
INTRODUCTION

The most sensitive and divisive issue in evangelicalism today, although not the most important one, is the issue of women in ministry. It is not surprising, therefore, that books and articles continue to pour forth. A work on the topic by Stan Grenz demands special attention, for he exerts a considerable influence upon the evangelical scene through his prolific writing. Actually, the book is the dual effort of Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo. Muir Kjesbo wrote the first two chapters and Grenz composed the rest of the book, although both authors had input on what the other had written. For the purposes of this review I will name only the primary authors of the respective chapters under consideration, but the reader should understand that the stamp of both authors is imprinted upon the entire book. Since this issue is so controversial, it is important that the authors are given a fair hearing before they are evaluated. Thus, the first part of the review will summarize briefly their argument. When this concludes, the tenability of their thesis will be examined.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

The book is divided into three sections: historical, exegetical, and theological. The historical section, which comprises the first two chapters, was written by Muir Kjesbo. Firstly, she surveys the landscape of the contemporary church relative to the ministry of women. She outlines the current debate within certain denominations, the status of women in seminaries, and the founding of two recent organizations—the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood and Christians for Biblical Equality. This chapter is a useful and "newsy" overview which is quite helpful in acquainting one with the current tensions regarding the ordination of women. In chapter two Muir Kjesbo surveys the role of women in church history. The central thesis is that women were vitally involved in ministry when the church was experiencing revival and renewal. But renewal movements inevitably become institutional, and at this stage the ministry of women was stifled. Muir Kjesbo's main support for her thesis derives from American revivals in the nineteenth century.

The exegetical portion of the book comprises chapters three and four. In chapter three an inductive approach is used to defend the egalitarian view that all ministries are open to women. The authority of Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah in the OT demonstrate "the seeds of an egalitarian strand unparalleled among surrounding nations" (p. 71). The ministry of Jesus, however, clarified decisively the value and essential equality of women. Jesus countered the culture of his day by treating women as equal to men. The radical agenda of Jesus, according to Grenz, was implemented in the post Pentecost period. Women, like men, functioned as authoritative prophets in the community (cf. Acts 2:16-17; 21:8-19; 1 Cor. 11:5). Priscilla's teaching of Apollos shows that women functioned as authoritative teachers, and Grenz insists that a distinction between private and public teaching is unwarranted. Women also functioned as co-workers (cf. esp. Romans 16), and Paul calls on believers to submit to such co-workers (1 Cor. 16:6), and thus both male and female believers "were to honor these women as leaders and submit to their authority" (p. 86).
A number of women were patrons in the NT who opened their homes for the meeting of the early churches. Grenz contends that those who served as patrons also functioned pastorally, and that the pastoral and patron role were "inseparable" (p. 87). Did women serve in church offices? No evidence, Grenz admits, exists that women served as elders or bishops, but he cautions that this does not rule out such a role, for women are not banned from the office. The example of Phoebe demonstrates that women served in the role of deacon (Rom. 16:1-2), although Grenz thinks 1 Tim. 3:11 alone is too ambiguous to establish that women were in the diaconate. A striking defense for the egalitarian interpretation is the case of Junia in Rom. 16:7. Grenz believes the evidence is sufficiently clear to conclude that the person described was a woman and that she served as an apostle.

Chapter four focuses on the writings of Paul. Grenz leads off with a discussion of Gal. 3:28. He contends that the equality of male and female in Christ cannot be restricted to equal access to salvation. The statement also has social implications, for the assertion that Jews and Gentiles and slave and free are one in Christ has social consequences. Grenz claims, for instance, "Paul believed that the social order of slavery and the unity of all believers in Christ were fundamentally incompatible" (p. 103). Similarly, the unity of male and female and Christ means that they must relate to one another in a new way. Grenz agrees with F. F. Bruce that the Gal. 3:28 must have hermeneutical priority in interpreting the Pauline statements that appear at first glance to prohibit women from some ministries.

