

Men and Women in Christ: The Chapter Summaries

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Andrew Bartlett KC now works mainly as an international mediator. A sharp-minded thinker, he has researched and worked through the topic of the role of women and men in the New Testament and in the Bible as a whole, taking into account all the theological arguments. He tries to approach the topic without bias, and in my opinion he has succeeded. This can be seen in the fact that at some points he also criticizes the egalitarian position when its arguments are simply weak or not well founded. This document contains the summaries of the main chapters, written by Bartlett himself.

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**FRESH LIGHT FROM
THE BIBLICAL TEXTS**

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In accordance with Holy Scripture, I hold the conviction that women, too, must exercise teaching and leadership ministries in the church in order to support the health of the church.

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Summary of Chapter 1: Revising Tradition, Seeking Unity

1. Christian unity is being damaged by a polarizing schism between egalitarians and complementarians.
2. The traditional interpretation of the Bible, to the effect that women are innately inferior to men, has rightly been rejected as being based more on patriarchal culture than on the actual text. Both egalitarians and complementarians now regard women and men as inherently equal and now affirm that women may be leaders in wider society. But complementarians insist on male leadership in the church and in marriage.
3. Faithful interpretation of the Bible gives Scripture priority over tradition, pays attention to culture, goes back to the source language in context, looks for coherence and takes a Christ-centred canonical approach; and it does this with spiritual openness and practical wisdom (appendix 1).
4. Applying those methods will lead to the conclusions of this book, which will be that the complementarian and egalitarian positions are each partly correct and partly mistaken.
5. If Christian believers can move closer together on these issues, this will please the Lord and strengthen the church's service as salt and light in a confused and hurting world.

Summary of Chapter 2: Husband and Wife, Men and Women: 1 Corinthians 7

1. Despite the prominence of 1 Corinthians 7 as the longest discussion of marriage in the New Testament, and despite its containing the only explicit New Testament mention of a husband's authority, complementarian analyses have tended to overlook it or downplay it.
2. Paul's view of the world is Christ-centred. Creation remains in view, but redemption and new creation are in the foreground. His perspective on marriage takes into account that the Messiah has come and the end is in sight. This relativizes all the present circumstances of believers' lives, which become unimportant in comparison with what is to come. In this light, he commends singleness and offers a strikingly equal view of marriage.
3. According to Paul in verses 3–5, husband and wife have equal authority. He repudiates unilateral decision-making. Leadership by a husband that is conceived in terms of one-way authority over his wife is in direct conflict with the apostle's teaching.
4. Verses 3–5 cannot justifiably be regarded as a special exception to a husband's unilateral authority, applicable only in the areas of sexual intercourse and joint prayer.
5. As far as can be determined from verses 1–16, 25–28, 32–40, Paul envisages complete equality of personal relations between men and women. If Paul believed in a hierarchical, unilateral authority of husband over wife, it appears inexplicable that he wrote these words.
6. This does not mean that Paul is an egalitarian in the modern sense. He is not calling for individuals to exercise their rights within marriage; rather, he is calling each equal partner to yield in submission to the other, in line with Romans 12:10; Galatians 5:13; Philippians 2:3.

Summary of Chapter 3: Hierarchies, Submission and Love: Colossians 3 and Ephesians 5

1. Colossians and Ephesians were written at about the same time and were intended for circulation from church to church, so are appropriately considered together.
2. Paul is not opposed to hierarchies where they are appropriate.
3. The word 'submit' (*hupotassō*) carries the idea of being ranked below someone else. But Paul's instruction to wives to submit does not of itself imply the existence of a hierarchy in marriage. We have to decide whether he means that wives should submit because their husbands *are* in authority over them or whether he means that wives should behave *as if* their husbands ranked above them.
4. Submission in Christian relationships does not mean giving unquestioning obedience to another person. There is no Christian duty to follow another person into wrongdoing.
5. There was not a uniform view of marriage in first-century culture, but typically the husband had unilateral authority over the wife.
6. Paul's instructions to wives to submit, and to husbands to love, are partly driven by practical considerations.
7. Paul endorses the authority of parents over children but not of slave owners over slaves. Comparing the three household relationships (wife to husband, child to father, slave to master) does not establish that Paul approves of husbands having unilateral authority over their wives.

