

"Teaching and Usurping Authority: 1 Timothy 2:11-15" (Ch 12) by Linda L. Belleville

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As many other aspects of the passage, the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) has been the subject of serious scholarly discussion in recent years.¹ It has increasingly become clear that before one can proceed to apply this crucial passage on women's roles in the church, one must first determine what it means. In this quest for the original, authorially-intended meaning of [1 Tim 2:12](#), the proper understanding of the passage's syntax has had a very important place, especially since consensus on the meaning of the rare word *authenthein* has proved elusive.

Most would agree that the essay on the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in the first edition of *Women in the Church* has advanced the debate and provided the framework for subsequent discussion. With its identification of two basic patterns of the usage of *oude* in both biblical and extrabiblical literature, and its proposal that [1 Tim 2:12](#) ought correspondingly to be rendered, "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man," the study put the interpretation of [1 Tim 2:12](#) on firmer ground.

It is in this context that Linda Belleville's chapter in *Discovering Biblical Equality* on the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#), as well as her earlier contributions on the subject, must be understood. The essential subtext of Belleville's construal of the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) is her critique of the findings of the above-mentioned essay in *Women in the Church*. Apparently, Belleville felt that in order to sustain her egalitarian reading of [1 Tim 2:12](#), she must overturn the findings of this study. As a result, she has lodged several points of critique that will be subjected to closer scrutiny in the pages below.

Yet since Belleville has not been the only one to contribute to the debate concerning the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) since the appearance of the original article in *Women in the Church*, it will be helpful not to stop at Belleville but to set the discussion in an even larger context. This will involve a survey of, and interaction with, the contributions made by other egalitarian and non-egalitarian writers, including scholars such as I. Howard Marshall, Craig Keener, William Webb, Kevin Giles, Craig Blomberg, and others.

This larger survey will make clear that the approval of the findings of the essay on the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in the first edition of *Women in the Church* has not been limited to those favoring a complementarian approach to gender roles but extends also to virtually all egalitarian and feminist writers who interacted with this essay. Not that this by itself establishes a complementarian reading of [1 Tim 2:12](#) as valid, but it certainly puts the interpretation of this passage on a surer footing.

This larger survey also reveals that Belleville's critique is out of step with other egalitarian writers. This does not by itself mean that her arguments are invalid (though this is what they are, as the critique below will seek to show). It does mean, however, that Belleville's arguments have failed to convince even most of

those who agree with her on the overall approach to the passage, which does lend further weight to the interpretive conclusions reached by the original study of the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in *Women in the Church*.

In the following essay we will first look at Belleville's work and then proceed to survey and critique the contributions of others.

Belleville's Earlier Essays

In her book *Women Leaders in the Church*, her essay in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, and her contribution to *Discovering Biblical Equality*, Linda Belleville has set forth her construal of the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#).² In *Women Leaders in the Church*, Belleville essentially restates the earlier argument of Philip B. Payne that the two expressions *didaskein* and *authentēin* in [1 Tim 2:12](#) connote "a single coherent idea in Greek."³ Blending instances of the noun *authentēs* and the verb *authentēin*, Belleville maintains that *this term has a negative connotation in 1 Tim 2:12*.

Belleville also claims that the order of the two infinitives, *didaskein* first, and then *authentēin*, favors her interpretation: "If Paul had the exercise of authority in mind, he would have put it first, followed by *teaching* as a specific example."⁴ The upshot of Belleville's discussion is that the two infinitives in [1 Tim 2:12](#) are to be construed as a *hendiadys*, that is, forbidding women "to teach a man *in a dominating way*" rather than enjoining them not to teach or exercise authority over men even in a way that would otherwise be appropriate.⁵

Belleville reiterates her views in her essay in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. She alleges that the study of the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in the book *Women in the Church* "ignore[s] both the literary form and the nature of Greek correlatives."⁶ According to Belleville, (1) infinitives are not verbs;⁷ (2) [1 Tim 2:12](#) has to do with ideas, not grammar;⁸ and (3) "neither/ nor" in [1 Tim 2:12](#) constitutes a "poetic device."⁹ Belleville also contends that (4) the two infinitives modify "a woman"¹⁰ and that (5) the question answered by these infinitives is "What?"¹¹

Yet Belleville misconstrues the grammar and syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in several ways, and her objection to the study of the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in *Women in the Church* entirely misses the mark. The forty-eight syntactical parallels to [1 Tim 2:12](#) in extrabiblical literature (as well as the one exact parallel in the NT, [Acts 21:21](#)) identified in this study all feature the construction "negated finite verb + infinitive + *oude* + infinitive" and in every instance yield the pattern positive/positive or negative/negative.