The rest of chapter four investigates three central texts on women in Paul: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 on head coverings, 1 Cor 14:33b-36 on silence in the church, and 1 Tim. 2:9-15 on women not teaching or exercising authority over men. Grenz's basic approach is to list a wide array of opinions and then to indicate which are persuasive to him. For instance, in 1 Cor. 11:2-6 he believes that the custom relates to hair style not to the wearing of a veil, that the meaning of the word "head" is difficult to determine, and that verse 10 teaches that women have freedom and authority. The liberating teaching of this pericope, Grenz suggests, is confirmed by vv. 11-12 where the fundamental equality of males and females in Christ is taught. Complementarians see a subordinationism in this passage that is modeled after the Trinity. Grenz objects that the analogy is faulty because the roles within the Trinity are "person-centered," whereas the distinctions between males and females are "group-oriented" (p. 114). The transcultural principle in this text, according to Grenz, is that women should minister as full partners with men but in a manner in which cultural norms are not violated.

In 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 Paul is correcting a local abuse, and does not provide a timeless word about a role for women. In approaching the 1 Timothy 2 text we should remember that it is addressed to a particular situation in which women were especially influenced by the heresy. The restriction on women is due to their own lack of knowledge or education. When their knowledge matures, then they are free to teach just as men do. The reference to the creation account should not be used to limit women from ministry. The point of verse 13 is "that rather than fulfilling God's intention to complete the creation of humanity by delivering the male from his solitude, the female actually became the agent of the opposite result" (p. 169).

The last section of the book, chapters five through seven, examines the whole issue
from a theological perspective. The issues examined are women and creation, women and
the priesthood, and women and the ordained ministry. The fact that God is represented as
"he" or "Father" should not lead to the conclusion that God is male. The language and
metaphors of scripture are analogical. In any case, both maternal and paternal images are
used with reference to God. It would be a serious mistake to identify God with one sex and
exclude the other. Those who appeal to the Son's relationship to the Father to support the
subordination of women are mistaken, not because such subordination necessarily implies
inequality--but because the analogy is faulty. The Son's subordination to the Father was
temporary and voluntary and cannot be compared to the "permanent submission of one
group to another" (p. 152). If the subordination of women is necessary, then they must of
necessity also be inferior. Furthermore, Grenz asserts that the Son's subordination to the
Father must be complemented by the truth that the Father submits to the Son. The mutual
relations among the members of the Trinity becomes the paradigm for male-female
relations.

It does not follow from this, Grenz maintains, that men and women are
androgynous, i.e., essentially the same. Research has established significant differences
between the sexes. It is precisely because of these differences that men and women should
both serve as leaders, for one will receive a truncated view of leadership if only men
function as leaders. Grenz disputes the complementarian view that Genesis 2 teaches a
different role between men and women. The creation of woman second may indicate that
she is the only suitable companion for man, not that man bears the primary responsibility for
leadership. Some complementarians see the naming of woman as a sign of man's authority.
Grenz, in dependence upon Phyllis Trible, contends that there is no evidence in Genesis 2
that Adam named the woman, for the actual name is found only in Gen. 3:20 and not in
Genesis 2. Finally, many have seen the subordinate role of women in the term "helper," and
yet this can hardly support subordination since it is typically used of God in the OT. Grenz
closes this chapter by noting that egalitarians understand women and men as equally made
in God's image, while complementarians see the divine image as more fully represented in
males (p. 169).