Summary of Chapter 4: Marriage Portrays the Saviour: Ephesians 5

1. The only marriage at the completion of the new creation will be the union between Christ and his people. In Ephesians 5 Paul teaches that marriage in the present age is to be seen as a pointer to that reality. The way that husbands and wives relate to each other is to be understood as part of the outcome of being filled by the Holy Spirit so as to live a Christlike way of life.
2. Paul uses a 'head' metaphor to describe both Christ's relation to the church and the husband's calling in marriage. In Greek this was not a standardized metaphor with a single meaning, so its meaning has to be determined from the context. In Ephesians 1:21–23 the focus is probably on Christ's lordship and in 4:13–16 it is on Christ's saviourhood. Four features show that it is the latter meaning which Paul applies to the husband. These are (a) Paul's apposition of 'head of the church' and 'himself saviour of the body' in 5:23; (b) Paul's theme of saviourhood in 5:25–33; (c) his use of Genesis in 5:31–32; and (d) the first word of 5:24 (*alla*, 'but'), which can only be explained in a way that fits the context if Paul is comparing the husband with Christ as saviour rather than as lord.
3. The meaning of the husband's headship, as shown by the head–body metaphor and the Christ–church comparison, is that he has a particular obligation of loving self-sacrifice for the benefit of his wife. If the husband has any crown, it is a crown of thorns.
4. Wives are to behave as if their husbands were their masters. This does not mean that husbands are masters of their wives. The reasons given by Paul for the wife's submission are the example of

and reverence for Christ (vv. 1–2, 21–22) and the husband's responsibility of self-sacrificial service (vv. 22–23). He does not give a reason based on a God-given unilateral authority of the husband.

5. The submission which Paul instructs in verse 21 is a voluntary, mutual submission of believers to one another. Husbands are not exempted from this as regards their wives.
6. In the limited and particular sense explained above, Paul makes a differentiation in the responsibilities of husbands and wives. The egalitarian view which denies any definite differentiation of responsibilities is not consistent with Paul's use of the head–body metaphor and the Christ–church comparison.
7. Marriages lived according to the model of Ephesians 5 are capable of being a wonderful demonstration of the humility of Jesus Christ and his sacrificial love for his church.
8. Paul appears to envisage joint leadership of the household and is not prescriptive about the balance of men's and women's responsibilities for the family.

Summary of Chapter 5: Creation and Life: Genesis 1 – 3 and Beyond

1. The complementarian interpretation of Genesis 1 – 3, which argues for male leadership authority, lacks explicit support in the biblical text. It depends on implications which are at best uncertain. None of them is a necessary implication from the text.
2. To be male or female is a created fact of life. The presentation of woman as made to be man's powerful ally indicates a definite differentiation of men and women.
3. The Genesis text does not define or develop this differentiation. It leaves open the possibility that other scriptures could indicate responsibilities of leadership. But it does not establish male rule. The rule of a man over his wife, as described in Genesis 3:16, is presented as a negative consequence of the fall. This is not something to be deliberately perpetuated or increased.
4. There is no Old Testament text which says that husbands ought to exercise authority over their wives.
5. Scripture is not prescriptive about the balance of roles of husband and wife in caring for the family. The description of the noble wife in Proverbs 31, who is both breadwinner and runs the home, sets out an idealized picture in a particular historical and cultural setting. People's circumstances, abilities and giftings vary. To regard Proverbs 31 as a mandatory prescription would be to misunderstand it.
6. Teaching about creation cannot provide a definitive answer concerning Christian marriage, because we must go beyond the question 'How did God order the original creation before the fall?' and ask also 'What is God's purpose for redeemed human beings?' and 'In the light of that purpose, how are we to live now?'
7. The institution of marriage in Genesis 2:24 has spiritual significance as pointing forward to the union of Christ and his church (Eph. 5:31). Even if the complementarian interpretation of Genesis 1 – 3 were correct, it would not follow that in Christ the husband should rule the wife. Redemption in Christ is taking believers forward into the new creation, not backwards to before the fall.

8. Old Testament examples of women's leadership with God's approval are inconsistent with there being a principle that women may never lead men or exercise authority over them.