This yields the conclusion that [1 Tim 2:12](#) is to be rendered either: "I do not permit a woman to teach [error] or to usurp a man's authority" or: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have (or exercise) authority over a man," the latter being preferred owing to the positive connotation of *didaskein* elsewhere in the Pastorals. Hence the question of whether infinitives are verbs or nouns is moot in the present case, since regardless of how infinitives are classified, the study of the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in *Women in the*

Church focused on exact syntactical parallels, comparing infinitives with infinitives.¹² Thus Belleville's major point of contention fails to convince.

To respond to the specific criticisms lodged by Belleville one at a time, (1) her argument that infinitives are not verbs is hardly borne out by a look at the standard grammars. Wallace's extensive treatment is representative. Under the overall rubric of "verb," he treats infinitives as verbal nouns that exemplify some of the characteristics of the verb and some of the noun.¹³ Hence Belleville's proposal that infinitives are nouns, not verbs, is unduly dichotomistic and fails to do justice to the verbal characteristics commonly understood to reside in infinitives.

Her proposals (2) that [1 Tim 2:12](#) has to do with ideas, not grammar, and (3) that *oude* in [1 Tim 2:12](#) constitutes a "poetic device" are also unfounded in that clearly grammar is involved in the present passage, and the genre is that of epistle, not poetry.

As to Belleville's contention (4) that the two infinitives modify "a woman" and (5) that the question answered is "What?" it must be noted that, to the contrary, the infinitives modify the main verb in verse 12, *epitrepō* ("I permit"), and the question answered is, "To *do* what?" the answer being "to teach or exercise authority." Hence the two infinitives are found to convey the *verbal* notion of actions to be performed or not performed. This is borne out once again by the standard Greek grammar by Daniel Wallace, which lists [1 Tim 2:12](#) under "complementary," one of the six subcategories of the adverbial use of infinitives.¹⁴

Belleville's Essay in Discovering Biblical Equality

In the 2004 essay collection *Discovering Biblical Equality*, Linda Belleville's "Teaching and Usurping Authority: [1 Timothy 2:11-15](#)" ups the ante by claiming that I consider "a hierarchical interpretation of this passage [[1 Tim 2:12](#)]. . . a litmus test for the label *evangelical* and even a necessity for the salvation of unbelievers" (205).¹⁵ Belleville claims I say (attributing a statement solely to me in a section that is signed by all three editors) "that a hierarchical view of men and women is necessary for 'a world estranged from God' to 'believe that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself'" (205, n. 1).

In context, however, the statement cited by Belleville does not refer to the interpretation of [1 Tim 2:12](#) but to "one's view of male and female gender identities and roles in the church" in general as of "the apprehension and application of his [God's] good gift of manhood and womanhood."¹⁶ A renewal of this understanding of what it means to have been created male and female in God's image in the beginning is presented as vital for our own deeper fulfillment and for our witness in the world.

Doubtless Belleville and other egalitarians would see their vision of gender equality as vital for people's deeper fulfillment and witness in the world; it is unclear why the editors of the first edition of this volume are denied the same hope and conviction. In any case, contrary to Belleville's assertion, neither I nor the other contributors to this volume believe that what Belleville calls a "hierarchical" view of men and

women is necessary for a person to claim the label "evangelical" nor that such a view is "a necessity for the salvation of unbelievers."

In her discussion of the grammar of the present verse, Belleville states at the outset that "Andreas Köstenberger claims that it is the correlative that *forces translators in this direction*" (217, emphasis added). It is unclear, however, what in the original essay suggests to Belleville a claim that the correlative "forces translators" in a certain direction. I did not claim that a certain understanding of the Greek coordinating conjunction motivated translators in the past, but rather that a certain understanding of the Greek conjunction in [1 Tim 2:12](#) most properly conforms to the way in which Greek grammar actually functions.

