle-based reading which in its essence is a tendency to find in Scripture inherent universal principles that could then be applied to the present situation of the reader. This first tendency is in close relationship to the second main characteristic which focuses at the analysis of historical-cultural factors behind the text. The historical-cultural analysis and the resulting distinction between permanent and conditioned elements in the message could be

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*Sola Scriptura*. Davidson calls it "the Bible and the Bible only" rule. It further contains the concepts of *primacy* and *sufficiency* of Scripture; 2. *Tota Scriptura*. Totality of Scripture for Davidson means that all Scripture is inspired and therefore interpreters must consider the totality of revelation in the Protestant canon in the hermeneutical process; 3. *Analogia Scripturae*. This principle means that there is a fundamental unity and harmony among the various parts in Scripture, including the relationship between NT and OT. According to Davidson the analogy of Scripture has three main aspects: (a) Scripture is its own interpreter, (b) consistency of Scripture and (c) clarity of Scripture; 4. "*Spiritual things spiritually discerned*". The final rule in Davidson's first category of "foundational principles" is recognizing the role the Holy Spirit and the spiritual life of the interpreter play in the interpretation process. The principles of interpretation in the category of "specific guidelines" build on the foundational principles according to Davidson. Within this category he discusses the following six main types of guidelines: 1. *Text and Translation* procedures under which he discusses at some length textual studies and translations & versions; 2. The second area involves *Historical Context* procedures where he discusses the reliability of biblical history, questions of introduction, historical backgrounds, seeming discrepancies with secular history and seeming discrepancies in parallel biblical accounts; 3. The third main area involves *Literary Analysis* procedures where he discusses limits of the passage, literary types (prose and poetry at some length) and literary structure at some length too; 4. The fourth area for Davidson involves *Verse-by-Verse Analysis* where the discussion focuses on grammar & syntax and word studies; 5. The fifth area of guidelines involves *Theological Analysis* which contains further discussion of (a) methods of theological study (the book-by-book approach, verse-by-verse exposition, thematic/topical study, the grand central theme perspective and literary structural analysis) secondly (b) how to interpret problematic theological passages and (c) discussion on Scriptures pointing beyond themselves (prophecy, typology, symbolism and parables) and 6. The last main area of guidelines for Davidson is *Contemporary Application* which further involves discussing Scripture as transcultural and transtemporal, scriptural controls for determining permanence and personalizing Scripture guidelines. Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 60-87.



argued is at the heart of proponents' hermeneutical argument against opponents. Nonetheless, the analysis has also demonstrated that the reliance on historical-cultural interpretation, being significantly depended on external factors, actually produces divisive results even among proponents themselves.

The third main characteristic of the proponents' method is their tendency to interpret specific Scriptural directives in the light of the totality of Scriptural revelation. The broad contextual emphasis is closely related to the assumptions of Scriptural unity and sufficiency which are both presupposed by the broad contextual reading. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the visible references to the presence of broad contextual emphasis are the connotations of *trajectory, plot, metanarrative, grand theme, great play or totality of Scripture*.

The final main characteristic which underpins the above tendencies is the rationalistic and scientific aspect their method retains. The analysis showed that proponents tend to perceive the hermeneutical process as a scientific and rational process, one which requires the interpreters not only to exercise their intellectual skills, but also have a very detailed technical knowledge of the procedures involved in the interpretation. It is thus the combination and mutual outworking of the four above-mentioned aspects that characterises and consequently defines the functional boundaries of proponent's hermeneutical approach to Scripture.

### Summary and Conclusion of Chapter III

*The Committee on Hermeneutics and Ordination* made up from proponents who had worked on one of the most influential books published by the proponents side, has identified hermeneutics as the critical issue to be addressed in the debate: "If only we would clarify our hermeneutics we would be able to decide whether the ordination of Seventh-day Adventist women ministers was acceptable."<sup>334</sup> Interestingly enough however, the *Committee* has decided that "one presentation, in the introduction, should be sufficient" and maintains that "the principles of interpretation described here...are time-honored approaches, similar rules appear in recognised Adventist publications."<sup>335</sup> The *Committee's* decision not to give more space to hermeneutical matters which are identified as the key issue in the debate is rather surprising and hardly does justice to the importance of the matter.

Given the committees' recognition, chapter two and three of the dissertation have attempted to "dig" much deeper and go also wider into the hermeneutical apparatus of both

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<sup>334</sup> Nancy J. Vyhmeister, "Prologue," in *Women in Ministry*, 2. On the other hand the *Committee* also understood "that the issue of women's ordination hinged on more than hermeneutical approach to certain passages of Scripture" (*Ibid.*). Therefore the book is not dealing just with hermeneutical issues.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. The "one presentation" the book on hermeneutical stance of proponents is slightly longer than one page.

ordination camps and analyse their various scattered treatments of the subject in order to provide a much-needed comprehensive analysis and structured synthesis of their systems. A comprehensive systematization of opponents' and now proponents' hermeneutical positions has been indeed long overdue in the debate and so, in this regard, Chapter Two and Three hope to provide a significant clarification and foundation for further exploration in the area of Adventist hermeneutics. Before the final chapter's critical assessment of both hermeneutical paradigms, through the exploration of meta-hermeneutical questions from the modern hermeneutical field of biblical interpretation, this chapter will first be concluded with a comprehensive summary of the proponents' biblical, theological and hermeneutical motifs.

In contrast to opponents, the Adventist proponents argue that the biblical material is silent on the issue of ordination of women and does not contain a clear "thus says the Lord". Viewed from this perspective the key biblical passages, proponents suggest, should be viewed from the broader context of Scriptural revelation.

Contextual, linguistic and historical examinations are at the heart of the exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 of various proponents. First, some point out that the context is husband-wife relations and not church order. Secondly, for others the linguistic evidence shows that "silence" is asked of one particular woman and thirdly, several proponents point to historical investigation which uncovers false philosophy of syncretism at Ephesus which might have had an impact on the situation in the church. Additional historical evidence, considering the macro and micro contexts of Roman and Greek churches, shows significant differences between Greek and Roman cultural attitudes towards the public roles of women. Proponents' exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:1-3 is based primarily on contextual considerations, secondly on close reading of the text which focuses on semantic investigation of κεφαλή and thirdly on historical-cultural examination of the background of the passage. With regard to 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 proponents elaborate on the overall context and purpose of the passage which they argue is about church order and not gender relationships. Significantly and in contrast to opponents, the proponents' interpretation of "the law" points to a Jewish custom, a Roman law, or a ruling in Genesis 3:16 but not to a headship rule. Contextual hermeneutics is also used to interpret Ephesians 5:21-33. The context for proponents is marriage and not gender discussion. Furthermore based on semantic investigation proponents conclude that κεφαλή should be understood as "source" rather than "head". Cultural-historical investigation in addition demonstrates that Paul in this passage is breaking the traditional one-way hierarchical submission of Roman household rules. Paul's argumentation rather points to a mutual two-way submission.

The main text that captures however the essence of the proponents' approach to ordination of women is Galatians 3:26-29. The interpretation of Galatians 3 reveals their emphasis on principle-based reading. The big picture of creation-fall-redemption is used as the

primary context for understanding this key passage which according to proponents teaches not only vertical redemption but also horizontal.

The biblical arguments of proponents are further supported by theological arguments. For proponents the theological direction of the Bible becomes critical. Proponents investigate the issue of women's ordination from the perspective of principles rather than literal application. The redemption perspective in this sense becomes the thematic key for their theological arguments while for opponents it is the creation perspective which is the thematic key.

The equality of man and woman is the first theological argument used by proponents. It is based on a semantical analysis of Genesis 1-3. "Adam" is argued to be the humankind which is not distinguished sexually until Genesis 2:23; thus, the instruction to subdue the Earth is made to both. Proponents here follow a hermeneutics which considers the structure, intention, individual words and the plot of the story. While opponents highlight the differences, proponents stress the equality. What proponents stress is the flow of the entire story, the great play or the saga of salvation which not only includes creation and fall but also the redemption perspective. The curse in Genesis 3 has descriptive significance but not prescriptive, since the story also includes a promise of redemption and reversal of the curse.

The second theological argument of proponents focuses on the New Testament attitudes toward women. Based on the 1<sup>st</sup> century historical realities, proponents argue that both Jesus' and the later New Testament church's treatment of women was in many respects progressive. Women, proponents argue, were equal recipients of spiritual gifts which were the only criteria for ministry in the early church. Moreover the New Testament analogy of church as body is further evidence for the equality and mutual cooperation that should exist in the church.

The third theological argument proponents bring to support their case considers the theology of ordination. Proponents from the outset argue that ordination has historically developed into a hierarchical model which is utterly foreign to the New Testament church. Later Augustinian sacramental (status) view of ordination came to dominate the theology of ordination, replacing the New Testament missiological-functional view of ordination as taught for example by the priesthood of all believers. Proponents also observe that the New Testament occurrences of laying on of hands are not in the context of ordination but in the context of church mission.

The last theological argument brought by proponents to support their case is based on the analogy between the 19<sup>th</sup> century proslavery hermeneutics and the current opponents' hermeneutics. Both hermeneutical positions are based on almost identical methodologies which follow a high view of Scripture and literalistic reading, yet opponents' theology ends up being a liberation theology towards slaves and at the same time oppressive theology towards

women's ministry. To proponents this dichotomy in their position points to serious methodological and theological inconsistency in the opponents' case.

When it comes to the proponents' method which was analysed in the second part of this chapter, the analysis has discovered that proponents follow a less unified approach to interpretation than opponents do. Beginning with the inspiration theory, the terminology is indicative of at least two tendencies within the proponents' camp. Some proponents prefer "plenary" or "thought" names for inspiration rejecting any verbal, mechanical *modus operandi* and hence consequently emphasizing that inspiration works primarily on the personal level. On the other hand there are those who while rejecting verbal or mechanical terminology nevertheless emphasise that inspiration affects also the actual words of the author and not just his/her thoughts.

The main analogy employed by proponents to explain the nature of Scriptural inspiration is the incarnational analogy. Here, an emphasis on keeping balance between the human and the divine aspects is a distinct feature of the proponents' theory. While there are certain variations among proponents concerning the possibility or impossibility of separating the two aspects in the theoretical discussions, nonetheless the common tendency to maintain the balance distinguishes proponent's theory of inspiration from opponents' which rather stands on the logic of "full" inspiration and its corollaries.

Another aspect in the proponent's theory of inspiration which sheds additional light on their method and which further distinguishes it from opponents' theory is the concept of trustworthiness or reliability. The mentioned logic of 'full' inspiration is not the main starting point of the proponents' rationale. The opponents' absolute inerrancy view so closely related to this rationale stands in opposition to the proponents' "respectful" approach to Scriptural reliability which avoids inerrancy notions. Proponents tend however to disagree how far reliability can be extended. While some suggest that inspiration assures trustworthiness beyond salvific purpose, others limit the trustworthiness to salvific details allowing other material to contain discrepancies. Overall, proponents prefer to use "sufficiency" and "credibility" terms which express their confidence in the overall purpose of the inspired message rather than inerrancy terminology.

The concept of cultural adaptation is another aspect of the proponents' theory of inspiration. The rationale of the cultural adaptation of the divine message is central to proponents' overall case against opponents. Against the sterile-like inspiration process of opponents, proponents argue that biblical authors were influenced by their culture and historical and individual contexts. The mindset of the authors under inspiration was not free from cultural influences. Inspiration was not an immediate process but rather a mediate process in which a human element contributed to the final product of inspiration. Closely related to this is the view of language. Language, according to proponents, is imperfect as a

medium of communication. They thus hold a different view of language from the strictly positivist and direct view of opponents. While for opponents, inspiration is regarded as a sterile-like process of handing over objective information with almost no mediation on the part of the recipients, proponents have a more mediated view of inspiration and language especially visible in their concept of cultural adaptation. Specifically, proponents argue that the limitations of language are visible in the grammar, semantics and vocabulary of the biblical writers.

Assumptions about the nature of revelation in addition to the theory of inspiration also reveal certain basic attitudes of proponents to Scripture and interpretation. The propositional character means that revelation is primarily concerned with imparting of actual information in the form of universal, timeless, eternal or permanent truths, principles or prescriptions. These principles or truths are recognised as doctrinal truths. Revelation has thus theological and theistic connotations. Especially female proponents suggest that revelation is also metaphorical in its nature. Because there is a dichotomy between the finite and the infinite we need metaphors. Literal language is an inadequate tool. The only means of communication with and access to the divine rests on the use of metaphors.

When it comes to defining the proponents' method itself, proponents have defined hermeneutics as a science of correctly interpreting and as a study of the basic principles and procedures. Exactness and objectivity are thus vital and can be achieved by following the right interpretative procedures. The variety of names by which they prefer to call their method ranges from Historical-grammatical, Grammatical-historical to Grammatical or Historical and even Wesleyan Quadrilateral. All these names fit within the traditional spectrum of Protestant methods.

An important aspect of the proponents' method concerns their attitude to the Historical-critical method. The two major positions which either hold the method to be completely unusable on the grounds of its humanistic assumptions and the more moderate position which holds that its assumptions can be separated from the actual procedures are in essence divided on how the method is defined. Proponents holding the moderate position argue that Historical-critical method in its Troeltschian sense is defined inadequately.

Finally, the chapter has explored the functional aspects which more precisely delineate the boundaries of proponents hermeneutical approach than do just theoretical definitions. The analysis of the aspects of the proponents' method revealed that there are four key characteristics of their method. (1) Principle-based reading. Proponents' interpretation looks for underlying principles which can be derived from the texts and which can be then reapplied to the situation of the reader. This approach differs from the opponents' literal reading which looks for more a direct relevance of the text. Principles to proponents are changeless vehicles of universal meanings and as such transcend culture. The aim of the proponents' interpretation

is at the end to uncover the underlying universal principles which could then be reapplied to the present situation of the church. (2) Historical-cultural Aspect. While proponents embrace a high view of Scripture (however not in its classical inerrant Fundamentalist position), they at the same time acknowledge its cultural limitations. Uncovering the pristine historical meaning is critical to the success of the overall interpretative goal. Literary styles, social customs and anthropomorphisms are evidences of historical-cultural conditioning of Scripture. Proponents even stress that the women's ordination debate could be resolved if the readers were able to correctly distinguish between cultural application and the permanent principle. (3) Another significant mark of the proponents' method concerns an accent on broad contextual reading. Apart from referring to *tota scriptura*, Scriptural unity and sufficiency as theoretical bases for broad reading, proponents also refer to Scripture's overall trajectory, direction of narratives, movement in the story and its metanarrative perspective as hermeneutical means for interpreting individual texts in their broadest contexts. The proponents' approach to Scripture especially on this point is visibly different from the more direct-literal hermeneutics of opponents. (4) Insistence on Rationality. The final discernable characteristic of proponents concerns their positive view of rational processes. Adventist proponents insist on informed reading which stands in opposition to blind reading. They, just as opponents, however do not develop deeper hermeneutical theory to describe the process more accurately. Proponents nonetheless in most cases employ technical and scientifically sounding guidelines which they believe are dictated by common sense and the laws of language. Robust Protestant hermeneutics they insist derives its essence from the philological methods of Erasmus of Rotterdam.

## CHAPTER IV

### THEORETICAL-REFLECTIVE APPRAISAL OF OPPONENTS' AND PROPONENTS' HERMENEUTICAL METHODS

#### Introduction

In the previous three chapters, the dissertation has attempted to present a coherent and systematic picture of the women's ordination debate within the contemporary Adventist theology particularly from the perspective of biblical-theological arguments and interpretative approaches. A correct presentation and the resulting systematic analysis of what the debate involves in terms of the biblical, theological and hermeneutical views was a central contribution of this study since there was no such analysis available before. The last chapter of this dissertation is logically building on the above examination and is deepening the analysis by looking into specific meta-hermeneutical aspects of both approaches from the perspective of the larger field of biblical interpretation and modern developments in the hermeneutical arena. The study has demonstrated that the historical dimension of the debate goes well back to 1881 and more immediately to the 1960s. Yet despite the best theological and hermeneutical attempts to solve the controversy over the ordination of women, neither of the camps seems to be convinced about the theological and hermeneutical solutions proposed by the opposite side. The study showed that the wide theoretical gap between the two hermeneutical approaches with the passing time is not getting any smaller. For this reason the thesis at this stage is attempting to look deeper into the theoretical operation of both hermeneutical mindsets and add an additional element to the systematic analysis of the debate by examining whether there may be relevant fundamental metacritical issues and even weaknesses that have not been yet noticed in the debate. The thesis is thus attempting, at this final stage, to theoretically reflect on and clarify the operation of the Adventist hermeneutical mindsets of both sides from the perspective of the larger hermeneutical field and underlying meta-hermeneutical matters.

The modern hermeneutical field is taken here as a useful academic mirror for raising not immediately apparent meta-hermeneutical questions concerning the functioning of language, epistemology (pre-understanding and understanding), the role of the reader's perspective, the question of the nature of text and meaning and operative philosophical assumptions behind one's method. Consequently, raising such issues might help assess

specific methodological points and uncover potential weaknesses of Adventist approaches of both opponents and proponents which they may have been overlooking and thus ultimately provide a theoretical-reflective mirror to them.

The main objectives of this chapter will be first to concisely introduce the field of biblical interpretation and within that field to contextualise the Adventist approaches. Since the field of biblical hermeneutics is large and there is a plethora of modern approaches, it will not be the intention to be fully comprehensive. Instead a selective approach will be used that will attempt to present an adequate overview of the field without however too much overcomplicating the presentation. Contextualizing Adventist approaches within the field of biblical interpretation is thus the first aim of the chapter. The second main objective is to reflectively evaluate the hermeneutical apparatus of both camps by raising meta-hermeneutical questions concerning the opponents' and the proponents' theory and function of language, their view of the nature of the text and its meaning and concerning their philosophical assumptions. Finally, the last section will bring together all the arguments and integrate them into the final thesis of this study.

Overall the chapter at its core could be characterised as theoretical-reflective meaning that it raises underlying vital questions concerning fundamental hermeneutical assumptions which operate invisibly in opponents' and proponents' thinking. In this sense Chapter Four is the culmination of all the previous chapters and supplies the final reflective appraisal for the overall thesis.