God's goal in creation is a new community in which love predominates. Thus, it is
dangerous to infer from the OT priesthood that only men can be ordained. The NT, after
all, teaches that all believers are priests. There is no evidence that women are deprived of
any gifts, and thus it is illegitimate to exclude gifted females from church office. Some
have argued, especially from higher church traditions, that males represent Christ better than
females. Grenz disputes this vigorously, arguing that both male and female would best
represent the inclusive humanity of Jesus. Some complementarians believe that men should
function as leaders because they are more aggressive and authoritative, but Grenz counters
that they fail to understand that Jesus taught servant leadership, and thus an argument for a
male prerogative here signally fails. Nor can one exclude women from teaching authority,
for women functioned as prophets which were every bit as authoritative, if not more so,
than teachers. Wayne Grudem's thesis that the prophets of the NT did not bear the same
authority as OT prophets is rejected as too rigid. Ultimately, the lines between teaching and
prophecy are rather fluid, and thus one cannot neatly distinguish between teaching and
prophecy. If women could function in the latter role, there is no reason to deny them the former.

EVALUATION OF ARGUMENT

The above summary indicates that this work is a significant defense of the egalitarian position. The work is irenic in tone towards complementarians, and "cheap shots" are not directed towards them. Grenz has carefully read complementarian literature, and so he usually presents accurately their perspectives. I believe it is crucial as brothers and sisters in Christ that we dialogue fairly and in love on these matters, and Muir Kjesbo and Grenz have set a good example for us here. I hope my review breathes the same spirit. Of course, an irenic approach does not rule out the taking of firm positions and evaluating the perceived weaknesses in another's position. Thus, Grenz often argues against what he sees to be the weaknesses of the complementarian position (including that of the reviewer!) with force and conviction. He realizes that genuine dialogue is respectful but does not shrink away from pointing out where the position of another is faulty. Thus, I hope my criticisms of Grenz's position are not interpreted as personal attacks on him. We need to love one another in the body of Christ especially when we disagree, because truth matters.

It has already been noted that Muir Kjesbo's introductory chapter is a helpful survey. Her analysis of church history in chapter two is highly questionable. The alleged pattern of women being involved in ministry during periods of revival and excluded during periods of institutionalization is established for the first 1800 years of the church in four pages! Such a pattern would certainly need to be vindicated by a much more careful and thorough sifting of the evidence. Since this period represents the bulk of church history I can only conclude that the thesis is not proven. Moreover, even the evidence provided needs to be evaluated much more carefully. For instance, Jerome certainly had great admiration for Paula's exegetical and theological gifts (p. 40). But he did not conclude from this that she should serve as an authoritative teacher over men (see Daniel Doriani’s essay in Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995, ). The lesson drawn from the relationship between Jerome and Paula, therefore, is quite misleading. Of course, some women in the United States participated in leadership during revivals. This fact, however, scarcely proves the overarching thesis advanced that throughout church history women assumed leadership positions when the Spirit was reviving the church.

A final comment relates to the distinction erected between revivals and institutionalization. Certainly the church has experienced seasons of revival and then periods of consolidation. Muir Kjesbo, however, gives the impression that revivals are positive and life giving, while the structuring of the church is negative and rigidifying. A more balanced perspective is needed here. When a revival is sweeping the church, there are both positive and negative features. Typically there are some excesses during revivals as Jonathan Edwards observes in his writings on the subject. The Montanist movement, which is passed over in silence, is one example of the danger of abuses. On the other hand, the structuring of the church also has negative and positive dimensions. The ordering of the church is a biblical mandate, but it can stifle the freshness of the Spirit (compare 1 Corinthians 14). A more balanced estimation of church history, it seems, identifies both strengths and weaknesses in times of revival and in times of institutionalization instead of
denigrating the latter and glorifying the former.

One of the interesting features of Grenz's exegetical section is the strategy employed. Instead of leading off with texts that contain a sustained discussion of the role of women he focuses on texts which mention women in the course of the narrative. The phenomena of the text, then, form the basis for his judgment on the role of women today. I think it is also significant that the texts related to husbands and wives are bypassed altogether. The reason, of course, is that the book focuses on women's ordination. Fair enough. And yet the texts on the relationship between husbands and wives are part of the fabric of revelation which may influence how one approaches the texts on the ordination of women. The implications are specially significant for the Pastoral Epistles, for there the church is conceived as "God's house" (1 Tim. 3:15; cf. 1 Tim. 3:4-5). The pattern in the family also becomes the pattern for God's "house," viz., the church.