Summary of Chapter 6: Submission and Honour: 1 Peter

1. Peter's view of life is Christ-centred. The example of our Lord's humble love and submission is prominent in Peter's first letter.
2. Peter discusses how this applies to a variety of situations in which Christian believers should give honour to others, including marriage.
3. Peter's reasons for submission of wives to husbands include: (a) to win them over; (b) a gentle spirit is pleasing to God; and (c) the example of holy women of the past, such as Sarah. She is a wonderfully encouraging illustration of submission to God, and therefore also to her husband, in adverse circumstances (3:1–6). Peter's analogies for wives' submission are the call to all believers to be submissive (2:15–17), the instruction to slaves to be submissive even to unjust masters (2:18–21) and the example of Christ's submission to those who unjustly caused his suffering (2:21–24). His reasons do not include that God's design has placed husbands in a position of unilateral authority over their wives. This would have been a highly relevant reason for him to give if he had believed it to be true. There is no scripture anywhere in the Bible which instructs husbands to exercise unilateral authority over their wives.
4. Husbands are to behave 'in the same way', with gentleness, and paying honour to their wives (3:7). This points to mutual submission.
5. To be named as an heir of the true God is the highest possible honour status. Husband and wife are equally 'heirs of the grace of life'. Accurately translated, carefully read and rightly understood, 1 Peter 3:1–7 does not endorse a unilateral authority of husband over wife.
6. Patriarchal culture has misused 1 Peter 3:1–7. Husbands should not coerce their wives. Where there is domestic abuse, steps should be taken to bring it to an end.
7. Mutual submission in Christian relationships is consistent with appropriate leadership. Christian leadership in the church does not involve the exercise of forcible coercive power over other people. Where church discipline is required, the strongest proper sanction is exclusion and nothing more.

Summary of Chapter 7: Veiled Meanings? 1 Corinthians 11

1. First Corinthians 11:3 is a framework statement which acts as a heading to Paul's remarks about praying and prophesying. It undergirds his reasoning.
2. Paul's meaning cannot be safely or convincingly settled by appeal to fine nuances of the doctrine of the Trinity.
3. Word studies show that 'authority over' and 'source' are possible metaphorical uses of *kephalē* (head). Usage elsewhere cannot determine Paul's intended meaning in this verse. This must be sought by examining the context.

4. The hierarchical interpretation which sees Paul's concern as being about men's authority over women cannot be right, because it conflicts with the text in eight respects. Of particular importance, the hierarchical interpretation makes it necessary to disregard the function of Paul's framework statement, to mistranslate verse 10 and to accept that Paul wrote verse 11 the wrong way around.
5. In the relevant cultural context, women's hair was regularly on display rather than hidden by a veil (compare 1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:3). But pagan practices in Corinth encouraged dishonourable sexual behaviour, both heterosexual and homosexual, and this was an issue for the Corinthian church. Men's long hair, and women's long hair let down loose instead of fastened up on top of the head, both suggested a willingness to engage in such conduct.
6. There are multiple difficulties in reading the passage as concerned with veils. Paul is writing about how hair is worn, not about the veiling of women. Properly translated, verses 2–16 are about hairstyles throughout, not about veils.
7. The NIV is correct to translate *anēr* and *gunē* as respectively 'man' and 'woman' throughout the passage, and not as 'husband' and 'wife'.

Summary of Chapter 8: Hair That Dishonours: 1 Corinthians 11

1. Once we accept that Paul's theological motif in 1 Corinthians 11:3 is sources, and that his subject matter is hairstyles worn by those who prophesy or pray aloud during assembled worship, we find that he is making a continuous, logical and connected argument. There are at least ten pointers to the substantial correctness of a sources and hairstyles interpretation of what Paul writes. The objections to a sources interpretation are unpersuasive.
2. Paul's concern is not about hair itself, but about the dishonourable message given by the Corinthians' hairstyles. Their conduct should honour God's purposes for men and women as taught in Genesis and should not appear dishonouring and contrary to those purposes. Relevantly, those purposes involve faithful, monogamous, heterosexual marriage. Paul also emphasizes redemption in Christ: though differentiated by their sexuality in creation, in redemption man and woman are united in the Lord. Men and women are interdependent and need each other's contributions. Prayer and prophecy should be undertaken by men and women in a way that honours God, the source both of creation and of redemption.
3. Paul says nothing in this passage about male authority over women. Nor does he say anything about reserving some governing and teaching roles within the church to men. If notions of male authority over women and restrictions on women's ministry are to be supported, this needs to be done by reference to other passages of Scripture.

Summary of Chapter 9: Silent Women? 1 Corinthians 14

1. Verses 34–35 form a unit, separate from verse 33. Verse 33 should not be split into two and partly joined onto verse 34 as in some modern versions.
2. The content of these two verses is in severe conflict with the surrounding context. This conflict raises interpretive issues for which no satisfactory solution has been found.