## **Contextualizing Adventist Approaches within the Field of Biblical Hermeneutics**

### **A Concise Introduction to the Field of Biblical Interpretation**

Adventist theological-hermeneutical ordination approaches do not operate independently of the general field of biblical hermeneutics. Adventism was born in the time of the 19<sup>th</sup> century revivalist evangelicalism in North America, and understandably it was influenced and shaped by the theoretical hermeneutical concerns of that time. To understand better – particularly regarding the context of modern Adventist approaches - it is valuable to introduce the field of biblical hermeneutics first to serve as a contextual framework before the Adventist approaches will be contextualised.

It probably does not have to be stressed much that the subject of biblical hermeneutics has been evolving rapidly for the past 40 years. Particularly from 1970s the world of evangelical interpretation<sup>1</sup> to which Adventist hermeneutics historically belongs has

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<sup>1</sup> The term "evangelicalism" is almost impossibly elusive and notoriously difficult to define. This is not only because evangelicalism includes so many ecclesial traditions but also because these traditions are rooted in various historical and theological paradigms. Scholarly attempts to delineate



diversified to a point where it cannot be defined so easily any more. There are significant variations among various approaches to Biblical interpretation in the contemporary scene.<sup>2</sup>

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kinds of evangelicalisms range from Webber's 14 types to Hunter's 4 major types. See Robert E. Webber, *Common Roots: A Call to Evangelical Maturity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979) and James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 7-9. Garry Dorrien who distinguishes three types of evangelicalisms based on historical roots and then three types based on attitudes towards Scriptural authority provides a useful introduction to evangelicalism. The three dominant paradigms in evangelical history are: *Classical evangelicalism*. This is grounded in the confessional and doctrinal heritage of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation particularly the Reformed tradition. *Pietistic evangelicalism* – deviates substantially in its language and outlook from vocabulary of divine sovereignty, forensic justification and literalistic inerrancy used in Reformed and Lutheran traditions. The theological outlook of pietistic evangelicalism is on experience of conversion, sanctification, spiritual regeneration and healing thus sharing the Puritan and Pietistic 18<sup>th</sup> century concerns. *Fundamentalist evangelicalism* is the by-product of fundamentalist reaction against theological modernism. It emphasises absoluteness of certain fundamental beliefs that are denied by modern criticism. In relation to biblical authority Dorrien divides the evangelical positions into: fundamentalist, neoevangelical and neoorthodox. The *fundamentalist* evangelicalism could be distinguished by its commitment to absolute inerrancy, the *neoevangelical* position holds to some "infallible teaching" model of Scripture. It is not the Scripture itself that is infallible but its message, particularly its essential message of salvation. Limited inerrancy could be another term that characterises this type of evangelicalism. *Neoorthodox* evangelicalism does not regard Scripture as the revelation itself but as a witness to revelation that can become the word of God. Despite these differences it could be argued that in broad terms evangelicals are characterised by their commitment to the doctrines of the final authority of Scripture, Christ's redeeming death and resurrection, the importance of evangelism and mission and the importance of a spiritually transformed life. See Garry J. Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 1-11. If we take Dorrien's historical classification, it could be argued that Adventist ecclesial roots lie firmly within evangelicalism, particularly pietistic evangelicalism. It is therefore expected that its hermeneutical outlook will not be foreign to its evangelical roots. Helpful introductions to the problems of evangelicalism are also provided by George M. Marsden, ed., *Evangelicalism and Modern America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984); Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, eds., *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991); Robert K. Johnston ed., *The Use of the Bible in Theology: Evangelical Options* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985); David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989); Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1994) and Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College Publishing, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> For a definite discussion on the contemporary scene in Biblical interpretation see Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description* (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1980); Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) and the more recent Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics: Collected Works with New Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006) and Anthony C. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI/ Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009). Also prominent in the contemporary scene is the *Scripture and Hermeneutics Series*. So far 8 volumes have been published: Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene and Karl Moller, eds., *Renewing Biblical Interpretation. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 1* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000); Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene and Karl Moller, eds., *After Pentecost: Language and Biblical Interpretation. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 2* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001); Craig Bartholomew, Jonathan Chaplin, Robert Song and Al Wolters, eds., *A Royal Priesthood? A Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically, A Dialogue with Oliver O'Donovan. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 3* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002); Craig Bartholomew, Stephen C. Evans, Mary Healy and Murray Rae, eds., *'Behind' the Text: History and Biblical Interpretation. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 4* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003); Craig Bartholomew, Mary Healy, Karl Moller and Robin Parry, eds., *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 5* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2004); Craig G. Bartholomew, Joel B. Green and Anthony C. Thiselton, eds., *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation. Scripture and Hermeneutics*

Worryingly for evangelical hermeneutics, some conservative evangelical textbooks on hermeneutics openly acknowledge that evangelicals have 'no common mind' on most issues, including ordination of women or the doctrine of Scripture.<sup>3</sup> The analysis in this study of the Adventist ordination debate has also not only brought attention to significant theological differences but also uncovered various hermeneutical and methodological 'minds' within the Adventist tradition.

Given the evolving and progressively diverse nature of the field of Biblical hermeneutics, I would suggest that a way to approach it constructively is through organizing the discussion within the categories of traditional/classical, new/modern and neo-pragmatic/context-relative hermeneutics.<sup>4</sup>

The *traditional or classical hermeneutics* is characterised by its fixation on the text and its historical worlds; and as it is, in essence, a text-centered hermeneutics it uses approaches and tools appropriate to deal with the text and its background. Traditionally, therefore, this hermeneutics is rules and procedures of interpretation oriented and based. Notably, this approach does not raise naturally deeper meta-hermeneutical or metacritical questions concerning the hermeneutical process which arise primarily from the reader's perspective.<sup>5</sup>

The *new or modern hermeneutics* is characterised by its multidisciplinary focus which demands a respect for contingency and the particularity of the hermeneutical task. Hence, particular interpretative procedures of particular readers as they read particular genres and particular texts is considered multidisciplinary hermeneutics. At the heart of such hermeneutics is however a basic recognition that not only the horizon of the text needs be taken into hermeneutical considerations, but also the reader's ability to shape the meaning.

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*Series, Volume 6* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2005); Craig Bartholomew, Scott Hahn, Robin Parry, Christopher Seitz and Al Wolters, eds., *Canon and Biblical Interpretation. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 7* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2006) and David Lyle Jeffrey and Stephen C. Evans, eds., *The Bible and the University. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 8* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2007). A very useful overview of past and present hermeneutical approaches is also in Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 542. See also pages 465 and 476-7.

<sup>4</sup> See for example Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, 393.

<sup>5</sup> While I will further characterise traditional hermeneutics in the following pages, the main representative sources of this approach could be identified with Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics*, Third Revised Edition, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1970); Gordon D. Fee, *To What End Exegesis? Essays Textual, Exegetical, and Theological* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), *New testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd revised ed., (Louisville: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2002), with Douglass Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, 2nd ed., (New York: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003); Walter Kaiser and Moises Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, (New York: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994); E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1976) or Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961 [1890]) in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Notably, this approach is more prone to raise deeper meta-hermeneutical issues, arising from its attention to the reader's horizon, such as the function of language, understanding and pre-understanding and theory of meaning.<sup>6</sup>

The *neo-pragmatic or context-relative hermeneutics* could be seen as the opposite approach to the traditional hermeneutics which is text-centered. The neo-pragmatic hermeneutics, it could be further argued, takes the positive affirmation of the reader's contribution that is acknowledged by the modern hermeneutics and applies it in its absolute sense. Thus the meaning is understood to be always relative to the reader or a community of readers. The reader-relative and pragmatic nature of this approach is visible in its main question which is not "what does it mean?" but rather "what does it do?" The key sentence that captures the essence of the neo-pragmatic hermeneutics thus could well be: "The reader's response is not *to* the meaning; it *is* the meaning."<sup>7</sup>

Unlike other reader-response theories, such as the reader-interaction theory of Wolfgang Iser, the narrative gaps reader-response theory of Susan Wittig and the semiotic and text related reader-response theory of Umberto Eco that emphasise positive and active roles of readers in assisting in hermeneutical self-awareness<sup>8</sup>, the neo-pragmatic and socio-pragmatic reader-response theories of Stanley Fish, Richard Rorty or Norman Holland are limited to cultural, ethnocentric, local or individual interests of readers.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, in contrast to radical reader-response theories of neo-pragmatic hermeneutics, the theories of Eco, Iser or Wittig avoid the pure subjectivism of the neo-pragmatic approaches and on the other hand also pure objectivism of text-oriented hermeneutics.<sup>10</sup> Within such a subjectivist theoretical model as the neo-pragmatic context-relative hermeneutics creates, the meaning effectively does not

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<sup>6</sup> The multidisciplinary nature of hermeneutics that takes into consideration metacritical questions of hermeneutical theory is best represented by the work of Anthony Thiselton. See for example *The New Horizons in Hermeneutics*.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley E. Fish, *Is there a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 3, cf 1-17. Italics original.

<sup>8</sup> Wolfgang Iser's main work is *The Acts of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978, 1980) see also his "Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response in Prose Fiction," in *Aspects of Narrative: Selected Papers from the English Institute* (1971), 1-45. Among the work of Susan Wittig is notable: (ed.) *Structuralism: An Interdisciplinary Study* (1975), "A Theory of Multiple Meanings," *Semeia* (1977), 75-105 and "Meaning and Modes of Signification: Toward a Semiotic of the Parable," in *Semiotics and Parables* (1976), 319-349. Umberto Eco's work includes: *A Theory of Semiotics* (1976), *The Role of the Reader: Explorations on the Semiotics of Texts* (1981) and *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (1984).

<sup>9</sup> Stanley Fish's work includes: *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (1967), *Is there a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretative Communities* (1980) and *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies* (1989). Richard Rorty's work includes: *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982) and *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (1989). Norman Holland's work among others includes: *Poems in Persons: An Introduction to the Psychoanalysis of Literature* (1973), *Reader's Reading* (1975), *The Dynamics of Literary Response* (1968).

<sup>10</sup> See William Ray, *Literary Meaning: From Phenomenology to Deconstruction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 134-137.

correct the readers and no prophetic voice is heard beyond the limited interest fields of the readers.

A specific hermeneutical approach of *Feminist hermeneutics* may - at this stage - be appropriate to introduce too, since particular opponents often charge some proponents of following Feminist hermeneutics. Feminist theology and hermeneutics brings together a variety of views, ideologies and approaches.<sup>11</sup> From the point of view of the hermeneutical theory it could be classified as belonging to the socio-critical hermeneutical models alongside with Liberation and Black hermeneutics. Socio-critical hermeneutics is based on questioning social orders which texts supposedly legitimate.<sup>12</sup> The traditional Feminist biblical hermeneutics could be said to proceed in two basic steps. First it starts with radical hermeneutics of suspicion which questions the validity of conventional interpretations of history and biblical texts, which as it argues, are not value-neutral.<sup>13</sup> In the second step Feminist interpretation establishes women's experience as the basic critical principle for unmasking the oppressive conventional social orders. With the help of this critical principle a reinterpretation of the traditional social order is undertaken.<sup>14</sup> For this double hermeneutics of suspicion and reinterpretation,<sup>15</sup> the key becomes the normative status of women's experience and a new conceptual language which reflects feminine categories.

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<sup>11</sup> A selection of primary sources for Feminist hermeneutics may include: Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM, 1983) and *Bread and Stone* (1984); Mary Ann Tolbert ed., *The Bible and Feminist Hermeneutics* (1983); Adela Yarbro Collins, *Feminist Perspectives in Biblical Scholarship* (1985); Letty M. Russell, *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, (1985), Ann Loades, *Feminist Theology* (1990), Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin, *Women of Spirit* (1979); Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Ian Jones, Kirsty Thorpe and Janet Wootton eds., *Women and Ordination in the Christian Churches: International Perspectives* (London: T&T Clark, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Socio-critical hermeneutics it could be said is the fallout of Gadamer's work. However it was Jurgen Habermas who became the most important contemporary theorist of socio-critical hermeneutics. Some of his major works on the subject include: *Theory and Practice* (English, Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), *Knowledge and Human Interests* (English, London: Heinemann, 1971) and *The Theory of Communicative Action: The Critique of Functionalist Reason*, 2 vols. (English, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984 and 1987). For an analytical introduction to the socio-critical hermeneutics see Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 379-409.

<sup>13</sup> For example Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, xxii, 5, 6, 16, 55 and 80; Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities," in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 59; Mary Ann Tolbert, ed., *The Bible and Feminist Hermeneutics*, 114; T. Dorah Setel, "Feminist Insights and the Question of Method," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 35-42 and Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, "Feminist Uses of Biblical Materials," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Letty M. Russell (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 55.

<sup>14</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Feminist Interpretation: A Method of Correlation," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Letty M. Russell (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 112-113.

<sup>15</sup> In many ways the Feminist socio-critical hermeneutics resembles the double hermeneutics of suspicion and retrieval of Paul Ricoeur. See Anthony C. Thiselton, "The hermeneutics of Suspicion and Retrieval: Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutical Theory," in *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 344-378.

However, the hermeneutical version of traditional feminist thinkers such as Fiorenza or Ruether is not the only alternative that is available in the field. Elizabeth Achtemeier and Susanne Heine provide a more text-oriented approach. Both Achtemeier and Heine question a full-scale depatriarchalizing language about God by showing that the gender-related imagery was chosen deliberately and reflects a given theological perspective. They argue that the traditional biblical language does not necessarily presuppose an anti-feminist social orientation and therefore radical socio-critical hermeneutics is an unintended betrayal of feminism.<sup>16</sup> So even within the field of feminist hermeneutics there are certain variations which are following either the traditional text-oriented hermeneutics or a more radical socio-critical suspicion and reinterpretation type of hermeneutics. These options are thus worth keeping in mind particularly as the chapter will further down contextualise and theoretically evaluate the proponent's approaches.

Since the neo-pragmatic approaches in their essence defeat the purpose of hermeneutics I will in the following consider only the traditional and modern hermeneutics that are more relevant to the evangelical and Adventist context. In general terms, Adventist hermeneutics arising from its larger evangelical context can be identified with the traditional hermeneutics as opposed to what is today called new or modern hermeneutics.<sup>17</sup>

### Elements of Traditional and Modern Hermeneutics

Probably the main distinguishing characteristic between the traditional and new schools is the various emphases each school puts either on the text or the reader. While traditional hermeneutics is predominantly concerned with the text and develops its hermeneutical strategies in the form of rules and principles of interpretation around *the text*, new hermeneutic recognises the importance of *the reader* in the hermeneutical process and hence it develops hermeneutical approaches which reflect the reader's problems, namely the problems of pre-understanding, understanding and language.

The difference between traditional hermeneutics and modern hermeneutical theory can be illustrated on the way each defines hermeneutics. Thus traditional evangelical definitions of

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<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Female Language of God: Should the Church Adopt it?" in *The Hermeneutical Quest: Essays in Honour of James Luther Mays (Princeton Theological Monograph 4)*, ed. Donald G. Miller (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Press, 1986), 97-114; Susanne Heine, *Women and Early Christianity: Are the Feminist Scholars Right?* (English, London: SCM, 1987), 9, 109, 121-122 and Susanne Heine, *Christianity and the Goddesses: Systematic Criticism of a Feminist Theology* (English, London: SCM, 1988), 3, 5, 28-28, 34-37, 46, 52 and 65.

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed discussion on the difference between traditional hermeneutics and new hermeneutics see Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, chapters 25 and 26 (441-461 and 463-48). By "new hermeneutic" here I do not mean just the particular school of thought of Ebeling, Fuchs and Bultmann, but a general new trend which considers the problems of the reader's perspective and not just the textual horizon. On the particular school of new hermeneutic of Ebeling, Fuchs and Bultmann see for example James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr., ed. *New Frontiers in Theology: Discussion among Continental and American Theologians, Volume II: The New Hermeneutic* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

hermeneutics tend to almost univocally emphasise that hermeneutics is a study of *rules and principles of interpretation*.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand definitions of modern hermeneutics speak of the subject in terms of the reflection on the conditions of *understanding*.<sup>19</sup>

This initial comparison of traditional and modern field of hermeneutical theory can be further elaborated by highlighting the following elements of traditional hermeneutics: text-centred intentionalism, a two-stage approach, methodology of rules and principles, negligence of the reader's horizon and the lack of theoretical considerations.

(1) *Text-centred Intentionalism*. Behind the intentionalism of traditional hermeneutics is intentionalism in its evangelical Hirschian form. The key characteristic of evangelical intentionalism is a belief that exegetical work of textual analysis will yield a fixed or unchanging meaning which the text contains. For Hirsch the meaning is the same as the author's intention and can be recovered from the text.<sup>20</sup> Thus traditional hermeneutics believes in the possibility of recovering the original meaning or intention of the author from the text with the help of appropriate exegetical procedures.<sup>21</sup>

Given the wide historical and cultural gap between the present-day reader and the author, intentionalist hermeneutics conceives of the meaning as being somehow trapped inside a lifeless body of the text, awaiting a revival and liberation through the use of the right methodology. The historical gap is indeed viewed in traditional hermeneutics as a desert through which the reader must travel to uncover the fresh fountain of meaning.<sup>22</sup> Traditional hermeneutics thus never deviates from the text within which the meaning is trapped.

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<sup>18</sup> For example: Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 1 or William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Revised and Expanded, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 5.

<sup>19</sup> Alexander S. Jensen, *Theological Hermeneutics* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 2. Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 48. Also Anthony C. Thiselton, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion*, 129. "Hermeneutics denotes more than 'rules for the interpretation of texts', even though it first emerged in this form..." (Ibid.).

<sup>20</sup> E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 8. Hirsch writes regarding the meaning: "It is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence" (ibid.). For an Evangelical exploration of the Hirschian intentionalism see Walter C. Kaiser and Moises Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), particularly 27-45.

<sup>21</sup> For example Gordon Fee, "History as Context for Interpretation," in *The Acts of Bible Reading*, ed. Elmer Dyck (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1996); and Walter Kaiser, *Towards an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981).