Does an impartial look at the phenomena alone establish Grenz's thesis? I examined this evidence in some detail in the Piper-Grudem work Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (see "The Valuable Ministries of Women in the Context of Male Leadership: A Survey of Old and New Testament Examples and Teaching"), and Grenz takes me to task at some points. The substance of what is argued there still seems correct to me. Grenz correctly says that Jesus treated women with dignity, taught them the scriptures, and appeared to them first after his resurrection. But does this prove they should be authoritative teachers and leaders? Not at all clearly. And in fact the most significant piece of evidence militates against the egalitarian view. Jesus did not select any female apostles. I do not think this is a decisive argument against women's ordination. Nonetheless, it does demonstrate that arguing at the level of the phenomena alone is fundamentally ambiguous. Nowhere did Jesus clearly teach or model that women should be in leadership over men. The evidence about the resurrection appearances hardly qualifies. Similarly, the fact that many women are called co-workers (cf. Romans 16) cannot establish the egalitarian thesis. No complementarian denies that women were involved in ministry in the NT. The question, to use Grenz's term, is whether they were "ordained." The term "co-worker" is too vague to determine the issue. It is illegitimate to jump to 1 Cor. 16:15 where the Corinthians are exhorted to "submit" to the co-workers in Corinth and conclude that therefore women were leaders. Such an approach falls prey to the "illegitimate totality transfer" error which James Barr warned against. If a woman is called a co-worker elsewhere, we cannot assume that what is said about co-workers in 1 Cor. 16:15 applies to all women co-workers. Such a conclusion would only follow if the term were a technical one, and that is scarcely apparent.

Grenz is probably correct in saying that women functioned as deacons. Yet two functions required of elders/overseers (being apt to teach and governing the church, 1 Tim. 3:2, 4-5; 5:17; cf. Tit. 1:7, 9; 1 Pet. 5:1-3) are not mandated for deacons. Thus, the admission of women deacons does not affect the main thesis advanced. Grenz also argues that patrons were necessarily leaders, citing other scholars in defense of his view. This thesis is asserted rather than proved. We need concrete evidence that this was the case, and citing other scholars does not constitute such evidence. But was not Junia (Rom. 16:7) an apostle? Grenz is quite careful here, saying that it "opens the possibility that women served in this capacity" (p. 96). Once again, as is often the case with isolated phenomena, the
evidence is too sketchy to resolve the issue. For instance, it is possible that the text should be translated Andronicus and Junias were "distinguished in the eyes of the apostles," though more probably "distinguished among the apostles" is the better rendering of the phrase. And despite the confident assertions of some, we cannot be absolutely sure that the person in question was a woman. And even if she were (which is likely in my view), we cannot be sure that the term "apostle" is used in a technical sense. Paul probably means that they functioned as missionaries, which should not be equated with the apostolic office in the technical sense. Indeed, if Junia was a woman, she may have labored particularly among women. Ernest Käsemann notes relative to Junia that, "The wife can have access to the ἄνωθεν, who would not be generally accessible to the husband" ([Commentary on Romans], Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980, p. 413). The purpose of Rom. 16:7 was to greet Andronicus and Junia(s), and thus we can probably never be certain about the role they played. The issue of how we evaluate phenomena crops up again here, and also with Grenz's admission that no women are ever specifically called elders or bishops. As we have seen Grenz believes this bit of evidence is indecisive. I agree. Arguments from ambiguous phenomena are only confirmatory and cannot be used to establish that woman should exercise leadership over men or vice-versa.