3. Paul seems to say that women's silence is required by a command of the Lord Jesus. This is a further puzzle.
4. In the absence of a satisfactory solution to the interpretive puzzles, we cannot tell what to make of these verses. In particular, we cannot judge whether a restriction on women's speaking which is based on an Old Testament scripture which cannot be identified (v. 34) and on cultural grounds (v. 35) should or should not apply to churches in different times and cultures.

Summary of Chapter 10: Silence Added? 1 Corinthians 14

1. Belief that Scripture as originally given is God's revelation requires Christian scholars to try to ensure, so far as possible, that the church is using accurate copies and not treating copying errors or spurious alterations as authoritative.
2. The text which is printed as 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 in our current Bibles is probably not authentic. The best explanation of the totality of the evidence currently available is that someone other than Paul wrote verses 34–35 in the margin as an early gloss or comment. Copyists mistook this as part of the original letter and promoted it into the main text, but were unsure where to position it. They inserted it in two different positions (some after v. 33, others after v. 40).
3. This explanation accounts for all the available evidential data, both external and internal. It does not conflict with any credible evidence. It resolves every historical and interpretive problem associated with these verses, including all the relevant features of the evidence from the manuscripts. No other explanation fulfils these criteria.

Summary of Chapter 11: Teaching and 1 Timothy 2: Difficulties

1. The purpose of Paul's instructions in 1 Timothy is to combat false teaching and ungodliness and promote right teaching and godliness in Christ.
2. There is a debate about the meaning of Paul's restriction on women in 1 Timothy 2:11–15. Major difficulties which all interpreters must deal with include (a) the incompleteness of our information about the circumstances in Ephesus; (b) the uncertainty over the meaning of the rare verb *authenteō* in verse 12; and (c) Paul's compressed style of writing in the critical passage.
3. The debate about the meaning of Paul's restriction is not a contest between an absolute and universal interpretation and a contingent and limited interpretation. Both sides recognize that Paul's intention must be limited in some way, in order to be consistent with his affirmations of teaching by women. The disagreement is about the nature of his intended limitation.
4. Egalitarians have suggested that Paul's restriction in verse 12 is limited to remedying a particular temporary problem in Ephesus. But they have struggled to find an explanation of Paul's meaning which both fits the available evidence about what was actually occurring at Ephesus and fits with the details of what Paul writes. I have drawn attention to four tough questions which egalitarian interpretations have difficulty in answering.
5. Complementarians contend that in verse 12 Paul is concerned with who delivers authoritative teaching in the church. But there are severe difficulties with this. They include the following: - 'I do not permit' / 'I am not permitting' would be a strange choice of expression for stating an enduring

rule applicable to all public assemblies of the church in all times and places. Paul's restriction applies to particular people over whom he has jurisdiction. This form of expression is not used anywhere else in the Bible for laying down an enduring rule. Inferring a principle of general application is dependent upon understanding verse 13 as Paul's appeal to a creation principle. - There is no clear statement by Paul that local church leadership must be exclusively male. If Paul meant in verse 12 to preserve male leadership authority, he should also have banned women from prophesying to men, but in 1 Corinthians he permitted it. - Scripture does not explicitly recognize a special activity of authoritative teaching that is different from other Christian teaching activities and that is allocated to a specific group of men. - If Paul really considers (as complementarians assert) that Genesis 2 teaches a creation principle of authoritative male leadership, which applies to the church, this principle should apply across the whole of life. But complementarians contradict this by their reluctance to apply it so widely. Their analysis does not provide a coherent explanation of Paul's reliance on Genesis.

6. The debate has reached an impasse. A fresh start is needed. Most commentators on both sides have proceeded on the basis that in 1 Timothy 2 Paul is giving instructions specifically for the conduct of the public assemblies of the church. But this does not fit the details of what Paul writes. To break the impasse, the first step is to recognize that chapter 2 is not focused on the public assembly.