<sup>22</sup> Roger Lundin, "Interpreting Orphans: Hermeneutics in the Cartesian Tradition," in *The Promise of Hermeneutics*, Roger Lundin, Clarence Walhout and Anthony C. Thiselton (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 41 and 55. For an analysis of intentionalism see pages 36-41. The problem with intentionalist approach to hermeneutics is that, as Lundin argues, it reflects the cold and soulless Cartesian philosophy of the first-person certainty. However as Roger Scruton concludes in his analysis of Cartesian Philosophy "The assumption that there is a first-person certainty... has been finally removed from the centre of philosophy", Roger Scruton, *From Descartes to Wittgenstein: A Short History of Modern Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 284. Intentionalism in its Hirschian form thus "stands pretty much by [itself] in the landscape of contemporary critical theory" as Frank Lentricchia observes in his analysis of Hirschian intentionalism. In Frank Lentricchia, *After The New*

For such a text-centred intentionalism of classical hermeneutics, the utilisation of “objective” exegetical rules and strategies becomes absolutely vital for successful recovering the original meaning. A right methodology thus becomes for traditional hermeneutics not only the guarantee for correct interpretation but also a critical aspect of its mindset. It will thus come as no surprise that the interpretative goal for the traditional hermeneutics is to recover the original historical meaning or as Vanhoozer calls it a “determinative textual meaning”.<sup>23</sup>

(2) The second methodological characteristic of the evangelical hermeneutics is what can be called *the two-stage approach to interpretation*. While the discussion so far has pointed out that recovering the original meaning is the objective of hermeneutics, it is nevertheless not the sole goal of the evangelical interpretation. Traditional hermeneutics has in fact a dual objective. The first is to secure the historical meaning by the means of exegesis. But the interpretation has not fulfilled its purpose until this exegetically secured unchanging meaning is applied to the present-day reader’s situation. Thus traditional evangelical hermeneutics proceeds in two stages to reach its objectives. The historical-textual analysis uncovers the original meaning while the second stage of application is concerned with the original meaning’s significance for today. The methodology has been first introduced by Schleiermacher and later popularised by E. D. Hirsch and Gordon D. Fee in evangelical biblical studies.<sup>24</sup>

(3) The strong emphasis on *the methodology of rules and principles* in another good indicator of traditional hermeneutics. This emphasis is central to evangelical hermeneutics. Almost without an exception the major traditional Protestant books on hermeneutics are primarily explorations of various methods and principles of interpretation. As examples of this trend can be mentioned the classical influential work of Bernard Ramm *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, also the equally influential and comprehensive hermeneutical textbook by William Klein and his co-authors *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* or Walter C. Kaiser and Moises Silva’s *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* and perhaps Louis Berkhof’s *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*. All these can be taken as representatives of the classical text-oriented evangelical Protestant approach to biblical hermeneutics.

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*Criticism*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 257. These and similar observations regarding the philosophical roots of intentionalism are elaborated in the second part of this chapter.

<sup>23</sup> William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 18-19 and 153. K. J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 300.

<sup>24</sup> Schleiermacher’s approach consisted of a) objective historical-linguistic investigation and b) psychological step in which one has to learn more about the author. The evangelicals while retaining the two-stage approach they nevertheless modified it somewhat to a) the objective exegetical step which secures the unchanging meaning and b) the subjective appropriation of the significance of the text which applies it to a present-day situation. It has been especially Hirsch’s *Validity in Interpretation* (1967) and Fee’s work which have been influential on evangelical biblical studies. See Roger Lundin, “Interpreting Orphans: Hermeneutics in the Cartesian Tradition,” in *The Promise of Hermeneutics*, 36-38.

It is illuminating to observe how much emphasis these representative sources place on the correct methodology which is defined in terms of set of rules and principles of interpretation. For example for Berkhof "hermeneutics is the science that teaches us the principles, laws, and methods of interpretation."<sup>25</sup> Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard in their *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* set the basic goal of their book to be in establishing "guidelines and methods to guide those who want to understand Scripture correctly." They claim the readers need an approach of methods or "agreed-upon principles" which are the best guarantee for correct interpretation.<sup>26</sup> Given the prominence of right methods and rules in Protestant hermeneutics, Protestant biblical scholarship, it could be said, reduces hermeneutics to mere exegesis.<sup>27</sup>

Closely related to the methodology of rules and principles is the notion of "method" as such. With regard to the analysis of Adventist approaches it may be worth noting to observe the variety of names traditional Protestant hermeneutics gives to its method. The most preferred names appears to be "philological", "historical", "grammatical" or "historical-grammatical" or even "critical". All these terminologies are not alien to evangelical vocabulary and as Ramm argues all of these could be used as valid descriptions of the traditional evangelical methodology.<sup>28</sup>

(4) *Negligence of the Reader's Horizon and Lack of Concern for Hermeneutical Theory.* Traditional hermeneutics - as opposed to modern hermeneutics - is not concerned with developing relevant concepts of language, meaning, reader's understanding and pre-understanding or a theory of the role of the reader as such, as modern hermeneutical theory does. Traditional hermeneutics is exclusively preoccupied with the horizon of the text only and it leaves out the reader's perspective from the hermeneutical considerations.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 11.

<sup>26</sup> William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 5. Moreover, they also define hermeneutics in line with other evangelical scholars as "both a science and an art" (*ibid.*, italics original).

<sup>27</sup> William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 20. "Proper hermeneutics provides the conceptual framework for interpreting correctly by means of accurate exegesis. Exegesis puts into practice one's theory of interpretation. Thus good hermeneutics will generate good exegetical methods." (*Ibid.*).

<sup>28</sup> Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 114. Ramm is mentioning philological, historical, grammatical or historical-grammatical, or even critical method as valid descriptions of Protestant biblical method. The comprehensive volume of Klein and his colleagues also favours historical-grammatical name for their preferred method. See William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 13.

<sup>29</sup> The concept of horizon was introduced into hermeneutics by Gadamer. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (London: Continuum, 2004), 300-305. Both the text and the reader have their horizons. See also Alexander S. Jensen, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 139-142. Traditional hermeneutics uses the word "presupposition" instead of "horizon of expectation" which is preferred by hermeneutical theoreticians. How "horizons of expectation" function see for example Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 44-46.



The ignorance of the reader's horizon and the consequent lack of concerns for hermeneutical theory of the traditional approaches have been also pointed out from inside the traditional evangelical scholarship. Julius Scott and Walter Kaiser in particular have raised questions already in 1979 about the sleeping condition of traditional evangelical scholarship with regard to the consideration of hermeneutical theory. Scott observes that "for many evangelical Christians, hermeneutics is an area whose importance is granted but whose nature and content is little understood."<sup>30</sup> Indeed the attention of the majority of evangelical scholarship in and before 1970s was on inerrancy and inspiration debates, and before the 1980s hermeneutics was treated rather with an indifferent attitude.<sup>31</sup> Kaiser even goes as far as to say that "much of the current debate over the Scriptures... is, at its core, a result of failure on the part of evangelicals to come to terms with the issue of hermeneutics."<sup>32</sup>

The observations of both Scott and Kaiser are important for understanding the present and the historical position of traditional evangelical hermeneutics. Since traditional evangelical hermeneutics has been up until very recent decades preoccupied primarily with the inspiration and inerrancy debates which have been part of the larger evangelical concern for Biblical authority it may be advantageous to see such concerns as important aspects of the traditional hermeneutics.

(5) *Inspiration and Authority of Scripture Concerns*. Historically, the doctrine of Scripture and its authority occupied a central place in the Protestant system of interpretation. This aspect had become even more prominent at the time of the emergence of liberal Protestantism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup> Particularly the Princeton theologians such as Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, Archibald Hodge and Benjamin Warfield launched a decisive attack against the liberal view of Scripture and in doing that set the agenda for evangelicals for many decades to come.<sup>34</sup> Evangelical authors on hermeneutics such as Gerald Bray had singled out Benjamin B. Warfield (1851-1921) as one of the key influential persons for the

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<sup>30</sup> Julius J. Scott, Jr., "Some Problems in Hermeneutics for Contemporary Evangelicals," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 22 (1979): 67.

<sup>31</sup> John R. Muether, "Evangelicals and the Bible: A Bibliographic Postscript," in *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, A Challenge, A Debate*, ed. Harvie M. Conn (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 253-264.

<sup>32</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Legitimate Hermeneutics," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 117.

<sup>33</sup> Ronald Satta, a defender of Christian Fundamentalism has put forward a proposition in which he argues that the doctrine of the high view of Scripture (absolute inerrancy view) has been the central doctrine of Protestantism from its very beginning. Satta also maintains that the core of Fundamentalism does not lie in the doctrine of eschatology but in its doctrine of Scripture, precisely high view of Scripture. Ronald F. Satta, *The Sacred Text: Biblical Authority in Nineteen-Century America*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 73 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2007), 103, footnote 11.

<sup>34</sup> Mark A. Noll, *The Princeton Theology: 1812-1921* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983).

modern evangelical doctrine of Scripture. It can be argued that for Warfield (a) the Bible is verbally inspired, though in a less mechanical or immediate way than normally asserted<sup>35</sup>, (b) it is factually inerrant in everything it mentions including historical or scientific details and that (c) only the autographs were without any error and hence inspired.<sup>36</sup>

Warfield was the first one who had limited the qualifications of inerrancy to the category of original autographs, even though after him many other qualifications have been added.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, evangelicals appear to have maintained unanimity regarding their views of Biblical authority.<sup>38</sup> Warfield in this regard is still seen as probably the key figure in shaping the evangelical doctrine of Scripture and its inspiration.<sup>39</sup>

Warfield's teaching in modern dress has been for example expounded by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy in its so-called *Chicago Statement* (1978). The summary section of the document contains five central statements: About the truthfulness of God (point 1), infallibility in all matters Scripture touches upon (point 2), the Spirit's illumination (point 3), verbal inspiration and inerrancy in all its teaching (point 4) and an all-or-nothing position regarding divine authority of Scriptures if the full inerrancy is downgraded to limited inerrancy (point 5).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The view of Scripture based on immediate activity of God means that the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible through immediate activity with human agents being rather inactive. On the other hand, the mediate view of Scripture allows human agents to mediate what they receive or experience under inspiration. Kern Trembath's work on *Evangelical Theories of Biblical Inspiration: A Review and Proposal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) based on his doctoral research has demonstrated that a tension between mediate and immediate positions had been present particularly in Warfield's view of Scripture. While Trembath shows how Hodge, Warfield or Montgomery's theories of Scripture are similar in their Common Sense Philosophy assumptions, deductivist methodology they follow and absolute inerrancy conclusions they reach, it is particularly Warfield's view of Scripture's inspiration that is neither mediate nor fully immediate. See Kern R. Trembath, *Evangelical Theories of Biblical Inspiration*, 8-46; Warfield's position is explored on pages 20-27.

<sup>36</sup> Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 555-559.

<sup>37</sup> Morris Ashcraft, "Revelation and Biblical Authority in Eclipse," *Faith and Mission*, Spring 1987, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Carl F. Henry's, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols. (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976-1983) could well be regarded as the magnum opus of evangelicalism. Different types of inerrancy concepts held by evangelicals are discussed for example in Robert K. Johnston, *Evangelicals at an Impasse: Biblical Authority in Practice* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1979); Robert McNair Price, "The Crisis of Biblical Authority: The Setting and Range of the Current Evangelical Crisis," (PhD Dissertation, Drew University, 1981), 99-243 and in Clark C. Pinnock, "Evangelicals and Inerrancy: The Current Debate," *Theology Today*, 35, 1978, 66-67.

<sup>39</sup> From within the Adventist scholarship Peter van Bemmelen has for example assessed the contribution of Warfield's inspiration theory. See Peter M. van Bemmelen, "Issues in Biblical Inspiration: Sanday and Warfield," (ThD Dissertation, Andrews University, 1987), especially 197-309.

<sup>40</sup> The Chicago statement on Biblical Inerrancy was first published in *toto* including its "Summary Statements", "Articles of Affirmation and Denial" and "Exposition" by C. F. H. Henry in *God, Revelation And Authority*, vol. 4 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1979), 211-219. The statement was signed by more than 300 leading evangelical scholars among them James Boice, Norman L. Geisler, Carl F. H. Henry, Harold Lindsell, John Warwick Montgomery, J. I. Packer, Francis Schaeffer, R. C. Sproul and John Wenham.

It is important to notice how prominent and central these inspiration-revelation and Biblical authority concerns were for the traditional evangelical outlook. According to Scott and Kaiser this fixation to such concerns led to neglect of deeper hermeneutical questions.<sup>41</sup>

### **Common Sense and Baconian Heritage of the Traditional Text-oriented Hermeneutics**

So far I have delineated traditional hermeneutics in terms of five aspects: text-centeredness; the two-stage approach of exegesis and application; methodology of rules and guidelines for reading; negligence of the reader's horizon and a general lack of concern for hermeneutical theory and concerns for the inspiration of Scripture. Equally important as touching on the key aspects may however be to briefly introduce the historical-theoretical heritage of the traditional hermeneutics.

For most of their history, evangelicals especially in America have denied that they had a philosophy. All they were doing they thought was using their common sense and following *Sola Scriptura*. However, the evangelical world is slowly awakening up to the fact that their thinking had been shaped by philosophical forces more than they were willing to acknowledge it: a significant impact had been made on modern evangelicalism and their hermeneutics, particularly by the Scottish Common Sense Philosophy and the American Didactic Enlightenment.<sup>42</sup>

Scottish Common Sense philosophy derives its roots from the teachings of Thomas Reid (1710-1796). Reid was a contemporary of David Hume whose skeptical empiricism Reid wanted to overcome. David Hume insisted that humans do not perceive things that are external, but only certain images and pictures of them imprinted upon the mind.<sup>43</sup> This way, observers cannot know for sure whether what they perceive corresponds to the real world that exists outside of the sensory perceptions. Empirical observers cannot even know whether they can rely on their senses which in fact may or may not transmit the outside world to their mind accurately.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> However in the recent decades the perception in contemporary field of evangelical hermeneutics is slowly changing towards recognition of the importance of hermeneutical theory thanks to especially a leading hermeneutical theoretician Anthony Thiselton who is working from within evangelical scholarship. Especially influential were Thiselton's *Two Horizons* (1980) and *New Horizons* (1992). Among his recent contributions is his volume containing the collection of his essays including new essays *Thiselton on Hermeneutics* (2006) and *Hermeneutics of Doctrine* (2007). Robert Knowles' recent PhD dissertation also assesses Thiselton's work as being unique and groundbreaking in the field of hermeneutics. See Robert Knowles, "The Grammar of Hermeneutics: Anthony C. Thiselton and the Search for a Unified Theory," (PhD Thesis, Cardiff University, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 83-88.

<sup>43</sup> David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 1.1.

<sup>44</sup> A concise introduction to Hume's philosophy in relation to Christian thought is provided by Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought: A History of Philosophers, Ideas and Movements, Volume 1: From The Ancient World to the Age of Enlightenment* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 234-258. For an extensive bibliography on Hume and his work see Brown's note 1 on page 402.

Against such skeptical empiricist philosophy (which Reid believed threatened not only the foundations of scientific explorations but also the foundations of Christian faith), Reid responded with his philosophy of direct realism. Central to Reid's thought is what he calls the "principles of commonsense". Such principles are used and presupposed by all human beings. It was in fact God, the Supreme Being that governs the world by the laws of nature, who also furnished the human mind with basic dispositions so that "every man of common understanding... finds it absolutely necessary to conduct his actions and opinions by them."<sup>45</sup>

Because God is the author of both the laws of nature and the principles of commonsense a direct correspondence between the mind and the empirical reality exists. Reid's central hypothesis therefore in essence proposes that God has tuned into the human mind of each person in such a way that it is able to read the physical world accurately almost by default. All that observers then need to do is to collect all available data from a studied field by the method of induction and the truth will become apparent to the mind. This way Reid and his followers were able to overcome the reader's problem which effectively Hume has raised.

The ideas of Scottish Commonsense philosophy in America combined with Baconian and Newtonian scientific method based on inductive collecting and combining data created what Noll calls the "American Didactic Enlightenment" or "Evangelical Enlightenment."<sup>46</sup> The American Enlightenment provided just the right tools to evangelicals, in order that they may master the tumults of the philosophically and politically revolutionary era of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Nowhere was the marriage between the evangelically minded Protestantism and the Scottish Commonsense and inductive scientific Baconianism more visible than in the doctrine of Scripture.

Baconian inductive methodology and the assumptions of commonsense philosophy meant that evangelicals began to treat Scripture as a scientific text whose pieces were to be collected and arranged and the reader would then in an almost obvious manner recognise the truths on any issue. A Restorationist James Lamar in 1859 summarised these sentiments well: "The Scriptures admit of being studied and expounded upon the principles of the inductive method; and...when thus interpreted they speak to us in a voice as certain and unmistakable as the language of nature heard in the experiments and observations of science."<sup>47</sup> It is therefore

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<sup>45</sup> Thomas Reid, *Essays on Intellectual Powers of Man*, 1.2. For an extensive bibliography on Thomas Reid's work see Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought*, note 1 on page 405-406.

<sup>46</sup> Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 87-88.

<sup>47</sup> James S. Lamar, *Organon of Scripture; or, The Inductive Method of Biblical Interpretation* (1859) quoted in Richard T. Hughes and Leonard C. Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 156-157 and 161. Leonard Woods' sentiments (1822) about the best method of the Bible study "[one] which is perused in the science of physics," regulated "by the maxims of Bacon and Newton" were quite common among evangelicals. See Leonard Woods quoted in Herbert Hovenkamp, *Science and Religion in America, 1800-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 61.

noteworthy that the Bible became “a store-house of facts” and its nature understood in propositional sense.<sup>48</sup> The virtues of objectivity, scientific precision and trust in the capacities of common sense (mind) of the reader are the defining traits of the evangelical hermeneutical thought.

By way of summary, if hermeneutics can be classified as a species occupying a middle ground between epistemology and methodology, as Alexander Jensen argues<sup>49</sup>, then hermeneutics should not only be concerned with developing a right set of guidelines for interpreting texts but also be informed by a theory of knowledge about what is involved when *readers* attempt to *understand* texts. A visible lack of meta-critical reflection concerning the reader's perspective is an aspect of the traditional hermeneutics which may be open to discussion.