The only argument from phenomena which has much weight, in my view, is the presence of women prophets. The evidence is so clear here that it cannot be doubted: e.g., Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, the Joel prophecy (Acts 2:16-17), Philip's daughters, and the assertion that women should prophesy with a shawl in 1 Cor. 11:5. The argument from women prophesying is probably the strongest base from which to advance the thesis that women should be appointed to leadership positions. Grenz argues vigorously that Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah prophesied publicly, contra to the view I espoused in an earlier essay. I still believe that my reading of the evidence is possible, and that Miriam ministered particularly to women seems confirmed by the specific wording of Exod. 15:20-21. Nonetheless, I am willing to grant that I may be incorrect, perhaps all of these women functioned as prophets publicly. And it is incontrovertible that women functioned publicly as prophets in the NT period.

Furthermore, Grenz argues that Grudem's distinction between OT and NT prophets is unpersuasive. Joel envisioned a greater outpouring of the Spirit, not an inferior gift! Thus, according to Grenz, we cannot say that women prophets in the NT had less authority than OT prophets. Again Grenz may well be correct. I have more reservations now about Grudem's thesis than I did formerly. On the other hand, Grenz does not sufficiently appreciate one of the advantages of Grudem's thesis. If the authority of the OT and NT prophets is the same, then the standards are the same as well. That is, those prophets who do not prophesy accurately are false prophets (Deut. 18:19-22). It is difficult to see, on this basis, how the gift of prophecy still functions today since infallible prophets do not seem to exist. For the sake of argument, however, let us assume that Grenz is correct, and prophecy in the NT is just as authoritative as in the OT. The egalitarian thesis is still not established because the prophetic office is not of the same nature as the teaching office. Both men and women were blessed with the charismatic gift of prophecy, but such a gift is fundamentally passive. Prophets are the vehicle of God's words. To say this is not to doubt the authority
of the prophetic words. The point is that the gift of prophecy and the gift of teaching are quite different gifts. Teachers transmitted the authoritative tradition about the gospel from reflection and study. Women functioned as authoritative prophets, but evidence is lacking that they had a teaching function over men or ruling office. Contra Grenz the private teaching of Priscilla in Acts 18 is not the same as teaching in a public church setting. We should also note that in 1 Cor. 11:2-16 Paul admonishes the women to exercise their prophetic gift with a demeanor that does not subvert male headship. Thus, Paul is concerned that when women do exercise the gift of prophecy that they do so in a manner that fits the complementarian view.

Naturally many observations could be made about Grenz's treatment of the three main exegetical texts in Paul. His method is somewhat frustrating in that he cites a dizzying array of alternatives, frequently without indicating what he himself believes. He often chronicles what others believe without much evaluation, and in setting forth various views words such as "may," "another alternative," "perhaps," are common. His conclusions on the texts are presented, but inadequate argumentation for the positions arrived at is provided. No sustained careful exegesis of the texts is evident. What is apparent is that Grenz has read many scholars with their various opinions, but one wonders if he did any fresh exegesis of the texts himself. For instance, one garners little sense of the flow or argument of the text in 1 Cor. 11:2-16 or 1 Tim. 2:9-15. And his discussion of the crucial word "head" (kephalē) is disappointingly brief and vague. We can hardly expect him to conduct an exhaustive study in a book which covers so much ground. And yet one looks in vain for some indication that he really wrestled with (even if he disagrees) with the substantial work presented by Grudem and Fitzmyer.

For the remainder of the review I will focus on some fundamental exegetical and theological issues which are central to the book, but first will note briefly a few areas of agreement. Grenz correctly asserts that both men and women are made in the image of God, but he wrongly (p. 169) claims that complementarians as a whole teach that men are closer to God's image than women. Nor is he accurate in accusing the Danvers statement of such a view. No citation is adduced from the Danvers statement to prove his point. We are also in agreement that the "Fatherhood" of God and his self-revelation as "he" does not indicate that God is "male." The language is analogical. And Grenz rightly remarks that feminine metaphors of God are found in the scriptures as well. My only comment here is that I have never met or read a scholarly complementarian who thought God actually was "male," but to be fair Grenz does not accuse anyone of holding such a position. On the other hand, Grenz does not reflect enough on why the metaphor for God's self-revelation is as "Father" rather than "Mother" and "He" rather than "She." The language is analogical but the emphasis on God as "Father" is quite intentional.