Summary of Chapter 12: Teaching and 1 Timothy 2: Contextual Keys

1. Four keys open the way to an interpretation of 2:9–15 which is fully grounded in the literary and historical context. The first is to ensure that we read those verses genuinely in the context of 1:1 – 2:8. The second is to consider together the two extended passages about women in 1 Timothy. By seeing what can be gathered from 5:3–16 concerning the historical context, we put ourselves more closely into Timothy's position as the first reader of the letter. This adds considerably to our understanding of 2:9–15. The third key will be to ascertain the meaning of *authentēō* provisionally from the context, and then check it against the range of possible meanings. The fourth key will be to pay attention to the signposts which Paul provides in verse 15.
2. Information about the historical background of the Ephesian church reveals a milieu in which magic arts and astrology were practised. In his letter Paul makes allusions to magic and to astrological lore. False teaching circulating in Ephesus includes sorcery and astrology. Resisting these influences is a spiritual battle against the unseen forces of evil.
3. Paul's concern in verses 11–12 is with certain wealthy women whose ungodly conduct evokes his strictures in verses 9–10. They are idle. They dress indecently and with extravagant display. They are going from house to house, each looking for a man who will satisfy her sexual desires, and promoting false teaching. Instead, these women should learn to do good works, in full submission to God, living a quiet and godly life. These women are influenced by the evil one. It appears that these are the false teachers remaining in the church, whom Timothy is charged to deal with. He must set them straight and ensure that none of them takes up a position as an elder or deacon in the church until she has proved her reformed life and character.

Summary of Chapter 13: Teaching and 1 Timothy 2: Paul's Reasoning

1. Using the third key, in the context of 1 Timothy 2:9–12 *authenteō* appears to mean 'overpower'. The nature of Paul's concern is: 'I am not permitting a woman false teacher with expensive and immodest dress, lacking decency and self-control, to teach and overpower a man: she is to be quiet and reverent and learn how to behave in accordance with the truth, in full submission to God.'
2. This interpretation facilitates ready explanation of Paul's reasoning by reference to Genesis in verses 13–14. Paul is underlining what he says in verses 11–12 by referring back to the first spiritual battle recounted in Scripture, where a woman was deceived by the satan into receiving forbidden knowledge, and falsely taught and overpowered a man, with dire results.
3. Paul chooses this rare word because of its use in the same sense in astrological lore, which forms part of the false teaching which the wealthy women are promoting. It is also associated with sorcery and with death, the opposite of salvation.
4. This line of interpretation illuminates the meaning of verse 15, traditionally regarded as a difficult verse. It refers to salvation brought about through the birth of the Messiah, with a sidelong glance at the beliefs of the Artemis cult.
5. Using the fourth key, we find that Paul provides two signposts in verse 15. He signals to the reader that he is equating 'woman' in verses 11–12 ('she' in v. 15) with 'women' in verses 9–10 ('they' in v. 15). This confirms that Paul's instruction in verses 11–12 is intended to relate to the women of verses 9–10. He also uses unusual vocabulary to construct a conspicuous verbal and thematic link between 2:15 (*teknogonia*) and 5:14 (*teknogoneō*). This is further confirmation that readers may get a better contextual understanding by reading his remarks about women in chapter 2 alongside his remarks about women in chapter 5.
6. The above interpretation fits into Paul's continuous, connected train of thought which starts in chapter 1 and proceeds through the letter. It shows how chapter 2 leads into chapter 3. It also resolves the four tough questions about 2:12 to which I drew attention in chapter 11 above.
7. First Timothy 2 does not justify a general ban on teaching by women in the church, or on the exercise of authority by women in the church.

Summary of Chapter 14: Women Church Leaders? A Biblical Survey

1. A rule of male-only church leadership is not justified by 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 or by 1 Timothy 2:11–15.
2. Jesus' choice of twelve Jewish male apostles does not determine the qualifications for local church leadership.
3. In the Old Testament much, but not all, teaching was done by priests. The priestly function has been brought to fulfilment by Jesus; and in Christ all believers are 'priests'. If priesthood is to be equated with leadership or with a teaching role, leadership and teaching roles are now potentially open to all God's people without gender distinction.
4. We considered ideas of 'headship' in chapters 4, 5, 7 and 8. Ephesians 5, Genesis 1 – 3 and 1 Corinthians 11 do not support restrictions on women's ministry.