### The Place of Adventist Approaches Within the Field of Biblical Interpretation

Adventist hermeneutics given its historical and theological roots largely belongs to the world of evangelical tradition.<sup>50</sup> As I indicate above it may be advantageous for contextualizing Adventist approaches to narrow the attention to the differences between the traditional and modern hermeneutical viewpoints.

The main distinguishing characteristic between the traditional and new schools is the various emphases each school puts either on the text or the reader. While traditional hermeneutics is predominantly concerned with the text and develops its hermeneutical strategies in the form of rules and principles of interpretation around *the text*, new approaches to hermeneutics recognise the importance of *the reader's perspective* in the hermeneutical process.<sup>51</sup> In the course of the investigation the traditional nature of both Adventist opponents' and proponents' methodologies has become increasingly obvious.

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<sup>48</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952 [orig. 1872-73]), 1:10-11.

<sup>49</sup> Alexander S. Jensen, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 5-6.

<sup>50</sup> See Garry J. Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*, 1-11. If we take Dorrien's historical classification, it could be argued that Adventist ecclesial roots lie firmly within evangelicalism, particularly *pietistic evangelicalism*.

<sup>51</sup> Traditional hermeneutics is defined as “the science that teaches us the principles, laws, and methods of interpretation.” See Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, 11. Given the emphasis on methods and rules in Protestant hermeneutics, Protestant biblical scholarship, it could be said reduces hermeneutics to mere exegesis. See William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 20. “Proper hermeneutics provides the conceptual framework for interpreting correctly by means of accurate exegesis. Exegesis puts into practice one's theory of interpretation. Thus good hermeneutics will generate good exegetical methods.” (Ibid.). Modern hermeneutics on the other hand sees the nature and the task of interpretation differently. See Alexander S. Jensen, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 2. Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 48. Also Anthony C. Thiselton, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion*, 129. “Hermeneutics denotes more than ‘rules for the interpretation of texts’, even though it first emerged in this form...” (Ibid.).

## Aspects of Traditional and Adventist Hermeneutics

The text-centred intentionalism, the methodology of rules and principles and a two-stage approach to exegesis and application are the most visible aspects of traditional hermeneutics. In addition a strong concern for the inspiration and authority of Scripture and the neglect of the reader's horizon lead to underestimation of metacritical issues. Adventist ordination approaches from both sides of the spectrum reflect all these aspects.

(1) *Intentionalist assumptions*, for example, are particularly visible in the way the representatives of both camps treat individual biblical texts and passages as documented in the first parts of Chapters II and III. While for the opponents the meaning is assumed to be present in the text in a literal, plain, natural and direct form, for the proponents the meaning is found in the text more indirectly in the form of principles.<sup>52</sup> Behind both these views however there is a noticeable assumption of intentionalism, especially intentionalism in its traditional evangelical Hirschian form.<sup>53</sup> The key characteristic of such traditional intentionalism is a belief that exegetical work of textual analysis will yield a fixed or unchanging meaning which the text contains. Adventist approaches to women's ordination also assume similar functioning of biblical texts where the meaning is present in the form of the authorial intention. Gerhard Hasel's reference to the work of E. D. Hirsch and Walter Keiser as the benchmark for evangelical biblical hermeneutics can probably be used as a general example. Hasel's intentionalist view is evident from the direct appeal to Kaiser's statement: "To interpret, we must in every case reproduce the sense the Scriptural writer intended for his own words."<sup>54</sup> Moreover the analyses in both Chapters II and III demonstrated that Adventist proponents and opponents believe in the possibility and necessity of recovering the original meaning or the intention of the author from the text with the help of appropriate exegetical procedures just as classical evangelical hermeneutics does.<sup>55</sup>

(2) For such a text-centred intentionalism of classical hermeneutics using "objective" *exegetical rules and strategies* becomes absolutely vital for successful recovering the original meaning which lies on the other side of the cultural and historical abyss.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See in the chapter II and III the sections on exegetical arguments of opponents and exegetical arguments of proponents. For example Holmes, in *Prove all Things*, 163, an example from opponents.

<sup>53</sup> For Hirsch the correct meaning could be found in the author's intention which can be recovered from the text. E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 8. Hirsch writes regarding the meaning: "It is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence" (ibid.).

<sup>54</sup> Gerhard Hasel, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women," 6. Kaiser's statement is from Walter C. Kaiser, "Legitimate Hermeneutics," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 118.

<sup>55</sup> For example Gordon Fee, "History as Context for Interpretation," in *The Acts of Bible Reading*; and Walter Kaiser, *Towards an Exegetical Theology*.

<sup>56</sup> Roger Lundin, "Interpreting Orphans: Hermeneutics in the Cartesian Tradition," in *The Promise of Hermeneutics*, 41 and 55. For an analysis of intentionalism see pages 36-41.

Viewed from this perspective, the debates between Adventist proponents and opponents about what is the correct, objective or scientific methodology provide clear indications of their traditional hermeneutics.<sup>57</sup> While it is true that Adventist opponents have a tendency to overlook or marginalise the historical gap in their method, this cannot be taken as an evidence of their lack of commitment to a method let alone intentionalism. In fact both theirs and also proponents' views about the meaning which is often referred to as "timeless truth" or "universal principle(s)", coupled with following a detailed rules-and-principles hermeneutics to recover the "changeless" truths are clear evidences of intentionalist thinking and commitment to a methodology of rules and principles.<sup>58</sup> All these examples place Adventist opponents and proponents' hermeneutics within the framework of the traditional hermeneutics which is characterised by its text-centeredness intentionalism and the use of a methodology of rules and principles.

(3) Furthermore, the third main aspect of the evangelical hermeneutics i.e. a *two-part exegesis and application approach to interpretation* is also a visible trait of Adventist ordination approaches.<sup>59</sup> Particularly the proponents' hermeneutics distinguishes carefully between the two methodological steps of historical, cultural and linguistic exegesis and application. This is for example visible in the way proponents define the nature of hermeneutics as being both a science and an art.<sup>60</sup> For proponents the science part of the definition refers to exegetical procedures, often argued to be objective and scientific, while the art part in the definitions refers to subjective appropriation of what exegesis discovers. In addition to this, leading representatives such as Richard Davidson for example explicitly hint at the two-stage methodological approach of traditional evangelical hermeneutics.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See sections in Chapters II and III which analyse the attitudes of both camps regarding the use of right methodology. Adventist ordination debate has indeed centred on the question about a right methodology to a significant degree.

<sup>58</sup> See especially opponents and proponents set of rules of interpretation. Both sets of rules demonstrate strong exegetical commitment to recover the "truth" from the texts. It could even be argued that opponents' case rests on the assumption that the disputed texts contain universally binding and therefore unchanging truths which can be recovered by literalistic reading (Chapter II, exegetical arguments of opponents, 1 Timothy 2). On the other hand, proponents principles based reading of the texts also strongly assume that the meaning could be revived in the form of eternal principles which can be formulated with the help of textual-historical analysis (see Chapter III, exegetical arguments of proponents).

<sup>59</sup> I have indicated in the introduction that the two-part methodology has been first introduced by Schleiermacher and later popularised by E. D. Hirsch and Gordon D. Fee in evangelical biblical studies. See Roger Lundin, "Interpreting Orphans: Hermeneutics in the Cartesian Tradition," in *The Promise of Hermeneutics*, 36-38. It has been especially Hirsch's *Validity in Interpretation* (1967) and Fee's work which has been influential in evangelical biblical studies.

<sup>60</sup> For example William Johnsson, "Nine Foundations for an Adventist Hermeneutic," 14. Willmore Eva, "Interpreting the Bible: A Commonsense Approach," 5.

<sup>61</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 60. While Davidson describes the aim of hermeneutics as threefold, the two-part approach is nonetheless clearly discernable: 1. To understand what the human writers intended to convey to their

On the other hand, while the opponents' hermeneutic to a large degree is more direct or immediate in its reading than the more "scientific" reading strategies of proponents in that the original meaning of the text tends to immediately overlap with its significance (application),<sup>62</sup> nonetheless the two-stage methodology is not denied by them in theory. An influential opponent, Gerhard Hasel back in 1980s directly approved of the Hirschian two-stage approach of "meaning" and "significance" as the correct method of interpretation.<sup>63</sup> Hasel's theoretical approval of the Hirschian hermeneutical model is even more remarkable because he was at that time the dean of the most influential Adventist theological institution which may suggest that such an acceptance of the two-stage methodology was part of the Adventist hermeneutical practice in general and not just limited to individual views of opponents.

Another example of how Adventist ordination hermeneutics generally and proponents' approaches in particular overlap with the traditional evangelical Protestant hermeneutics is represented by the Ramm's *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. The way the book defines hermeneutics as a two-stage science-art/rules-application project in the introduction, through to how Ramm organises and presents the material in its key chapters three to five, moving from inspiration to theological principles down to specific exegetical guidelines, provides a rather startling parallel example to how Adventist ordination participants define, organise and even present theological principles or specific exegetical guidelines.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, it is known fact that Ramm's material had been widely used in the past by the leading Adventist theological institution, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University as a textbook on hermeneutics.<sup>65</sup> There is hence at least a strong parallel in thinking that is discernable between traditional two-stage Hirschian method as popularised by Ramm, Fee or Kaiser and Adventist hermeneutical approaches. It seems

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readers; 2. To grasp what the divine author intends to communicate and; 3. To learn how to communicate and apply the message. (Ibid.).

<sup>62</sup> See for example Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 36. Also see in chapter three the Clarity of Scripture section under the Method and Principles part. Opponents assume that what the text meant (the task of exegesis) and what it means (the task of application) is in agreement and hence both these methodological steps are rather conjoined into one. The literalistic reading tendencies also lead to a direct and immediate perception of the meaning.

<sup>63</sup> See Gerhard Hasel, "Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women," 6.

<sup>64</sup> Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. For the definition of hermeneutics see page 1. For the structuring and specific theological principles and specific exegetical guidelines see chapters 3, 4 and 5 pages 93-162. For Adventist examples see methodological section in chapters II and III and particularly Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 58-104.

<sup>65</sup> Information obtained from Andrews University alumni. Illustrating Bernard Ramm's influence in Adventist circles may also be a topic that has dealt with Ramm's work in a recent PhD thesis submitted in 2006 at Andrews University. See Andrew M. Mutero, "A Comparative Investigation of the Concept of Nature in the Writings of Henry M. Morris and Bernard L. Ramm," (PhD Dissertation, Andrews University, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2006).



therefore beyond question that both Adventist proponents and opponents' interpretative approaches which in fact are very similar especially in their approach of guidelines and rules of interpretation could firmly be placed under the umbrella of the mindset and functioning of traditional evangelical Protestant hermeneutics.<sup>66</sup>

A supplementary point that could be brought in to support similarities with evangelical methodology could be based on the usage of the same terminology each uses to define its methods. Chapter Two has identified the preferred method of opponents as "historical-grammatical", while Chapter Three has identified the preferred method of proponents as "grammatical", "historical", "grammatical-historical" or "Wesleyan quadrilateral". All these terminologies are not alien to evangelical vocabulary and, as Ramm argues, all of these could be used as valid descriptions of the traditional evangelical method.<sup>67</sup>

(4) Apart from obvious areas of methodological similarities between the approaches of Adventist proponents and opponents and the traditional, mostly evangelical hermeneutics, Adventist approaches also show general similarity with classical biblical interpretation in that neither of them seriously discusses *the problems of the reader's perspective* and/or develops a *hermeneutical theory* arising from the problems of the reader's perspective.

Traditional evangelical as well as Adventist hermeneutics fails to develop relevant concepts of language, meaning, reader's understanding and pre-understanding or a theory of the role of the reader as such, as modern hermeneutical developments do. The analysis of many resources from both sides of the ordination spectrum in the first three chapters was not able to detect any significant attempts that would address what is called in the modern hermeneutical theory *the reader's horizon*. To the contrary, not only are the Adventist hermeneutics exclusively preoccupied with the horizon of the text, but furthermore, questions of the reader's horizon are significantly misunderstood and generally brushed aside as being liberal expressions of historical critical theories.<sup>68</sup> Hence there has not been much theoretical

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<sup>66</sup> Long set of rules in both camps are also an evidence of extensive preoccupation with the text. In addition, both evangelical Protestant hermeneutics and Adventist ordination approaches seem to believe that all that is needed to recover the meaning from the text is to apply appropriate exegetical rules. Somehow to make an application once the meaning is secured is not so complicated since there are virtually no rules or guidelines explaining how to make application. In this sense referring to application as an art and to exegesis as a science is revealing about which of these steps is regarded as central. But the overall preoccupation with the text in both traditional Protestant and Adventist hermeneutical approaches is evident.

<sup>67</sup> Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 114. Ramm is mentioning "philological", "historical", "grammatical" or "historical-grammatical", or even "critical method" as valid descriptions of Protestant biblical method. The comprehensive volume of Klein and his colleagues also favours "historical-grammatical" name for their preferred method. See William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 13.

<sup>68</sup> Davidson for example treats such theoretical questions as being all part of "The Enlightenment Hermeneutics and the Historical Critical-Method" see Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 90-94. Equally Hasel placed the

attempt within Adventism to consider larger theoretical questions arising from the perspective of the reader.

In the first section I have highlighted how leading evangelical thinkers have observed the lack of theoretical considerations themselves. Walter Kaiser has in this regard said that “much of the current debate over the Scriptures... is, at its core, a result of failure on the part of evangelicals to come to terms with the issue of hermeneutics.”<sup>69</sup> The attention of the majority of evangelical scholarship before 1970s was on inspiration, inerrancy and generally authority of Scripture debates battling the influence of historical-criticism which meant that hermeneutics generally was before 1980s treated rather unsympathetically.<sup>70</sup>

While the situation in the contemporary field of evangelical hermeneutics is slowly changing<sup>71</sup>, the latest Adventist publications on hermeneutics prefer to follow the traditional text-centred and guidelines-centred approach which does not give space to reader’s perspective considerations.<sup>72</sup> Adventist scholars involved in the ordination debate from both sides of the spectrums for various reasons to be mentioned later appear to reject or neglect the problems connected with the reader’s perspective and in this sense overlook an issue addressed in modern hermeneutical theory.

A visible lack of metacritical reflection on the level of hermeneutical theory is one of the critical issues when it comes to understanding Adventist ordination approaches. The critical assessment in the second part of the chapter will therefore specifically look into these dynamics and will try to indicate possible reasons for the traditional orientation of the Adventist hermeneutical approaches.

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questions of the reader’s horizon under historical-critical school of thought. See Gerhard Hasel, “Biblical Authority, Hermeneutics, and the Role of Women,” 6.

<sup>69</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “Legitimate Hermeneutics,” in *Inerrancy*, 117. Julius Scott similarly observes that “for many evangelical Christians, hermeneutics is an area whose importance is granted but whose nature and content is little understood.” See Julius J. Scott, Jr., “Some Problems in Hermeneutics for Contemporary Evangelicals,” 67.

<sup>70</sup> John R. Muether, “Evangelicals and the Bible: A Bibliographic Postscript,” in *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic*, 253-264.

<sup>71</sup> Especially influential became Thiselton’s *Two Horizons* (1980) and *New Horizons* (1992). Among his recent contributions is his volume containing the collection of his essays including new essays *Thiselton on Hermeneutics* (2006) and *Hermeneutics of Doctrine* (2007). Robert Knowles’ recent PhD dissertation also assesses Thiselton’s work as being unique and groundbreaking in the field of hermeneutics. See Robert Knowles, “The Grammar of Hermeneutics: Anthony C. Thiselton and the Search for a Unified Theory,” (PhD Thesis, Cardiff University, 2005). Also the *Scripture and Hermeneutics* series where many leading evangelicals are contributing considers matters arising from modern hermeneutical theory.

<sup>72</sup> The latest Adventist publications on a hermeneutics, such as the *Handbook of Adventist Theology* (2000) with Davidson’s article on biblical interpretation or the volume by Reid, George W., ed. *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*. Biblical Research Institute Studies, vol. 1 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute and General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005) which contains a number of contributions from Adventist scholars involved also in ordination debate, are examples of traditional approach to hermeneutics. Neither of these nor any other publication up until today in Adventism discusses the problems of hermeneutical theory.

## Contextualizing Opponents' Doctrine of Scripture

Before the discussion can move to the assessment part, however, I will first attempt to contextualise certain specific aspects of opponents and proponents' views. With regard to opponents, it is relevant to identify the larger connections of their doctrine of Scripture because of central place it occupies in the opponents' theology and methodology. With regard to Adventist proponents an investigation will be undertaken into possible connections to Feminist hermeneutics as it also may shed light for later critical assessment.

First, in this section I will argue that there are significant similarities between the opponents' doctrine of Scripture and the Fundamentalist doctrine of Scripture as particularly held by Benjamin B. Warfield (1851-1921) and later expounded by the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* (1978).

The Adventist opponents' view of and understanding of the function of Scripture is closely tied to their inspiration theory. While opponents do not endorse a mechanical or dictation model of inspiration their descriptions nonetheless do not exclude infallibility and inerrancy concepts as proper descriptions of their high view of Scripture, concepts which are often connected with verbal or mechanical models of inspiration. An interesting aspect of their view of Scripture concerns a tension between *mediate and immediate views of inspiration*. The issue that creates a tension for them is how much mediated activity can be attributed to the human agents and how much unmediated activity to the divine working. The significant point to observe is that on one hand Adventist opponents cannot subscribe to full immediate divine activity which would lead to a mechanical/dictation view of Scripture while on the other hand they reject a view of Scripture which allows for genuine human contribution or mediate activity.<sup>73</sup>

Kern Trembath's work on *Evangelical Theories of Biblical Inspiration* (1987) based on his doctoral research has demonstrated that a similar tension between mediate and immediate positions had been present particularly in Warfield's view of Scripture's inspiration. While Trembath shows how C. Hodge, Warfield or Montgomery's theories of Scripture are similar in their Common Sense Philosophy assumptions, in the deductivist methodology they follow and the absolute inerrancy conclusions they reach, it is particularly

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<sup>73</sup> The view of Scripture based on immediate activity of God means that the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible through immediate activity with human agents being rather inactive. On the other hand, the mediate view of Scripture allows human agents to mediate what they receive or experience under inspiration. Adventist proponents for example claim that Scripture did not come as the result of a dictation mode of inspiration (as a result of God's immediate activity) yet they also hold that human writers were not influenced by their own prejudice or culture of their day when under inspiration (no acknowledgement of mediate activity either). For example Raymond C. Holmes, *The Tip of an Iceberg*, 32, 42, 43; Pipim, *Receiving the Word*, 51, 265 and 248, 226. For a detailed analysis of opponents' view of the nature of Scripture see in chapter II sections on Definition and Terminology and Divine and Human under The Theory of Biblical Inspiration.