Belleville also misunderstands the argument of the original essay when she says that it "argues that the Greek correlative pairs synonyms or parallel words and not antonyms" (217). This is not, in fact, the argument I make. Rather, my point is that there are two patterns of usage found with regard to *oude* in the NT and extrabiblical Greek literature: "Two activities or concepts are viewed positively in and of themselves, but their exercise is prohibited or their existence is denied due to circumstances or conditions adduced in the context" (Pattern 1) and "Two activities or concepts are viewed negatively, and consequently their exercise is prohibited or their existence is denied or they are to be avoided" (Pattern 2). The issue here is not that of synonyms vs. antonyms but that of a particular type of perception of a given activity by a writer or speaker. For example, in [1 Macc 15:14](#), we read that "he pressed the city hard from land and sea, and permitted no one to leave or enter it." Clearly, "leave" and "enter" are antonyms, but this is not the crucial point in the present analysis, but rather the fact that both "leaving" and "entering" are viewed positively (rather than one being viewed positively and the other being viewed negatively) by the perpetrator of a given action. This point may be subtle, but an understanding of it is crucial for one to appreciate the argument being made in the present essay.

Beyond this, Belleville merely repeats her earlier argument (noted above) that infinitives are nouns, not verbs and disallows a progression from particular to general in [1 Tim 2:12](#). Once again, however, it must be noted that the categorization of infinitives as verbs or nouns is not the critical issue, since the present study identified a total of 49 exact syntactical parallels (negated finite verb + infinitive + *oude* + infinitive) in the NT and extrabiblical literature, so that infinitives are compared with infinitives, which clearly is the most accurate comparison possible.

I conclude that none of Belleville's arguments overturns the syntactical patterns identified in the study of the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in *Women in the Church* and the implication of these patterns for the proper rendering of [1 Tim 2:12](#).¹⁷

Other Recent Contributions to the Study of the Syntax of [1 Timothy 2:12](#)

The following review of other recent contributions to the study of the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) is significant in that it reveals that Linda Belleville is virtually alone in her criticisms of the study of the syntax of [1 Tim](#)

2:12 in the first edition of *Women in the Church*. As will be seen below, the essay was exceedingly well received even by egalitarian or feminist interpreters. This demonstrates that Belleville's alternative construal of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 (which in any case is largely a restatement of Payne's view, already critiqued in *Women in the Church*) and her strong criticism of the study of the syntax in *Women in the Church* have failed to convince even those who share her egalitarian commitment.

In the first few years subsequent to the publication of the original essay on the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12 in *Women in the Church*, responses were very positive, both overseas and in North America. Peter O'Brien, in a review published in Australia, concurred with the findings of this study,¹⁸ as did Helge Stadelmann in an extensive review that appeared in the German *Jahrbuch für evangelikale Theologie*.¹⁹ Both reviewers accepted the results of the present study as valid.

Even Alan Padgett, in a generally negative review in the egalitarian *Priscilla Papers*, calls the present chapter "a convincing syntactical analysis of v. 12, " though he favors reading both infinitives as conveying a negative connotation.²⁰ Padgett disagrees that *didaskō* is always used positively in Paul, citing Titus 1:11, 1 Tim 1:7 and 6:3, without, however, mentioning that in the second and third instances the word used is not *didaskein*, but *heterodidaskalein*.

Another egalitarian, Craig Keener, in a review that appeared in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, says that while (in his view) the principle is not clear in all instances cited in the present study, "the pattern seems to hold in general, and this is what matters most." Keener concurs that the contention of the present essay is "probably correct that 'have authority' should be read as coordinate with 'teach' rather than as subordinate ('teach in a domineering way')." ²¹

The first substantive interaction did not appear until the publication of I. Howard Marshall's ICC commentary on the Pastorals in 1999.²² Marshall indicates his acceptance of the findings of the present study by noting that it has "argued convincingly on the basis of a wide range of Gk. usage that the construction employed in this verse is one in which the writer expresses the same attitude (whether positive or negative) to both of the items joined together by *oude*."²³

Marshall proceeds to suggest, however, that matters are "not quite so simple."²⁴ In response to the point that Paul would have used the word *heterodidaskalein* had he wanted to convey a negative connotation, Marshall avers that doing so would have implied that while women were not permitted to engage in false teaching, men were allowed to do so. However, as Blomberg points out in a later piece, this objection does not carry force, because the prohibition still could have been clearly framed to avoid this conclusion.²⁵

Consequently, Marshall opts for a negative sense of both words because of the reference to Eve in verse 14, which he maintains would be pointless unless Paul here has "some particular false teaching by some women" in mind.²⁶ Marshall concedes that the text does not say that Eve gave false teaching to Adam, but he claims such is nonetheless implied. Again, however, Blomberg notes that, while women were clearly

victimized by false teaching in Ephesus, "no passage ever suggests that they were numbered among the false teachers themselves."²⁷

In a lengthy footnote, Marshall says the present study does not appreciate the point that, if the second unit is seen pejoratively, then this will also be the case with the first unit.²⁸ To the contrary, this is one of the two patterns shown throughout the entire essay. According to Marshall, Paul is using *didaskein* with the same connotation as *heterodidaskalein*, so the apostle is in fact telling women—but not men—not to teach falsely. How would that not still allow the same implication Marshall disavows, namely that women and men are here treated inequitably?