Some have argued that only the male can truly represent Christ to the congregation. Grenz's dismissal of this argument is on target, nor can one justify the exclusion of women from ordination merely by observing that women could not be priests in the OT. On the other hand, there is a suggestive pattern in that women functioned as prophets in both the OT and the NT, but they do not serve as priests in the OT nor elders in NT. Grenz focuses on the issue of ordination, arguing that it should be retained as a practice. The NT itself,
however, does not clearly teach that those in leadership must be ordained. Instead, the text
refers to the offices of deacon and elder/overseer/pastor. If one desires to retain the
language of ordination (which the NT itself does not mandate), then we should say that
women should not be ordained to the office of elder.

Many egalitarians emphasize the social implications and hermeneutical priority of
Gal. 3:28. Doubtless social implications can be drawn from Gal. 3:28, although the primary
argument made is that men and women have equal access to Abraham's promise. The
social consequences, however, must be drawn from Paul's theology, and evidently Paul
himself did not believe that equal access to the promise nullified gender role distinctions
(cf. Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19). Many egalitarians simply read in the western conception
of equality into the Pauline text. Apparently, Paul himself did not feel the same tension
between differences in role and statements of fundamental equality. What has just been
said also relates to the issue of hermeneutical priority. Complementarians do not assign
priority to 1 Timothy 2 or Ephesians 5 instead of Gal. 3:28. Instead, we read both
statements in context and determine what Paul meant when he said males and females are
one in Christ, and that there are different roles between the sexes. Egalitarians think we
must be assigning hermeneutical priority to the restrictive texts because they cannot see how
role differences are compatible with fundamental equality. I would argue that they cannot
reconcile the two statements because they impose their western conception of equality upon
the biblical text.

Complementarians have often argued for both differences in role and fundamental
equality between the sexes on the basis of the Son's submission to the Father. Grenz rightly
says that the relationship among the members of the Trinity is also mutual. No
complementarian would disagree. Human relationships are complex. Both mutuality and
role differences, for instance, characterize the relationship between husbands and wives, and
surely the former is present and striking in any healthy relationship. On the other hand, no
evidence is adduced whatsoever in support of Grenz's assertion that the Father also submits
to the Son. Such a claim surely needs to be substantiated with biblical evidence, but none is
forthcoming. Interestingly, Grenz does not examine the statement that at the end of history
Christ will be subject to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28). Surely, this crucial biblical statement
needs to be integrated into any doctrine of the relationship between the persons of the
Trinity, but Grenz flies past it without comment. His objection that the parallel between the
submission of Christ and women is inept because the former is personal and the latter is
group oriented is askew. Even though women as a whole are a group, they are still persons.
Grenz imposes a distinction upon the text which is foreign to it. On what grounds should
we accept the claim that since the latter is a group the analogy is inept? Moreover, Grenz is
mistaken when he says that the submission of Christ is temporary, while the submission of
women is permanent. In my view Grenz falls prey here to over-realized eschatology, the
same error which was probably afflicting the women in 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 2.
The submission of women is hardly permanent but is confined to this age! And the NT
emphasizes that our journey here is a short pilgrimage. In this respect, apart from how one
interprets 1 Cor. 15:28, the experience of women is analogous to that of Jesus. During their
earthly journey they function in a different role than men. There is no indication that such
distinctions continue in the coming age (cf. Matt. 22:30; 1 Cor. 7:29-31). Grenz imposes the age to come upon the present age, and by assigning a permanent subordinate role to women in the complementarian view ignores the fact that the coming age—which lasts forever—will erase the social distinctions of the present era. Nor does he defend the idea that the submission exhorted in the NT is impersonal or involuntary. The NT is full of exhortations and commands, but such commands never threaten the personhood of those commanded. The commands summon persons to accede to what is commanded, so that they will be happy in God and live in the obedience that flows from faith.