Warfield's view of Scripture's inspiration as neither mediate nor fully immediate that shows the best similarities to Adventist opponents' view of Scripture.<sup>74</sup>

This argument can be further supported also by Gerald Bray's description of Warfield's view of inspiration which has already been briefly alluded to in the first section. It can be observed that for Warfield just as for modern Adventist opponents (a) the Bible is verbally inspired, though in a less mechanical way than normally asserted, (b) it is factually inerrant in everything it mentions including historical or scientific details and that (c) only the autographs were without any error and hence inspired.<sup>75</sup>

Further evidence of similarities between Warfield's theories and Adventist opponents' inspiration a comparison with the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy' *Chicago Statement* (1978) which is generally regarded as an extension of Warfield's theories provides. When analysing the five points of the summary statement it also becomes evident that for example Adventist proponents could subscribe only to its two statements, about the truthfulness of God (point 1) and the Spirit's illumination (point 3). However the opponents' view of Scripture is in agreement with all five points of the summary statement, namely infallibility in all matters Scripture touches upon (point 2), verbal inspiration and inerrancy in all its teaching (point 4) and its all-or-nothing position regarding divine authority of Scriptures (point 5).<sup>76</sup> This in a direct way connects Adventist opponents to the Chicago statement and in an indirect manner shows that opponents' view of Scripture is a not-so-distant relative of Warfield's theories.

The Scriptural inerrancy position of the Princeton school to which Warfield belonged has been also traditionally identified with the Fundamentalist movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>77</sup> Ronald Satta, a defender of Christian Fundamentalism has put forward a proposition in which he argues that the core of Fundamentalism does not lie in the doctrine of eschatology but in its doctrine of Scripture, precisely its high view of Scripture.<sup>78</sup> Satta distinguishes among three alternatives which were recognised in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with regard to Scripture: (1) the high view which regarded Scripture as absolutely inerrant and verbally inspired; (2) the partial theory which proposed that only thoughts were inspired but not the

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<sup>74</sup> Kern R. Trembath, *Evangelical Theories of Biblical Inspiration*, 8-46, Warfield's position is explored on pages 20-27.

<sup>75</sup> Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 555-559.

<sup>76</sup> The Chicago statement on Biblical Inerrancy was first published in *toto* including its "Summary Statements", "Articles of Affirmation and Denial" and "Exposition" by C. F. H. Henry in *God, Revelation And Authority*, vol. 4, 211-219.

<sup>77</sup> Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Ronald F. Satta, *The Sacred Text*.

<sup>78</sup> Ronald F. Satta, *The Sacred Text*, 103, footnote 11.

words and (3) the theory of degrees of inspiration which said that only some parts of Scripture received direct revelation. According to Satta only the first alternative represents the traditional orthodox view of Scripture.<sup>79</sup> When compared with the above alternatives, the Adventist opponents' concept of Scripture echoes noticeably the first high view position.

In this sense, and in summarising the context of Adventist opponents' view of Scripture which plays a fundamental part in their overall theology and hermeneutics, there is enough support for linking their concept of Scripture to that of the Chicago statement, the Fundamentalist movement, the Princeton school and more specifically to Benjamin Warfield's.<sup>80</sup>

### **Proponents' Hermeneutics versus Feminist Hermeneutics**

The basic argument that has been put forward so far suggests that the hermeneutics of Adventist proponents fits the remits of the traditional rules-centred evangelical Protestant hermeneutics. Contrasting proponents' method with feminist hermeneutical approaches can further illustrate this point. I will argue below that while the Adventist proponents' method in general does not fit the parameters of the traditional Feminist hermeneutics of suspicion and woman's experience - as represented for example by Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza or Rosemary Ruether - some female proponents' approaches do.

Feminist theology has been introduced at the beginning and therefore there is no need to repeat its main features. However, in short it could be said that the traditional Feminist biblical hermeneutics proceeds in two steps. First it starts with radical hermeneutics of suspicion which question the validity of conventional interpretations of history and biblical texts, which as is argued, are not value-neutral.<sup>81</sup> In the second step Feminist interpretation establishes women's experience as the basic critical principle for unmasking the oppressive

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 1-22, 52-53.

<sup>80</sup> With regard to Satta's alternatives, it is also significant to note that the proponents' view of Scriptural inspiration falls mostly under the second category (with the exception of Thompson who would also overlap with the third). Moreover, it could be argued that the official Adventist statement about Scriptural inspiration from the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1883) unambiguously belongs to the partial theory of thought inspiration. See "General Conference Proceedings," *Review and Herald*, November 27, 1883, 741-742. Part of the statement reads: "We believe the light given by God to His servants is by the enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thought, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed." It is also interesting to note that while this statement expresses the position of the church's leadership, the majority of the membership continued to adhere to verbal inspiration and even to mechanical inspiration. See for example Angel M. Rodriguez, "Issues on Revelation and Inspiration," unpublished Biblical Research Institute document, April 2005, available at [adventistbiblicalresearch.org](http://adventistbiblicalresearch.org).

<sup>81</sup> For example Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, xxii, 5, 6, 16, 55 and 80; Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Word, Spirit and Power: Women in Early Christian Communities," in *Women of Spirit*, 59; Mary Ann Tolbert (ed.), *The Bible and Feminist Hermeneutics*, 114; T. Dorah Setel, "Feminist Insights and the Question of Method," in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship*, 35-42 and Katharine Doob Sakenfield, "Feminist Uses of Biblical Materials," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 55.

conventional social orders. With the help of this critical principle, a reinterpretation of the traditional social order is undertaken;<sup>82</sup> and, furthermore, for this double hermeneutics of suspicion and reinterpretation,<sup>83</sup> the key becomes the normative status of women's experience and language. A comparison with the majority of Adventist proponents' approaches, as outlined in Chapter Three, indicates that there is very little similarity with the Feminist double hermeneutics of suspicion and critical social reinterpretation. In this sense, the lack of connection to the Feminist hermeneutics may further illustrate the general point of this part about the identification of hermeneutics of Adventist proponents with the traditional evangelical hermeneutical approaches.

However an additional remark concerning the Adventist proponents' hermeneutics as it relates to the Feminist hermeneutics needs to be made. While the lack of similarity between the Adventist proponents' method and the Feminist methodology is applicable generally, the hermeneutical approach of some *female Adventist proponents* is an exception to this rule.

The main publication representing the position of Adventist women proponents *Women and the Church: The Feminine Perspective* (1995) contains two studies which demonstrate distinct similarities with the Feminist method. The studies "Coming to Know God through Woman's Experience" by Iris Yob and "Women, Music, and the Church: An Historical Approach" by Estelle Jorgensen use women's experience as the critical norm for reinterpretation of biblical texts and of ecclesial history.

Yob, for example, argues that our language about God should be evaluated for its fit to our experience and since the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition is based on predominantly masculine language and experience it presents only a one-sided picture of God. A better approach, Yob suggests, is to use inclusive language based on the life experience of both women and men.<sup>84</sup> Yob thus sees biblical language as a purely sociological construct of patriarchal society which should be counterbalanced by language arising from women's present experience.

Similarly, Jorgensen argues that historically the early church was built to reflect male metaphors which are visually constructed in order to protect male supremacy and patriarchy. However because the female world is aurally constructed music constitutes a potentially subversive element to male power structures. From this perspective of radical suspicion towards the historical language and metaphors of the church, Jorgensen, using Schussler-

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<sup>82</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Feminist Interpretation: A Method of Correlation," in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, 112-113.

<sup>83</sup> In many ways the Feminist socio-critical hermeneutics resembles the double hermeneutics of suspicion and retrieval of Paul Ricoeur. See Anthony C. Thiselton, "The hermeneutics of Suspicion and Retrieval: Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutical Theory," in *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 344-378.

<sup>84</sup> Iris M. Yob, "Coming to Know God Through Women's Experience," in *Women and the Church*, 5 and 20.

Fiorenza's insights, sees Paul's vision of equality as a "theological retreat" taking the church back to Jewish rabbinical patriarchal traditions. While for the majority of Adventist proponents Paul is a promoter of equality (as they believe is reflected by Galatians 3:18), for Jorgensen her radical hermeneutics of suspicion leads to just the opposite conclusions. Jorgensen ends her study with a call to women's liberation and reclaiming *their* (Adventist females') heritage and their church by writing their own theology and composing and performing their own music which gives voice to their vision of God.<sup>85</sup>

It is interesting to note that these two studies follow a more "radical" route of feminist interpretation such as described above. However Fiorenza or Ruether's feminist hermeneutical version is not the only possible alternative that is available to female Adventist proponents. In fact a less radical approach which may reflect more consistently the Adventist view of Scripture is provided by Elizabeth Achtemeier and Susanne Heine whose views were already presented.<sup>86</sup> Both studies by Yob and Jorgensen while showing distinct signs of Feminist hermeneutics of suspicion and reinterpretation based on the norm of women's experience and language are rather an exception to Adventist proponents' hermeneutics. The proponents' interpretation is generally not based on socio-critical reinterpretation of biblical or ecclesial language and history but is rather following a traditional exegetical text-oriented model.

### Summary

The first section has been attempting to provide a general framework of reference for the Adventist ordination approaches. I have argued in the first part of Chapter Four that Adventist proponents and opponents' hermeneutical approaches could be, with some confidence, identified with traditional text-centred evangelical and Protestant hermeneutics as opposed to new or modern hermeneutics which is more reader-oriented. Where Adventist hermeneutical approaches show clear similarities with traditional hermeneutics is in their aspects of text-centred intentionalism, thus approach of rules and principles and the two-step exegesis-application methodology. All these identify Adventist ordination approaches firmly with traditional hermeneutics. Moreover, the lack of consideration to hermeneutical theory and lack of attention to the reader's horizons are further evidence that Adventist approaches reject or neglect for reasons investigated in the next section the reader's perspective and the resulting meta-hermeneutical issues of the modern or new hermeneutics.

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<sup>85</sup> Estelle R. Jorgensen, "Women, Music, and the Church: An Historical Approach," in *Women and the Church*, 36, 40 and 52.

<sup>86</sup> Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Female Language of God: Should the Church Adopt it?" in *The Hermeneutical Quest*, 97-114; Susanne Heine, *Women and Early Christianity*, 9, 109, 121-122 and Susanne Heine, *Christianity and the Goddesses*, 3, 5, 28-28, 34-37, 46, 52, 65.

A closer look at the opponents' key tenet of their hermeneutics, the doctrine of Scripture, uncovered similarities with Benjamin B. Warfield's inspiration theories and the later Chicago Statement. On the other hand Adventist proponents' approaches do not display signs of deviation from traditional hermeneutics except of few studies of women's proponents which display similarities with feminist hermeneutical methods.

### **Critical Assessment of Opponents' and Proponents' Hermeneutics**

The present section critically assesses the overall function, assumptions and theoretical bases of opponents' and proponents' hermeneutics from the point of view of modern hermeneutical developments. The theoretical apparatus of the Adventist ordination approaches will be examined by following a meta-hermeneutical methodology which will specifically consider opponents' and proponents' underlying philosophical assumptions, their understanding of the function of language, the nature of the text and meaning and the issue of the reader's perspective and hermeneutical theory. While opponents' and proponents' approaches may work coherently within their defined field of operation and theoretical structure, it still does not mean they are completely free from certain inherent problems that arise from their historical or theoretical background. The last section analyses the historical and theoretical background of both positions and asks whether such inherent problems are present in their hermeneutical apparatus.

### **Underlying Philosophical Assumptions**

While for most of their history, evangelicals especially in America have denied that they had a philosophy the recent scholarship on the roots of evangelicalism has clearly demonstrated that the heritage of the traditional text-oriented evangelicalism is tied up with strong Common Sense and scientific Baconian convictions.<sup>87</sup> The American Didactic Enlightenment which combined both these convictions made a significant impact on the modern evangelicalism and their hermeneutics.

The Chapter has already presented the elements of Reid's positivist Common Sense Philosophy and Baconian inductive methodology and therefore there is no need to spend additional space on the background of these. What is however worth pointing out again is that nowhere was the marriage between the evangelically minded Protestantism and Scottish

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<sup>87</sup> Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 83-88; Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; George M. Marsden, ed., *Evangelicalism and Modern America*; Robert K. Johnston ed., *The Use of the Bible in Theology: Evangelical Options*; David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* and Johannes N. Vorster, "The Use of Scripture in Fundamentalism," in *Paradigms and Progress in Theology*, ed. J. Mouton, A.G. van Aarde and W.S. Vorster (Human Sciences Research Council, 1988), 155-175.



Common Sense and inductive scientific Baconianism more visible than in the doctrine of Scripture and particularly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Restorationist movement's use of Scripture.<sup>88</sup>

With this in mind, it may therefore be not just a matter of historical importance that two of the three founders of Adventism were Restorationists. Joseph Bates and James White were preachers in the Christian Connection church that was part of the Restorationist movement and together with Ellen Harmon (who was a Methodist) were the historical and theological founders of Seventh-day Adventism.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, it is important to underline that the Adventist movement was generally born in the milieu where the foundations of modern evangelical approach to Scripture were formed. Hence it is not surprising to find that William Miller's rules of interpretation, which significantly influenced the early Adventist reading, manifest the same inductive scientific methodology and the same positivist common sense zeal as the hermeneutics of his contemporaries.<sup>90</sup>

However, as previously discussed in Chapter Two, the analysis of the opponents' hermeneutical position has also demonstrated that the modern opponents are very content to identify their approach with William Miller's rules of interpretation. Opponents in fact explicitly want to establish a link between their reading habits and Miller's reading since by doing that they assume they can prove that their approach to Scripture is the traditional Adventist approach and hence to be preferred over the proponents' views. Chapter Two has also showed that the opponents' call to clarity, sufficiency and plainness of Scripture means that every "Bible-believing" Christian can arrive at a substantial understanding of Scripture's basic message on his/her own just by comparing one passage with another. Gerhard Damsteegt makes the connection to common sense and Baconian assumptions even more explicit when he refers to Miller's hermeneutics as the best example of plain reading which is based on the

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<sup>88</sup> Richard T. Hughes and Leonard C. Allen, *Illusions of Innocence*, 143.

<sup>89</sup> George R. Knight, *A Search For Identity*, 30-31. "Restorationism was a vital force in many early 19<sup>th</sup> century American Religious movements. Beginning independently in several sections of United States around 1800, the movement aimed at reforming the churches by restoring all of the New Testament teachings... The task of the Restorationist movement was to complete the unfinished Reformation" (Ibid.).

<sup>90</sup> Miller for example wrote: "I was thus satisfied, that the Bible is a system of revealed truths, so clearly and simply given, that the 'wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.'" Indeed the Bible was "a feast of reason" to Miller. See William Miller, *Apology and Defence* (Boston: J. V. Himes, 1845), 6. The Common Sense and scientific roots of Miller's hermeneutics were explored in Steen R. Rassmussen, "Roots of the Prophetic Hermeneutic of William Miller," unpublished Master's Thesis, Newbold College, 1983. Francis Nichol from within Adventism has argued that Adventism is the only true heir of Miller's pre-millennial movement. See Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, D.C: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1944). The only complete history of Miller's movement is in George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993). One of the latest publications on William Miller is by a non-Adventist David L. Rowe, *God's Strange Work: William Miller and the End of the World* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2008).

common sense of the words of the text.<sup>91</sup>

The proponents' use of Scripture contains a broader spectrum of reading strategies and assumptions and it is not so unified in its outlook as opponents' approaches. For this reason it would be a generalisation to suggest that particularly the Common Sense heritage is present behind the proponents' methodological approach to Scripture to the same degree as it is in the opponents' case. Nonetheless, the American Enlightenment influence and especially Baconian scientific inductive methodology seems to be shaping the reading strategies of proponents to a significant degree. An illustration of this tendency can be seen in Richard Davidson's influential article in the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, where he insists that common sense and the laws of language dictate the basic reading guidelines of the grammatico-historical method; furthermore, an endorsement of Miller's rules of interpretation in the same article is an additional evidence that proponents' reading strategies are shaped by common sense rationalistic and Baconian empirical scientific assumptions.<sup>92</sup>

Moreover, a general endorsement of the historical-grammatical method by all opponents and many proponents, links their approaches directly to Scottish Common Sense epistemology and Baconian methodology since it was precisely the "grammatical-historical exegesis", which became the "inevitable choice" and the "only legitimate way" of interpretation for evangelical hermeneutics, that emerged from the tissue of common sense and Baconian concerns.<sup>93</sup>

Despite the positive confidence of both sides that their respective methods are rooted in Reformation hermeneutics, the approaches of opponents and proponents which show affinities with the common sense thinking and inductive Baconianism are rather a deviation from the Reformation. European Reformations of the 16<sup>th</sup> century began with questioning the innate rational abilities of humans. The doctrine of sin and depravity was one of their central doctrines. Reformers denied that people had natural moral sense by which they can understand what is true. The doctrine meant that human nature was radically depraved and nothing escaped from the curse of sin, not even the human mind. Reason, rationality and language were equally subject to the limitations of a sinful world as other areas of creation. However the

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<sup>91</sup> Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, *Searching the Scriptures*, 38 and Gerhard Damsteegt, "Scripture Faces Current Issues," 24. It is interesting that the editor of Ministry did not endorse Damsteegt's hermeneutical position as representing Adventist hermeneutics. (Ibid., 23).

<sup>92</sup> Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 68 and 96-97. At least two of Miller's endorsed rules exhibit these assumptions: a) All Scripture is necessary and may be understood by diligent study by one who has faith and b) To understand doctrine, all the Scripture passages on the topic must be brought together. Neither of these rules *explains* just how understanding works or how it happens, instead they simply *assume* that a right attitude of faith and collection and organization of all the relevant data will produce understanding almost by a default. Both these rules express the Scottish Common Sense and Baconian scientific spirit. (Ibid., 96).