5. Governing the church and teaching in the church may overlap, but they are distinct activities. A prohibition on women's teaching would not prove that women may not become elders. Conversely, permission for women to teach does not prove that they may become elders.
6. Women fulfilled prominent roles in the early church. They were significant participants and were so perceived by outsiders. But this does not tell us specifically whether women were appointed to recognized positions of leadership in local churches.
7. Care is needed not to make either too much or too little of the New Testament evidence concerning women's activities and roles. For example, it cannot be shown that Phoebe held a governing role in a church; conversely, we can say with a high degree of confidence that Junia was an outstanding missionary apostle.
8. We do not find in the New Testament any named women who can with practical certainty be identified as elders. But the same is true of men, except for special cases (Peter and John). If we expand our search to probabilities, we can identify both men and women, unless there was a definite ban on women's eldership.
9. In the historical and cultural context of New Testament thought and life, there would not have been a general assumption that only men could be elders. If the apostles intended that no women should ever be involved in church leadership and serve as elders, they needed to say so with clarity, in order to guide the church for the future. But passages dealing with elders or leaders, such as Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:1–5; Hebrews 13:17, do not contain statements limiting eldership or leadership to men.

Summary of Chapter 15: Women Elders? 1 Timothy 3

1. The fullest guidance about the appointment of elders is found in Paul's lists of qualifications for eldership (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). Contrary to the impression given in most English versions, in the Greek text Paul's lists of qualifications for elders do not contain a clear exclusion of women. Prominent complementarian scholars acknowledge that this is so. These passages (especially 1 Tim. 3) contain positive indications that women may qualify as 'elders', in the sense in which that term is used in the New Testament.
2. Paul's idiomatic expression 'one-woman man' in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 is directed at faithfulness to the Christian sexual ethic and should be understood generically so as to encompass also 'one-man woman'.
3. A vital aspect of elders' or pastors' duties is to be guardians of the flock. It does not follow from this that only men should be elders or pastors. When we understand 'one-woman man' generically, all seventeen qualifications listed by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 are qualities and behaviours which are found in both men and women. The same feature runs through the corresponding list in Titus 1:5–9.
4. In conclusion, Scripture does not support a general ban on women becoming church elders. Nor is there a ban on women fulfilling any other function in the local church. The complementarity of men and women suggests that it is advantageous to have both men and women in leadership.
5. In chapters 11 to 15 I have offered an explanation of the meaning of 1 Timothy 2 – 3 as regards women's teaching and eldership. This explanation takes into account the available New Testament

data and information about the historical and cultural context, has a simplicity that does not require reliance on unevidenced speculations, and sheds light on other areas, outside the immediate focus of our inquiry. These three features provide grounds for confidence in it.

Summary of Chapter 16: Taking Stock and Moving Closer Together

1. The conclusions reached in chapters 2 to 15 support a view of marriage which is non-hierarchical and partly complementarian, while rejecting any general ban on women's teaching or leadership in churches.
2. The concept of submission should be understood in the context of the Christian paradox of humility and equality. All God's people are equal inheritors of his abundant grace. Because of the example of Jesus Christ, humility is at the heart of Christian living.
3. Our conclusions do not depend on prior assumptions about the relative extent to which creation or new creation should guide believers' behaviour. But they fit well into the context of the presently overlapping relationship of creation (as background) and new creation (as foreground).
4. Husbands are called to serve rather than rule over their wives. Calling women to church leadership is not contrary to Scripture. There is no reason to fear that these callings will lead to gender confusion.
5. Some interpretations fall short because the interpreter has had insufficiently high expectations of Scripture. Close study of the texts should lead to a fresh appreciation of the biblical writers, to the glory of God.
6. If churches, groups of churches and other associations claim to be evangelical, this means they accept an obligation to be obedient to what the New Testament says about unity.
7. There are currently weaknesses on each side of the partisan debate. The disagreements over interpretation require further work in pursuit of unity.
8. Claims by egalitarians that complementarians are driven by base motives should be discarded.
9. Complementarians need to re-frame their understanding of the debate. Egalitarian views on marriage or women's ministry do not cause theological liberalism. Among believers who accept the authority of the Bible, the critical issues are not questions of obedience to Scripture but questions of interpretation, to be settled by using orthodox methods. It is time for complementarians to stop claiming that evangelical disagreement with complementarian interpretations threatens the authority of Scripture or the truth of the gospel.
10. Jesus prays for the unity of those who will follow him (John 17:11, 20–23), so that the world will know that he was sent by the Father. In a Christ-centred view of the world, this is a vitally important objective. The apostolic instruction to make every effort to maintain unity requires a fresh conversation on a basis of mutual respect. Those who have taken up opposing positions on women's leadership or ministry need to recognize that this is not a primary gospel issue, to look afresh at the biblical arguments, to take care to use only sound methods of interpretation, and especially to pay closer attention and give more weight to context and to the train of thought in the relevant passages. Meanwhile we are to receive one another as the Lord has received all of us (Rom. 15:7).