Formerly egalitarians used to argue that the similarity between men and women qualified women to serve as pastors. Recent research has established what our great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers knew intuitively and from experience, viz., that men and women have different tendencies. Grenz grants this point and goes on to argue that on this basis women should serve as pastors. But the argument could easily be turned around. The reason distinct roles between men and women are apropos is because we have different inclinations and capacities. Of course, such generalizations have exceptions. They are useful precisely as generalizations. The point is that God created men and women with different strengths and weaknesses, and this helps us understand why there are different roles. Complementarians, therefore, are not surprised that Paul appeals to the creation account (1 Cor. 11:8-9; 1 Tim. 2:13-14) to justify the leadership of men over women.

The complementarian case reflects the most natural way of interpreting scripture. For instance, Grenz says that Eve was created second to show Adam that she was the only suitable companion for him. What Grenz says is part of the reason Eve was created later, but when Paul reflects on this text he discerns a connection between the order of creation and the prohibition against women teaching and exercising authority over a man (1 Tim. 2:12-13; cf. 1 Cor. 11:8-9). It is hard to see how Grenz's view that Eve was created second to show Adam that she was an appropriate companion relates to the admonition given in 1 Tim. 2:12. What does it mean to say that women should not teach or exercise authority over men because women are suitable companions for men? When Grenz paraphrases his understanding of Paul's argument in 1 Timothy 2:13 (see the citation from p. 169 above), he smuggles in v. 14 in order to make sense of the argument. What is striking, though, is that no clear reason emerges as to why an argument from creation is introduced in v. 13. It is hardly clear, as Grenz asserts, that Paul's point is that women did not fulfill her function to help man in his solitude. How does this relate to teaching and exercising authority? The logical relationship certainly seems opaque on Grenz's view. The clarity of scripture supports the complementarian view. Paul gives an easily understandable reason in v. 13 to explain why men should teach and exercise authority rather than women. That is, the order of creation signifies that men and women should fulfill different functions and roles.

On the other hand, Grenz is correct that the word "helper" per se does not connote a different role. D. J. Clines is probably right, however, in claiming that the help envisioned by the author of Genesis is the producing of children so that the mandate of Gen. 1:28 can be carried out. Thereby the rule over the created order given to men and women would be realized through their offspring (cf. Psalm 8). Finally, despite the objections of Grenz and Trible the naming of the woman is a sign of authority. They protest that Adam "named" the
woman as "Eve" only in Gen. 3:20 and not in Gen. 2:23, for in the latter passage she is designated as "woman" but not given a personal name. This misses the point of the narrative. The same verb "called" is used of the naming of animals (Gen. 2:19-20) and of the woman (Gen. 2:23). When the text says that Adam assigned names to the animals, it does not mean that he gave them personal names, such as "Tony" the tiger. Presumably Adam roughly classified the animals into various categories: elephants, tigers, bears, dogs, sheep, cows, horses, etc. Similarly, the point in "calling" the person taken from his rib as "woman" was to identify her basic nature. In both instances it was an expression of the dominion Adam was to exercise (cf. Gen. 1:28). Of course, there is no implication that the woman is ontologically inferior in Genesis, nor should one draw the conclusion that she is no different from the animals. The text itself informs us that like man she is made in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27) and is of the same nature as he (Gen. 2:23). Nonetheless, the equality of personhood does not rule out differences in gender identity and role.

CONCLUSION

We can be grateful to Muir Kjesbo and Grenz for an irenic treatment of the ordination of women, even if the arguments presented are found wanting. Meanwhile we need to co-exist in the body of the Christ by accepting one another even if we seriously disagree. Local congregations, however, must make a decision on which way to go. I believe the church will be healthier and stronger if the historic view is maintained. If the Lord does not return soon, I believe the issue will eventually be resolved, for the biblical text is an immovable rock which stands despite the vagaries of human thinking. Theories wax and wane as cultures change, but "the word of the Lord abides forever."

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