<sup>93</sup> Johannes N. Vorster, "The Use of Scripture in Fundamentalism," in *Paradigms and Progress in Theology*, 169-172.

Scottish Common Sense Philosophy, as indeed the entire Enlightenment movement, begins by assuming just the opposite, it perceives the mind and understanding to be somehow immune from the impact of sin. For Common Sense philosophy the reader's "sanctified" understanding is taken for granted provided one has faith and collects the relevant data. In this scheme the reader's horizon or presuppositions are not even considered since it is assumed that every "sane and unbiased person of common sense could and must perceive the same things."<sup>94</sup> The questions of epistemology, language, understanding and pre-understanding thus tend to be marginalised if not completely overlooked by all methodologies being shaped by a greater or lesser degree by common sense assumptions. However Schleiermacher - whose work has been identified as the turning point in hermeneutical studies - claims interpretation must start from assuming that misunderstanding is the normal state of affairs, and not understanding, as the Common Sense Philosophy readily assumes.<sup>95</sup>

The opponents' and the proponents' reading of Scripture in the first part has been linked to a traditional text-oriented hermeneutics which in its essence operates on rationalistic, objectivist and scientific premises similar to European and American Enlightenments. I pointed to this rationalistic framework when I discussed the intentionalist character of traditional hermeneutics. In this sense traditional hermeneutical approaches are based on "sanctified" use of the Enlightenments' rationalist framework.<sup>96</sup>

In summary therefore, the assessment has uncovered that neither opponents' nor proponents' readings are immune from external philosophical influences. It is not just the positivist assumptions of the Scottish Common Sense Philosophy or the objectivist Baconian method in particular but also generally the Enlightenment's rationalistic framework of the opponents' inspiration theory and the proponents' conceptual tools which shapes their methodologies.<sup>97</sup> However and maybe more significantly, the additional point that must be

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<sup>94</sup> George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 111.

<sup>95</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and other Writings*, transl. by Andrew Bowie, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 21-22. Also Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, in *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Pioneer of Modern Theology*, ed. Keith Clements (London: Collins, 1987), 167. See also Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 197.

<sup>96</sup> See for example the three studies in *Paradigms and Progress in Theology* in part three of the book: Johannes N. Vorster, "The Use of Scripture in Fundamentalism," 155-175; J. Mouton and J. C. Pauw, "Foundationalism and Fundamentalism: A Critique," 176-186 and E. Echeverria, "Foundationalism, Evidentialism and the Rationality of Religious Belief," 187-205 which all argue that Scottish Common Sense direct epistemology, Baconian inductive methodology and generally the rationalistic and empirical framework of the Enlightenment are behind "inerrancy and inspiration" concerns, "grammatical-historical exegesis" and general approach to Scripture of the Fundamentalist Protestantism. (*Ibid.*, 163-165, 169-172).

<sup>97</sup> The link between deductivist inspiration theories such as opponents hold, as well as sophisticated tools that are devised to bridge the historical gap such as proponents use, and the Enlightenment rationalistic framework has been well documented by various scholars. Historical criticism arising from Enlightenment assumptions is an "all but unacknowledged bedfellow" to

made is that neither of the camps appears to be acutely aware of these epistemological problems and is rather innocently assuming that their readings arises solely from Sola Scriptura framework and of Adventist or Reformation interpretative traditions. The dispute about the ordination of women, however, in an ironic way, may alert those involved in the debate to the possibility and arguably a need for further methodological reflection. Although both camps are claiming the same Sola Scriptura, Adventist and Reformation heritage since 1880s their methodologies could not bring the camps any closer on the disputed matter.

### Concepts of Language, Meaning and the Nature of Text

#### Function of Language for Opponents

One of the most noticeable characteristics of the opponents' methodological approach to Scripture and its interpretation is their insistence on the literal or plain meaning of words and sentences. The objective and unmediated revelation and inspiration process which preserves the meaning from any cultural and personal distortions of the human writer is the theoretical basis for such a literalistic hermeneutics of opponents. The preservation of a universal meaning, it could be further elaborated, is possible only because of the specific inspiration process in which the divine element took overall and tight control over the limitations of the human element. The opponents' christological or incarnational analogy which is used as the main explanatory model for Scripture's divine and human composition is taken as a full analogy. In this full analogy Christ's sinless humanity is analogically transferred to the writer's humanity which is consequently understood to be also "sinless" meaning free from cultural and personal distortions and hence in effect making the Bible into an inerrant revelation.<sup>98</sup> It is not difficult to overlook that opponents' view of inspiration is

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evangelicalism's view of inspiration and interpretative method. See Stephen B. Chapman, "Reclaiming Inspiration of the Bible," in *Canon and Biblical Interpretation, Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 7*, ed. Craig Bartholomew, Scott Hahn, Robin Parry, Christopher Seitz and Al Wolters, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2006), 177 and 189. Also James Barr, *The Scope and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 70.

<sup>98</sup> This logic of opponents which basically supports the whole theoretical structure of their view of the text and its nature is however seriously flawed. The flaw in essence lies in making the incarnational analogy into a full analogy. While there is an analogical likeness between the nature of Christ's incarnation and the nature of Scripture, there is also unlikeness. Thomas Torrance has in this regard argued that while in Christ human and divine are hypostatically together, in the Bible human and divine are sacramentally together. While the likeness lies in that both Christ and the Bible have dual human and divine nature, the unlikeness lies between the human element in the Bible and in Christ. The human element in the composition of the Bible refers to the writer's humanity which is different from Christ's incarnated sinless humanity. If anything, Christ' incarnation analogy should indicate that just as Christ, the Word of God entered accommodated into our imperfect condition so the written word of God enters into our imperfect condition accommodated. Neither Christ nor the word of God in the Bible comes with compelling self-manifestation that is above our fallen ways of thought and speech. See Thomas F. Torrance, *Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1995), 6-8. Also Peter Enns proposes that incarnational analogy be rather regarded as "incarnational parallel" since the traditional analogy cannot be taken as a full analogy. See Peter Enns, *Inspiration and*

based on an immediate theory of inspiration which rejects cultural accommodation. However such an immediate perception of inspiration leads consequently to an immediate conception of biblical language and it therefore raises questions about the opponents' theory of language and meaning.

Most particularly, religious language for opponents appears to function like an independent container which carries and preserves the objective, universally applicable meaning in an almost sterile manner. The meaning a biblical author has received under inspiration of words has been preserved from all surrounding influences and can be equally retrieved from the wording of the text by its readers in a similar direct manner in which it was revealed to the author. Directness and immediacy of meaning is then what specifically characterises opponents' views of how language functions. Their immediacy pertaining to language stems from their inspiration view and leads to a theory of language in which a direct relationship between a meaning then and now exists. Opponents' reading of Scripture given this theoretical background is consequently not concerned with problems of various language contexts of the reader and the text or its author, accommodation or development of language over time. In all this, the opponents' view of language and meaning has signs of inadequate referential and ideational theories of meaning.

Probably the two most dominant theories of meaning in the past were the referential and the ideational theory. The ideational theory has a long tradition. The theory has been used in the Greco-Roman times by Stoics and later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by John Locke for example.<sup>99</sup> In its essence the theory assumes that meaning exists alongside actual speaking or language and that thoughts or ideas can be present in the mind independently of language. The opponents' theory of immediate inspiration which maintains that the author can receive and record objective meanings independent of his particular language context and the opponents' view of the reading process in which the reader can retrieve the objective meaning apart from its original language context only by the help of his/her own language context are two examples of the ideational theory assumptions.

The referential or representative theory of language has been defined for example by Nancey Murphy as a theory in which "words get their meaning from the things in the world to which they *refer*, or sentences get their meaning from facts or states of affairs they

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*Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 167-169.

<sup>99</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the work of Ogden, Richards or Susanne K. Langer has traces of the ideational theory. See for example: C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (London: Routledge, 1923). In Locke's work the theory is visible for example in John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975 [1798]).

represent;”<sup>100</sup> or by Wittgenstein as a picture of language with the following idea: “Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the world. It is the object for which the word stands.”<sup>101</sup> Thus the referential theory of meaning assumes that the word itself is the basic unit of meaning even within broad stretches of language and that the meaning of a word is the object to which the word refers. These two principles are held together.<sup>102</sup> While the referential theory recognises rightly that meanings are learned on the basis of ostensive definition,<sup>103</sup> where the theory becomes inadequate is when it fails to account for the complexity of communication and intelligibility in every-day language usage. Or as Ebeling observed it is possible to understand all the individual words but still not understand the message.<sup>104</sup>

In this case, the opponents’ insistence on the literal-grammatical sense of words and at the same time their almost total ignorance of historical-cultural investigation<sup>105</sup> are indications of affinities with assumptions of the referential theory. However, developments in the field of language theory and its associated concept of meaning in the past 60 years, especially through the contribution of Wittgenstein’s work, have demonstrated that meaning and language are not independent of each other. Meaning is not a mental process that exists alongside actual speaking. Moreover, not only are language and meaning not detached from each other, but neither is language detached from its surrounding context.<sup>106</sup>

It could be therefore argued “that to think of language as that which merely articulates thoughts,” ideas or truths already present to the mind or revealed to the mind “is an inadequate and seriously misleading view of language.”<sup>107</sup> The opponents’ theory of an immediate and un-accommodated model of inspiration in which the meaning is given to the writers in a universalistic sense which is detached from their particular language context can therefore be

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<sup>100</sup> Nancey Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism: How Modern and Postmodern Philosophy Set the Theological Agenda* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2007), 38, cf. 38-41. Italics original.

<sup>101</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1953), §1.

<sup>102</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, 525-7.

<sup>103</sup> For example Augustine admitted that he learned language through ostensive definitions. In his *Confessions* he for example reveals: “When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out... Thus I gradually learnt to understand what objects they signified.” *Confessions*, I, 8 cited in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §1.

<sup>104</sup> Gerhard Ebeling, *The Nature of Faith* (London: Collins, 1961), 16. For example J. Pelc observes that the theory cannot progress beyond its basic assumption: “that the meaning of a sentence is a function of the meaning of its components.” See J. Pelc, *Studies in Functional Logical Semiotics of Natural Language* (The Hague, 1971), 58. However every-day communication does not function always like that.

<sup>105</sup> See especially Chapter Two pages 95-96.

<sup>106</sup> L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), §§338-342. Also Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, 527-8.

<sup>107</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, 528.

questioned from the point of view of language theory. The opponents' lack of theoretical discussion and certain naivety about the function of language shows that there may be inherent problems present in their hermeneutical theory which could be raised and potentially addressed.

### Opponents' Literal Sense

The assessment of the opponents' perception of language could be further pressed by adding that their insistence on the "literal," "plain" or "natural" meaning of biblical language and words which as they argue should be understood as the readers normally understand and interpret language and words in everyday discourse is a potentially confusing construct from the beginning. The Antiochene school of interpretation insisted on the literal meaning of the text in contrast to the Alexandrian allegorizing tendencies. However for Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom or for other Antiochenes the term "literal" did not exclude metaphorical or symbolic meanings. In fact the difference between the two schools was not that one exclusively insisted on strict literal interpretation and the other on allegorical meanings since both knew that the immediate sense pointed beyond itself and the Bible text carried deeper meaning. The difference was that one demanded that the meaning be understood in its proper linguistic context which for Antiochenes was the historical context of the author while the other school of Alexandrians demanded the meaning be understood in its anachronistic rhetorical sense which was detached from its historical linguistic context.<sup>108</sup> The *usus loquendi* of words for schools of thought that historically insisted on literal reading was the historical *usus loquendi* of the author's language and not the *usus loquendi* of the reader's language as it is for opponents.

The argument can be further illustrated through Luther's case. Opponents often refer to Luther and Reformation hermeneutics as an example of the literal approach. While Martin Luther insisted on one genuine sense which for him was the literal sense, he nevertheless did not reduce this sense to a direct or naïve understanding of the text by the reader who is only informed by his own language context. For Luther language was a much more complex phenomenon and so he was emphasizing that study of language as such will make a positive contribution to biblical hermeneutics.<sup>109</sup>

It is well known that Luther and other Reformers wrote a number of exegetical and expository commentaries and hotly debated problems of biblical interpretations. One of such

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<sup>108</sup> Frederick W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961 [first 1886]) 217. Frances Young, "Alexandrian and Antiochene Exegesis," in *History of Biblical Interpretation, Volume 1: The Ancient Period*, ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Cambridge: Eerdmans Publishing, 2003) 531-2.

<sup>109</sup> Martin Luther, "Letter to Eobanus Hessus" (March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1523), in *Luther's Works, Volume 49: Letters*, ed. Gottfried G. Krodel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 34. See also Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought* (London: Collins, 1972).

internal debates was the controversy concerning the presence of Christ in communion. Alexander Jensen has pointed out that behind Luther, Zwingli and Calvin's dispute is not only the theological matter of Christology but also more fundamentally a hermeneutical problem of language. For Luther language is representational or effective, meaning that language (word) is a sign that brings about what it signifies. On the other hand for Calvin and Zwingli, language is demonstrative, meaning that it is merely a sign that points to a reality beyond itself.<sup>110</sup> Despite of their appeal to "literal" or "natural" meanings, the Reformers were acutely aware of deeper hermeneutical problems which they did not ignore.

While Luther's appeal to "literal," "natural" or "plain" meaning may sound similar to the opponents' basic hermeneutical call, for Luther the "natural" sense did not denote context-free obviousness of meaning which largely ignores the historical investigation as the opponents' approach does. Luther had, for example, referred variably to the literal sense as the historical sense: "It is the historical sense alone which supplies the true and sound doctrine."<sup>111</sup> Furthermore the basic perspective which informed Luther's "plain," "literal" and "natural" meaning could be convincingly argued was his rejection of the multiple or allegorical meaning, instead of which he emphasises *sensus literalis, grammaticus* and/or *historicus*.<sup>112</sup>

Hence, the hermeneutics of the Reformation was as much historical and cultural as it was grammatical or literal. Historical and cultural language considerations were not only important but also indispensable for genuine and realistic interpretation of the biblical text. Whatever the biblical authors wrote, they wrote from within their particular cultural and language context. This context modifies, determines and generally guides the manner in which they express themselves. Literal interpretation is indeed crippled without genuine historical-cultural studies which consider the biblical language to be historically and culturally accommodated.<sup>113</sup> In this sense, the opponents' somewhat simplified view that the literal sense

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<sup>110</sup> Alexander S. Jensen, *Theological Hermeneutics*, 70-74; see also 38-48. In the context of "hoc est corpus meum" controversy Luther's effective and representational view of language led him to conclude that the Eucharistic bread and wine are Christ's literal body and blood since language represents what it signifies. On the other hand for Zwingli for example, his demonstrative view of language led him to conclude that bread and wine are merely symbols pointing beyond themselves.

<sup>111</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Volume 1*, ed. J.J. Pelikan and H. T. Lehmann (St Louis, Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 283.

<sup>112</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Volume 54*, ed. J.J. Pelikan and H. T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 406. Duncan Ferguson, *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (London: SCM, 1986), 158-163. Also Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther*, 107-109 and G. S. Robbert, *Luther as Interpreter of Scripture* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1982). Luther became convinced that an interpreter must avoid allegory by 1518. Luther's early work on Psalms *Dictate Super Psalterium* 1513-1515 still employs allegorical approach. However in 1517 in his *Seven Penitential Psalms* and particularly in his exposition on the Decalogue in 1518 he moves away from allegory completely.

<sup>113</sup> Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 150-161. Ramm also argues in this context that biblical inerrancy must be judged by the *usus loquendi* of the times and not artificially from the scientific perspective of the modern reader. The customs and standards of the time of writing are the primary criteria for what inerrancy means. See chapter seven, "The Problem of Inerrancy and Secular Science in Relation to Hermeneutics" (*Ibid.*, 201-214).



is the reader's normal sense does not have historical or theoretical support. If anything, a perception of language based on the *usus loquendi* of words of the reader and his/her language context is a heritage of secular common sense philosophy, rather than any ecclesial biblical hermeneutical tradition.

### Opponents' Clarity of Scripture

Another critical aspect of the opponents' methodology is their assumption of the clarity of Scripture. The opponents' assumption about the exegetical clarity of Scripture is one of the most defining aspects of their hermeneutical position. It has to be noted in this regard, that the opponents' appeal to clarity and plainness of Scripture is basically an appeal to exegetical clarity of individual texts and not just an appeal to general epistemic clarity of Scripture as a whole. Considering how significant such an assumption is for the overall rationale of the opponents' method and their case, it becomes relevant to assess this assumption from the perspective of its genesis at the time of the Reformation. Very helpful in this regard is Thiselton's tracing of the idea back to its Reformation roots. Thiselton convincingly argues that *claritas Scripturae* arose in various polemical contexts and its meaning therefore should be seen from this perspective. There are thus three meanings to the concept: (1) against the view that the meaning is in principle polyvalent or puzzling, perspicuity becomes a hermeneutical principle; (2) in relation to magisterial ownership of interpretation, *claritas* become an ecclesiological and critical principle and; (3) in relation to claims that no knowledge can be sufficiently certain, clarity of Scripture become an epistemological principle.<sup>114</sup>

However the most intense affirmation of *claritas Scripturae* by Luther was in the context of epistemology not hermeneutics. It is particularly the context of his controversy with Erasmus about the status of knowledge which shaped significantly the concept. Two of Erasmus' works especially express skepticism about confidence in the foundations of knowledge. In his *Moriae Encomium (In Praise of Folly)* (1509) he for example claims that "human affairs are so obscure and various that nothing can be *clearly* known." Later his *The Freedom of the Will* (1524) implies that this lack of clarity also characterises Scripture.<sup>115</sup> In addition Erasmus's Neoplatonic roots which preferred allegorical and hidden wisdom as opposed to literal, contextual and historical meaning have even more reduced confidence in the foundations of Scriptural knowledge.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 179-180.

<sup>115</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly* (Chicago: Packard, 1946), 84. Italics added. The book is nowadays accessible in English freely at various servers. See also Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 1-17.

<sup>116</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 181.

Over against such epistemologically skeptical views Luther formulated the perspicuity of Scripture which implies that the teaching of Scripture is not uncertain. Scripture as the whole can provide criteria for knowledge and action. For Luther the issue was not the exegetical clarity of individual Scriptural passages, but about the overall epistemological certainty of Scripture.<sup>117</sup> Clarity of Scripture later became for Pietism, Puritanism and Protestant Fundamentalism a defensive slogan against the need for serious hermeneutical thinking. The literal, natural or plain meaning came to be viewed in the context of perspicuity of Scripture as the obvious meaning to the reader. In this context, it is absolutely fundamental for the women's ordination debate to observe that the case of opponents resting on the notion of exegetical clarity of individual passages was alien to Luther or other Reformers and is rather more in line with the later pietistic, puritan and fundamentalist traditions.

The initial assessment of the opponents' hermeneutical apparatus thus shows that their methodology may not be free from inherent historical-philosophical and theoretical problems. Especially the positivist Common Sense philosophy heritage and lack of critical reflection concerning language and meaning may lie at the root of the opponents' methodological problems. For the Adventist opponents it may be important to address these problems in order to clarify the basic operation of their method particularly as it concerns their assumptions about the native ability of readers, their view of the nature of Scripture its meaning and the function of language. Without such theoretical and critical justification and with the present lack of historical and theoretical support for their basic notions, their apparatus may be vulnerable to critique.

### **Proponents' Language Theory**

I have already argued above that the opponents' perception of language does not operate with accommodation to biblical language and in this sense has distinct affinities with especially ideational theory and also traces of its associated referential theory. Turning the attention to proponents, it is evident from the analysis of their inspiration and revelation views that proponents hold a more "realistic" theory of biblical language which they assume is historically and culturally accommodated to a particular language context. On the level of exegetical procedures then, their view of accommodated language is visible in their concern for cultural-historical investigation which is one of the key marks distinguishing their exegetical procedures from opponents'. However, despite this more realistic appreciation of biblical language it cannot be said that their theory of language is completely free from all the pitfalls of referential theory and accounts for all the complexities of understanding.

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<sup>117</sup> Particularly Luther's *On the Bondage of the Will* (1525) provides sufficient evidence concerning what he means by *claritas*. See Martin Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will* (Edinburg: Clark, 1957), 71, 74, 125, and 128-129.

One of the main aspects of the proponents' methodological approach to Scripture is their discernable linguistic-semantic analysis of the text. This alongside the broad contextual and historical study constitutes the core of their exegetical method. Proponents thus devise highly technical and detailed sets of historical and philological measures which aim to investigate the world behind the text and the world within the text which aims to discover the original intended meaning of the author. Such an approach as pointed out already generally characterises the traditional text-centered hermeneutics which scrutinises the text as an object of inquiry. Such a text-oriented and intentionalist model of the proponents' interpretation, it can be additionally argued, is based on assumptions of Common Sense epistemology which assumes that a direct relationship between a word and an idea exists. The resulting empiricist inductive methodology of studying individual linguistic entries and their historical contexts is just a visible representation such a language concept.

One of the key distinguishing marks of the proponents' perception of the nature of Scripture is, as I pointed out in Chapter Three, their propositional view of revelation. God's revelation is understood to be God's self-disclosure which comes in the propositional form of universal, timeless, eternal or permanent principles and truths which readers eventually can recognise as doctrinal truths. However such an identification of the proponents' understanding of the nature of Scripture or revelation with a propositional theory of religious knowledge also points to a referential theory of language since it is the referential theory of language, as Nancey Murphy showed, that directly correlates with a propositional theory of religious language.<sup>118</sup> Murphy has additionally argued that the referential theory of language has been picked up particularly by Conservative evangelicalism and fundamentalism in 19<sup>th</sup> century America and that in fact this theory correlated well with Reid's Common Sense philosophy which influenced those religious movements.<sup>119</sup>

The discussion about language and meaning could be organised as Randolph Tate proposes according to three metaphors of "worlds" of textual interpretation: *behind*, *within* and *in front of the text*.<sup>120</sup> The first metaphor *behind the text* describes a hermeneutical inquiry that investigates the text from the perspective of a historical, author-centered approach, an approach which dominated from the 18<sup>th</sup> and particularly 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The largely rationalist frame of this model of hermeneutics aims to define the meaning in terms of its meaning for the original author and his contemporaries. The approach assumes that historical investigation of the author's world can provide criteria for objective and correct

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<sup>118</sup> Nancey Murphy, *Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism*, 42-46.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 15-19 and 42-46.

<sup>120</sup> Randolph W. Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, 3rd revised edition (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 1-7.

interpretation.<sup>121</sup> The second metaphor *within the text* describes the paradigm shift from history to literature which began to take place from the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even though it gained momentum in biblical interpretation in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The new approach argued that the total meaning couldn't be defined in terms of the historical meaning only. Hence the attention to the world within the text followed.<sup>122</sup> However after this formalist model a more reader oriented hermeneutics followed which can be evoked by the *in front of the text* metaphor. While the first two approaches are primarily preoccupied with textual investigation, the third approach is more reader-centered in terms of recognizing a) the reader's contribution to the reading and b) the impact acts of reading have on readers.<sup>123</sup>

With this background in mind, it becomes evident that traditional evangelical hermeneutics falls largely within the framework of *behind* and *within the text* approaches. Equally, the proponents' historical-semantic procedures are interested only in the worlds behind and within the text, in uncovering the author's historical and textual semiotic meanings. However restricting the meaning to semantic and historical notions of meaning does not do justice to the larger theory of meaning. Historical and particularly semantic notions of meaning are all too reminiscent of the referential theory of language which cannot fully account for how communication happens in every day situations. It is precisely the contribution of the individual reader's language context which adds an important dimension that cannot be overlooked from how language and interpretation work. The gravitating of the traditional approaches towards the semiotic (within) and the historical worlds (behind) of the text are based on particular language perception. It could therefore be argued that while the Adventist proponents' view of language is more "realistic" (accommodated) compared to the opponents' naïve ideational (un-accommodated) view it still however does not account for all the complexities of meaning.

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<sup>121</sup> The work of Johann Martin Chladenius, *Einleitung zur richtigen Auslegung vernünftiger Reden und Schriften* (1742) could mark the beginning of this approach and is also an example of the rationalist framework of "correct interpretation". Later Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Philip August Boeckh (1785-1867) have followed and developed this approach. Boeckh's "Encyclopedia and Methodology of the Philological Sciences" published in English under the title *On Interpretation and Criticism* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968) represents the classical example of this model. See also Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, 608-609.

<sup>122</sup> Particularly influential was the work of Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* (London: Penguin, 1973), first published in 1949. This became an influential textbook on literary theory.

<sup>123</sup> See Randolph W. Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 4-5 and 219-227. It also could be argued that a fourth postmodern approach has developed as a radical expression of the reader-centred model. The neo-pragmatic and postmodernist worldview of Stanley Fish and Richard Rorty rejects any possibility of representational reading. For them texts are not representational at all and the meaning is constructed by the community of readers. See for example Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class?* and Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). Useful evaluation of the consequences of these neo-liberal and pragmatic approaches is in Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*, 55-62 and 168-164.

Wittgenstein's maxim that an understanding of meaning can exist only within the framework of a functioning language "game" (context) asserts the necessity of including the reader's language context among the hermeneutical considerations.<sup>124</sup> Since understanding of meaning always presupposes participation in the language context, by extension such process involves not merely consideration of the semantic or historical contexts of individual words of the text but also consideration of a functioning language context of an individual reader. It is precisely the horizon of the reader, including the reader's language context which does not receive from proponents (and opponents) adequate theoretical considerations and which consequently makes their position vulnerable to criticism on the meta-hermeneutical level. The traditional text-oriented hermeneutics with their largely pre-Wittgensteinian conceptual and methodological tools may not account for all the complexities of the meaning and functioning of language.

What is needed, as Tate is arguing, is in fact an integrated hermeneutical approach which takes all three metaphors into account in their distinct yet complementary roles. Only this approach could account for the complexities of understanding and avoid the pitfalls of narrow referential notions of meaning.<sup>125</sup>

If the word of God does not come in compelling self-demonstration, but veiled in our humanity, accommodated, with the limitations of our language and ambiguities of our speech, as Torrance is arguing and with which the proponents' inspiration view also concurs,<sup>126</sup> then hermeneutical enquiry cannot be reduced to sets of rules and procedures which investigate the text, but a responsible method must take into consideration questions of epistemology, understanding, meaning and language. While one camp (opponents) does not even acknowledge the reality of accommodated language and hence largely ignores meta-hermeneutical issues, the other camp (proponents) does not appear to take seriously enough their outgoing inspiration logic and follow it through in conceptual epistemological and meta-hermeneutical discussion. This observation raises in essence important questions about the functioning of opponents' and proponents' models which either completely reject (opponents) or partially neglect (proponents) the reader's perspective. This theoretical reflection thus

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<sup>124</sup> Karl-Otto Appel, *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy*, trans. G. Adey and D. Frisby (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 28. See also Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions: 1912-1951*, ed. J. Klagge and A. Nordmann (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1993).

<sup>125</sup> Randolph W. Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 1-7, 266-270. The traditional semantic-etymological approach has been criticised also by James Barr. He indicates that traditional linguistics is diachronic not concerned enough with synchronic linguistics that investigates the language at a given point in time: "The etymology of a word is not a statement about its meaning, but about its history." James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 109. He had convincingly demonstrated that the standard reference works of OT or NT are overlooking the particularity of meaning suggested by synchronic investigation. Dictionary definitions are thus at best provisional generalizations about the meanings of words in standard contexts. (Ibid., 107-160).

<sup>126</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *Divine Meaning*, 8.

points out that Adventist hermeneutical debates still may have to face the challenges of the reader's perspective in the future.

### Reader's Perspective and Hermeneutical Theory

James Torrance rightly observes that genuine biblical study is impossible to conduct without raising questions of hermeneutics - and questions of hermeneutics cannot be raised without first raising questions of epistemology, language and presuppositions.<sup>127</sup> These three meta-hermeneutical issues (epistemology, functioning of language and pre-understanding) have been raised in the previous sections and have been used as a theoretical-reflective mirror for the particular hermeneutical discussion within the Adventist ordination of women debate. So far I have highlighted the fact that, while the problem of hermeneutics as evidenced by the modern hermeneutical theory is twofold (relating to text as well as the interpreter), the hermeneutics of opponents and proponents do not reflect the duality of the problem. Both methodological positions which this study has investigated devise strategies which concentrate on one side of the hermeneutical problem – the text.

However, if there is no such thing as natural understanding as (already observed by Schleiermacher), misunderstanding is where we begin, and as we don't possess the innate natural disposition to understanding that Common Sense Philosophy suggests, then it is paramount for the intellectual integrity of the theologian to raise also meta-hermeneutical questions. No theologian, tradition or community is immune to habits of mind or habits of reading loyal to the theological outlook, tradition or culture. Without the deeper awareness of hermeneutical issues that concern the reader, habits of mind will provide illusionary belief that what is read is the "natural", "plain" or "normal" meaning.<sup>128</sup> If at the very heart of hermeneutics is the interpreter's ability to step out of his/her frame of mind – habits of reading, to that of the author/text/the other, then full awareness of the two-sidedness of the hermeneutical problem may provide a defense against hearing back merely the echoes of the reader's own presuppositions, theology or attitudes.<sup>129</sup>

However, the traditional text-oriented hermeneutics of opponents and proponents may be regarded by leading participants in the debate as an adequate alternative which solves the theological and exegetical problems of the ordination of women. With this regard they may bring certain objections against attempts to open theoretical questions about hermeneutical methods. Some of these objections indirectly surface especially in their discussions concerning the presuppositions of readers. Based on the analysis in Chapters Two and Three, it could be

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<sup>127</sup> James B. Torrance, "Foreword," in Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, xi.

<sup>128</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, 373-375.

<sup>129</sup> Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, ed. H. Kimmerle, trans. J. Duke and J. Forstman, AAR Text and Translation 1 (Missoula: Scholars, 1977), 42.

argued that neither of the camps pays adequate attention to the problems of the readers' presuppositions. While opponents' deductivist inspiration theory along with their Common Sense mindset reduces the discussion to matters of *right attitude*, the more inductive inspiration theory alongside the Baconian perspective of proponents reduces the discussion to *right set of scientific procedures*. It appears therefore that opponents and proponents may bring against raising any meta-hermeneutical questions two main objections: the sufficiency of reader's faith or right attitude and the sufficiency of scientific procedures to recover timeless truths.

Especially opponents imply that the right attitude of faith is all that is needed to overcome the reader's habits of mind. Since in its nature Scripture is clear and the meaning is plain, an attitude that accepts the Bible as the fully inspired word of God is the only prerequisite necessary on the side of the reader. The problems of understanding, language or reader's presuppositions are not a concern to opponents who believe that the Bible was written in a language understandable by the modern reader and therefore there is a correlation of meaning between then and now.<sup>130</sup> Since the problem of historical and linguistic distance is almost not existent to them, hermeneutics in its essence is reduced to having a right "Bible-believing" attitude.

Since the theoretical apparatus of opponents is operating from within strong Common Sense assumptions about the reader and is supported with a specific inspiration theory which assured the preservation of the meaning from cultural, historical and language limitations, it inherently tends to *reject* the basic problem of the reader's perspective or pre-understanding. For opponents, given how their model is devised there is no need to raise questions about the reader's prior perspective. The objective immediate inspiration of Scripture and the assumptions about the reader's ability to grasp the plain and clear meaning of the text make concerns for the reader's horizon redundant and unnecessary.

An illustration of this dynamic is in Chapter Two: which, when analyzing the opponents' views concerning the reader's horizon, observed that the reader's presuppositions can be silenced to a point where an inspired author of the text can speak with his own independent voice to the reader from the text. This assumption in the mindset of opponents' has a potentially significant impact on their interpretation of biblical texts and the validity of their conclusions, as it may create from the Bible just an echoing instrument of their own pre-understandings. Ignorance of the reader's perspective and overlooking the fact that every reading of the text is already an interpretation by the reader, and that in this sense there is no such thing as a reader-independent interpretation of an inspired writer creates a very significant hermeneutical precedence in the opponents' theological method.

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<sup>130</sup> See in Chapter Two.

The objection that might be implied by the other side of the spectrum is that scientific philological and historical procedures are sufficient measures for separating the timeless principles of the Bible from the cultural husk. However, text oriented-procedures regardless of how scientific they may appear still presuppose that the only problem hermeneutics must overcome is the problem of semantic and historical distance. In contrast to opponents who reject the problem of historical conditioning, proponents do not reject it but assume that this is the only problem. While the theoretical apparatus of proponents is operating on different premises that take into account the language and historical limitations of both the text and reader, it nonetheless *neglects* the full problem of the reader's perspective. What both opponents' and proponents' apparatus fails to notice is the problem of the reader's understanding or perspective which comes before the question of the object to be known.<sup>131</sup>

The importance of the attitude of faith and openness to the Holy Spirit's illumination are important aspects of Bible interpretation, but as Pannenberg and Ebeling insist faith does not constitute an additional avenue to knowledge independent of the normal processes of human understanding.<sup>132</sup> Similarly, neither is the Spirit's illuminating work independent of ordinary processes of understanding. Both the right attitude of faith and the Spirit's leading, work through normal processes of understanding neither independently nor contrary to them.<sup>133</sup> Therefore the problems of hermeneutics cannot be overcome by *rejecting* the historical-cultural conditioning and by insisting on having the right "Bible-believing" attitude only (opponents). Nor can hermeneutical problems be *reduced* to issues of historical-cultural conditioning and the use of sophisticated tools only (proponents). A larger and broader view may be needed which also would include questions pertaining to the reader's operation of understanding and pre-understanding. At the present for primarily the reasons of strong common sense positivist convictions and reasons of equally strong Baconian objectivist convictions the horizon of the reader is eclipsed in the hermeneutics of both sides. Appeals to the sufficiency of a right attitude or to sophistication of procedures cannot be however used as justifications for overlooking where the interpretation begins, namely with the epistemic horizon of the interpreter.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> G. Gloege, *Mytologie und Luthertum*, 89 quoted in Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, 89.

<sup>132</sup> Gerhard Ebeling, *Word and Faith* (London: SCM, 1963), 116.

<sup>133</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, 88-92; Thomas F. Torrance, *God and Rationality* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 137-192 and Heinrich Ott, "What is Systematic Theology?" in *New Frontiers in Theology: I, The Later Heidegger and Theology*, eds. James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr. (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 81.

<sup>134</sup> A text on which this point could be illustrated is Mark 14:7 "The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want..." Readers from affluent nations will almost certainly read this text from the viewpoint of the benefactor – as a call to obligation to help the needy. However a reader from an impoverished nation will almost certainly read this text as a tragic reminder



“Traditional hermeneutics”, as fittingly observed by the authors’ of the influential evangelical textbook *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* “is, common sense wisdom...combined with the methodological precision.”<sup>135</sup> This description could well be applied to describe the essence of opponents’ (common sense wisdom) and proponents’ (methodological precision) methods by which they approach the ordination debate. However as the assessment is pointing out such description and identification of traditional methods with Common Sense and Baconian convictions is also raising important questions what they may be overlooking.

### Final Thesis

Adventist hermeneutics was born in the time of great evangelical revivalist zeal and the American Didactic Enlightenment and consequently followed general reading methods available in the 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelical world. The use of such methods generally worked well; not only in Adventist theology, but also in the evangelical world, provided that the general culture within which they operated was Christian. However, once the world began to change the obviousness of a common sense mentality and “Bible-onlyism” in its Baconian version became ineffective in solving new emerging problems. Evangelicals were discovering that there is little theoretical ground from which they can reason and advance their internal and external debates.<sup>136</sup>

The controversy of the ordination of women in Adventist theology which this study has attempted to analyse and assess on exegetical, theological and hermeneutical levels has demonstrated the existence of various methodological minds within the Adventist hermeneutical tradition. The dissertation has discovered that the disagreements about the meaning of texts spring not only from exegetical or theological conclusions but also from prior disagreements about the nature of interpretation.<sup>137</sup>

On the positive side, the ongoing discussions concerning the role of women in Adventism have also contributed to the development of a greater hermeneutical awareness. In many ways the discussions have considerably clarified the field of Adventist interpretation especially in the fields of inspiration-revelation, methodology of principles and rules and the textual and historical procedures. Nonetheless, the developments and the progress made remains largely limited to the concerns of traditional evangelical text-oriented hermeneutics.

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that there will be always oppressors for God to judge. See William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 100-101.

<sup>135</sup> William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 63.

<sup>136</sup> Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 106-107.

<sup>137</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, 48-49.

While opponents and proponents' methodologies may function coherently within their defined theoretical framework, theoretical reflection on their positions is suggesting that these methodologies may still contain inherent theoretical problems that at least should be acknowledged by the participants and at best addressed.

However given the manner in which the apparatus of both sides is defined and conceived, the hermeneutical dialogue between opponents and proponents is avoiding reflection about deeper theoretical matters and potential inherent problems. The analysis in chapter four has however shown that there are number of theoretical and functional questions which both sides could and perhaps should raise. The lack of attention to the problems of the function of language and meaning, the problematic of reader's understanding and pre-understanding or critical awareness of epistemological-philosophical influences that may be operative invisibly behind one's method are examples of such questions.

Unless both sides make conscious attempts to address the lack of epistemological and critical clarification of their hermeneutical positions, there is every chance that the theological differences between the two camps will remain unresolved. It is therefore the proposition of this research that fuller awareness of the problems of hermeneutics may provide a defence against interpretations that may be largely echoes of one's own attitudes or pre-judgements; furthermore, at the same time, such a fuller awareness may provide a useful platform for further constructive reflection.

Closely related to this is a recognition that mutual engagement in meta-hermeneutical reflection may bring with it general edification benefits for reading practices and character virtues of those engaged. While traditional text-oriented hermeneutics is largely informational, a hermeneutics that takes into account also matters related to the horizon of the reader could be in addition educational. The edification dimension of hermeneutics that is critically aware where it is coming from and what it is doing is not simply about creating room for new information, but also about creating "another mentality" or re-formed mindset.<sup>138</sup> Indeed for all major seminal thinkers including Gadamer, Betti or Ricoeur hermeneutical reflection formatively nurtures qualities of listening, tolerance, patience, openness, respect for the other/text/author, refusal to exercise mastery or to impose "my" agenda.<sup>139</sup> They recognise and promote the benefits of hermeneutical understanding which involves not only information but also formation of the habits of reading. Anthony Thiselton being a leading hermeneutical

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<sup>138</sup> Emilio Betti, *Die Hermeneutik als allgemeine Methodik der Geisteswissenschaften (Hermeneutics as Comprehensive Methodology in Human Sciences)* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1962, [2<sup>nd</sup> 1972]), 307. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1989 [1<sup>st</sup> 1975, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised 2004]), 299.

<sup>139</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, 807.

theoretician<sup>140</sup> for the past three decades has summarised the potential benefits of metacritical reflection as having impact on especially three areas: (a) it would help to define the nature of hermeneutical task; (b) it would provide the interpreter with conceptual tools for interpretation and (c) it would help the interpreter to detect his own presuppositions and develop his own critical capacities.<sup>141</sup>

Being alert to and reflecting potential problems of proponents' and opponents' methods may therefore be beneficial on more than just the theological level of ordination of women debate. There are examples in the hermeneutical field that show that problems of language, meaning, reader's perspective and epistemological influences have been considered and even addressed. Anthony Thiselton's example may be the most noticeable one, yet there are also other examples of scholars working from within the evangelical tradition who have engaged in addressing meta-hermeneutical questions.<sup>142</sup> It is not the purpose of this theoretical-reflective chapter or the thesis as a whole to propose what opponents' or proponents' hermeneutics should do, how they should operate or which direction they should take. In its essence this thesis is an analytical one and therefore its main aim was to comprehensively analyse and simply point out the problematic aspects of both Adventist hermeneutical paradigms.

Since how we read, understand and interpret biblical texts is at the very heart of Christian identity and faith, Christian communities must not assume that this reading, understanding and interpretation is a "given" and obvious process which they can just do without a prior and ongoing conscious reflection about what hermeneutics actually is and what reading and understanding actually involves. It would be a lost opportunity for Adventist

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<sup>140</sup> Not only is Thiselton's contribution widely acclaimed by modern scholarship, but also more traditional hermeneutics proponents recognise Thiselton as a the leading authority in the field. See William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 62, footnote 160; Gerald Bray from within conservative evangelicalism has described Thiselton as "a leading authority on hermeneutical theory... a conservative evangelical [whose] work offers an outstanding example of how a scholar of that persuasion can penetrate the abstruse world of German philosophy at the deepest level." See Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 474. Unfortunately, Bray later in his book wrongly identifies Thiselton as an exponent of New Hermeneutic school of Ebeling, Heidegger, Fuchs and Bultmann. (Ibid. 481). Thiselton himself has criticised the particular hermeneutical school of New Hermeneutic extensively in an essay published first in 1977 "Entering a Transforming World: 'The New Hermeneutic'" and republished in Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics*, 463-488, cf. 481-488.

<sup>141</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons*, 445. Kevin Vanhoozer's work may serve as an example of a conservative evangelical scholar who has taken into account metacritical issues of language and adjusted his approach accordingly. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "From Speech Acts to Scripture Acts: The Covenant of Discourse and the Discourse of Covenant," in *After Pentecost: Language and Biblical Interpretation. Scripture and Hermeneutics Series, Volume 2*, eds. Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene and Karl Moller, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001), 1-49 and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

<sup>142</sup> *Scripture and Hermeneutics* series has been already mentioned as addressing state of the art hermeneutical matters. The contributors to this series are predominantly scholars from conservative evangelical traditions.

opponents and proponents not to reflect with greater attention about the theoretical and conceptual tools they are using. Their approaches - while historically and presently remaining dividing – also have open-ended futures.

‘It is always possible to argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations, to arbitrate between them and to seek agreement, even if this agreement remains beyond our immediate reach’...interpretations are parts of our history. As such they have pasts that have shaped them and futures that open before them and beckon them.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Forth Worth: TX: Texas Christian Press, 1976), 79 and Roger Lundin, “Interpreting Orphans: Hermeneutics in the Cartesian Tradition,” in *The Promise of Hermeneutics*, 61.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to provide a first of its kind systematic and analytical synthesis and assessment of biblical, theological and hermeneutical aspects of the ongoing debate about women in Adventist theology. While other studies have already researched the subject of the ordination of women in Adventism, no study has yet attempted to analyse and appraise the discussion from its theological and hermeneutical perspective on this level. This thesis thus attempts to fill this gap.

The research has begun achieving its main objectives by first introducing the Adventist ordination debate from the point of view of its historical roots. The historical dimension of the debate is an undeniable fact since the discussion began in 1881 when at the General Conference level the question of ordination of women arose for the first time. While the resolution to set apart women by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry has not been approved, the matter was far from being dead not alone because the Adventist church having its roots in the evangelical Revivalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, eschatological Millerism, pietistic Wesleyanism and generally radical Reformation has had from its beginnings a positive view of women's ministry. All these roots of the Adventist denomination nurtured positive and open attitudes toward the ministry of their female members. It is therefore not surprising that as early as in 1881 the question of ordination of women had already been opened in Adventist theology.

However, the more immediate roots of the current ordination debates go back to 1960s when the question was re-opened with new force on international level. It was especially the decades of 1970s, 1980s and 1990s which have witnessed an exponential growth in material published on various aspects of the subject of women's ministry. It was also at this time that the church officially authorised women to be ordained as deacons and elders yet couldn't reach a theological and administrative consensus concerning a worldwide authorization of women's ordination into the pastoral ministry. Administratively and theologically, therefore, the Adventist church since then seems to be trapped in a non-committal position.

With that historical and ecclesial background the study has begun in Chapters Two and Three to look into the theological and hermeneutical divide. The first objective of providing a structured analysis and synthesis of biblical and theological arguments has been accomplished in the first parts of these chapters. Chapter Two thus investigated first the position of opponents of women's ordination. The biblical arguments of opponents are based on the assumption that Scripture is clear concerning the role of women in the church and that none of the pertinent passages is obscure or difficult to understand. 1 Timothy 2:9-15 alongside 1 Timothy 3:1-7 constitute the central biblical evidence of opponents. 1 Timothy 2 provides the retrospective hermeneutical vantage point to Genesis 1-3 from where a permanent

validity of the male headship principle is argued. The reasoning of opponents hence follows deductive logic from the New Testament back to the Old Testament. Rigorous literalistic reading of "husband of one wife" is followed to interpret 1 Timothy 3, the second backbone texts of the opponents' case. The implication of this text according to opponents is that gender qualifications for church ministry are first while spiritual gifts serve as secondary qualifications. Opponents find further Scriptural evidence supporting their case in 1 Corinthians 14:33-36. The main argument according to opponents is that Paul's call to subordination is a call not to challenge male leadership. The reference to "the law" shows that subordination is a divine arrangement from creation and not a cultural norm. The permanent validity of the principle of headship and subordination is also affirmed by 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 according to opponents. Neither of the two passages in Corinthians they maintain is problematic, and they can be understood by deductive reading. Finally, according to opponents the two texts of Ephesians 5:21-23 and Galatians 3:26-29, which are used by proponents to support their case, have either no bearing on the subject of ordination (Galatians 3) or confirm a one way subordination and not a mutual one (Ephesians 5). Both these texts talk about salvation and ontological equality but not church order.

The theological arguments form a crucial foundation of the opponents' case and further add to their biblical evidence. The primary theological argument which has the greatest bearing on their position is the theological principle of male headship and female subordination. This principle, opponents argue, was established at creation and is visible in the Genesis account from the manner and order of creation. Additional theological arguments of the role women held in the Old Testament and New Testament and the representative role of pastor/elder are only elaborations of this basic theological motif which according to opponents has not only family, but also practical ecclesial implications.

The opponents' methodological case was presented in the second part of Chapter Two. This part of the chapter showed how the opponents' theory of biblical inspiration, their method and its functional aspects constitute the essence of their hermeneutical thought and practice. The most important connotation opponents apply when it comes to their view of inspiration is the notion of "full" inspiration. This notion has decisive impact on their rationale. The chapter demonstrated in particular the impact such notion has on the text of the Scripture which is consequently regarded to be fully authoritative, universally applicable, culturally not conditioned and importantly absolutely inerrant in all its theological and non-theological details. Moreover such corollaries of full inspiration work well alongside their fundamental assumption about Scriptural clarity. Because Scripture is clear in its message the interpretation of it should be based on literal reading rather than reading strategies of "plot" or "trajectory". Opponents' views of biblical inspiration have been overall identified as having decisive affinities with verbal, immediate and deductivist theories of biblical inspiration.

The opponents' preferred method of interpretation is in Chapter Two identified as the historical-grammatical method which is placing strong emphasis on plain, natural and literal meaning of words. Crucially, such a method for opponents suggests that historical investigation while being part of the interpretative process has to avoid using any extra-biblical sources. At its essence the opponents' preferred method is characterised by literal reading which operates on the assumption that the meaning is discovered by following one's common sense understanding. Opponents generally dismiss the historical-critical methods, yet practically they cannot escape from utilizing "lower" critical procedures; which, as later argued in the thesis, is illustrative of the fact that the two methodologies have a similar philosophical heritage behind them. While Chapter Two has attempted to achieve its goal of systematically analysing and synthesizing the position of opponents on the biblical, theological and hermeneutical levels, it also, through this method, attempted to expose the underlying rationale and logic that undergirds their scheme of thinking. The analysis therefore has occasionally raised questions which point to deeper influences operating in the hermeneutical mind of opponents. Particularly questions concerning the opponents' perception of language and the nature of text arising from the way they define inspiration and revelation, questions concerning pre-understanding of readers arising from how they treat presuppositions and define reading as being an extension of the reader's natural sense, the chapter has suggested, may be indicative of deeper meta-hermeneutical issues which have not been addressed by them so far and which may shed more light on the essence of their reading habits.

The objective of providing a structured analysis and synthesis of biblical and theological arguments and related hermeneutical positions has been further pursued in Chapter Three which focused on investigating the proponents' position. In contrast to opponents, the Adventist proponents argue that the biblical material is silent on the issue of the ordination of women and does not contain a clear "thus says the Lord". The key biblical passages, proponents suggest, should be therefore viewed from the broader context of Scriptural revelation.

Looking at the key biblical evidence of proponents, Chapter Three has identified principle-based, contextual, linguistic and historical-cultural reading strategies as being at the heart of their biblical approach. The exegesis of the key texts of 1 Timothy 2:11-15, 1 Corinthians 11:1-3, 1 Corinthians 14:33-36, Ephesians 5: 21-33 and Galatians 3:26-29 for proponents demonstrates that there is no conclusive biblical evidence against the ordination of women. Most of the biblical passages are in the context of family relationships, some emphasise a two-way submission. In addition semantic clarification and historical-cultural background of the micro and macro contexts shed important light on influences shaping the situations in the churches. The main text that captures however the essence of proponents'

approach to ordination of women is Galatians 3:26-29. The interpretation of the proponents' Magna Charta reveals their emphasis on principle-based reading of biblical texts. The big picture of creation-fall-redemption is used as the basic context for understanding this key passage which according to proponents teaches not only vertical redemption between God and mankind but also horizontal restoration of relationships between men and women.

After the biblical arguments in Chapter Three, the theological arguments of proponents have been presented. The most important theological arguments of proponents have been identified as the argument of equality from the creation account which not only suggests ontological equality but also functional equality in every aspect of life. Proponents bring the argument of the New Testament's positive treatment of women as their second theological argument. According to proponents both Jesus in the Gospels and later the early church treated women beyond traditional expectations of that time and culture. Women were given important place in the life of Jesus and in the ministry of the early church. The third theological argument proponents employ considers the theology of ordination. Proponents argue that ordination has historically developed into a hierarchical model which is foreign to the New Testament church and theology. The later Augustinian sacramental view of ordination came to dominate the theology of ordination, replacing the New Testament missiological-functional view of ordination. The last theological argument brought by proponents to support their case is based on the analogy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century proslavery hermeneutics, as compared with the current opponents' hermeneutics. Both hermeneutical positions are based on almost identical methodologies and yet the opponents' theology ends up being a liberation theology towards slaves and at the same time an oppressive theology towards women's ministry. According to proponents such a dichotomy points to methodological and theological problems in the opponents' case. Overall the chapter has pointed out that while the opponents' theological orientation could be characterised as creational (based on Genesis 1-3), proponents' theological orientation could be described as redemptive (based on Galatians 3:28).

Part two of Chapter Three investigated the proponents' hermeneutical thought. It initially pointed out that compared to opponents, proponents follow a less unified approach to interpretation which means that the analysis of their hermeneutical position had to involve a larger spectrum of views. The chapter has demonstrated a significant point of difference from the opponents' hermeneutical thinking lies in how the proponents' understanding of inspiration works compared to opponents. The proponents' inspiration rationale is not built on the notion of "full" inspiration and its corollaries but rather on a mediated view of inspiration in which the human inspired agent contributed to the overall form and content of Scriptural revelation. This accommodated view of inspiration has however also its consequences for how proponents perceive the nature of Scripture and how ultimately they interpret it. Importantly



the proponents' mediated view of inspiration does not lead their logic to absolute inerrancy positions nor to literalistic reading tendencies, but rather to a respectful approach towards Scripture which acknowledges the divine element alongside the human and consequently to principle-based reading which tries to distinguish between cultural applications and universal principles. The main distinguishing characteristic of the proponents' methodological approach then is their insistence that hermeneutics is a science of correct interpretation which is guaranteed by following a precisely defined and devised set of rules of interpretation. The more inductive nature of the proponents' principle-based hermeneutics compared to the more immediate and direct nature of the opponents' literal hermeneutics is based on historical-cultural and broad metanarrative reading strategies.

In all of these hermeneutical aspects and in the inspiration logic - and not just in how differently proponents interpret the same biblical passages or how their theological views differ from opponents - one can note the real and substantial differences between the two camps. These fundamental methodological differences while being recognised and identified in chapters two and three have been further assessed and appraised from a meta-hermeneutical perspective in the last chapter.

Chapter Four has thus attempted to take the analysis of opponents' and proponents' hermeneutical paradigms from the previous two chapters to the meta-hermeneutical level. The last chapter has primarily argued that because both Adventist ordination approaches fit within the traditional evangelical and Protestant spectrum of biblical interpretation, their paradigms therefore reflect the theoretical text-centred framework which largely ignores deeper meta-hermeneutical questions. Because of the traditional text-centred orientation of both hermeneutics and their tendency to underestimate or reject meta-hermeneutical considerations arising from the problems of the reader's perspective both camps may be not noticing certain weaknesses which are inherent in their hermeneutics.

The last chapter has illuminated the number of theoretical and functional questions which both sides could and perhaps should raise. First of all, critical awareness to epistemological-philosophical influences of positivist common sense assumptions and rationalist Baconian scientific expectations that may be operative invisibly behind their methods is one such question. I have argued that it is precisely the positivist common sense orientation of the opponents' method and more scientific rationalist orientation of the proponents' method that leads either to literalistic-direct reading off the meaning from the text or alternatively to principle-based hermeneutics of rules of interpretation which are thought to be the guarantee of discovering the universal principles. But more importantly, such common sense and Baconian orientations also make both positions either reject or neglect the problems of the reader's perspective. It is precisely attention to the reader's perspective that may open the awareness of proponents and opponents to additional problems their hermeneutical

apparatuses may contain, namely: the problems of the function of language; meaning; and, more generally, the problems of a reader's pre-understanding, which are part of one's hermeneutical reality regardless of whether one knows about them or not.

It is therefore the suggestion of this research that fuller awareness of the problems of hermeneutics and recognition of philosophical-historical influences that could potentially be shaping hermeneutical thinking, may provide a defence against interpretations that may be largely echoes of one's own already achieved theological conclusions. The modern hermeneutical field provides a number of positive examples of conservative evangelical scholarship that has engaged in deeper theoretical considerations and was as a result of that able to address pressing hermeneutical matters. It is, however, not the purpose of this study to propose what opponents or proponent should do hermeneutically or how they should operate. At its core, this thesis is an analytical study and therefore its main aim was to analyse and simply theoretically reflect on the potentially problematic aspects of both Adventist hermeneutical paradigms. Arguably, in the end, a fuller awareness of meta-hermeneutical problems and historical influences may provide a needed reflective impulse for a more productive and rewarding discussion.

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