As to the relationship between *didaskein* and *authenthein*, Marshall presents two options: either these two terms are separate (citing Moo and the present study as favoring this option) or the former term represents a specific instance of the latter (i.e., teaching is an act by which authority is exercised). However, this does not quite capture matters accurately. The present analysis sees teaching as included in the exercise of authority, not as entirely separate. There is a partial overlap between the two terms, though exercising authority is the broader concept.

Finally, regarding the relation between verses 11 and 12, Marshall claims that the contrast is between learning in a submissive attitude and teaching in a manner "which is heavy-handed and abuses authority."²⁹ However, there is no need to import the alleged negative sense of *didaskein* into the way in which the contrast between verses 11 and 12 is construed.³⁰

Overall, it appears that Marshall is not prepared to follow his acknowledgment that the present study "argued convincingly" for a particular understanding of the syntax of verse 12 to a conclusion that would require a non-egalitarian reading of the text. Hence he opts for a negative sense of both "teaching" and "exercising authority" on the basis of his construal of the background and reading of the context, particularly verse 14.³¹

Shortly after the publication of Marshall's commentary, William Mounce, in his contribution to the WBC series, comes to rather different conclusions than Marshall.³² Mounce draws extensively on the present syntactical analysis of 1 Tim 2:12 (quoting at length from its critique of Payne) and integrates it into a full-orbed and coherent exegesis of the passage. While there is no need to rehearse here all the details of his cogent discussion of the verse, it should be noted that Mounce frequently adduces data not adequately (or at all) considered or acknowledged by Marshall:

- *didaskein* is almost always used in a positive sense in the Pastorals;
- if Paul is prohibiting women merely from teaching error, verse 13 seems irrelevant;
- the fact that *didaskein* has no object strongly suggests that the verse is a positive command;
- *didaskein* and *authenthein* are best seen as distinct yet related concepts.³³

Mounce also points out that the two verbs are separated by five words in [1 Tim 2:12](#), which further speaks against viewing them as forming a *hendiadys*, where words are usually placed side by side (citing BDF § 442 [16]).³⁴ Following my identification of the pattern as from specific to general, Mounce concludes that "Paul does not want women to be in positions of authority in the church; teaching is one way in which authority is exercised in the church."³⁵

Remarkably, even Kevin Giles, who lodges a 38-page critique against the first edition of *Women in the Church* (plus writing a 20-page surrejoinder), finds himself in essential agreement with the present syntactical analysis of [1 Tim 2:12](#).³⁶ However, by way of special pleading, Giles maintains that "[p]eople, even apostles, break grammatical rules at times," so that *oude* may function differently in the present passage than everywhere else in attested contemporaneous Greek literature.³⁷

This is, of course, possible, but highly unlikely. In my extensive research in both biblical and extrabiblical Greek literature, I found no evidence of anyone "breaking the rules" in his or her use of *oude*. It seems that even Giles himself does not trust this kind of reasoning, for he later floats the possibility that both *didaskēin* and *authentein* are to be understood negatively—in keeping with the pattern of usage identified in the present study.³⁸

Craig Blomberg, in an appendix included in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, renders the following assessment:

Decisively supporting the more positive sense of assuming appropriate authority is Andreas Köstenberger's study of pairs of infinitives in "neither . . . nor" constructions both throughout the New Testament and in a wide-ranging swath of extrabiblical Greek literature. Without exception, these constructions pair either two positive or two negative activities. So if the "teaching" in view in [1 Timothy 2:12](#) is not false teaching but proper Christian instruction, then *authentein* must be taken as appropriate authority as well.³⁹

Blomberg proceeds to discuss the question of whether or not the two infinitives form a *hendiadys*. Blomberg contends that he has identified a "largely overlooked. . . informal pattern throughout 1 Timothy of using pairs of partly synonymous words or expressions."⁴⁰ However, virtually all of these examples are nouns. Blomberg concludes that the two terms are "closely related" (agreed) and "together help to define one single concept" (this may go a bit too far).⁴¹

Blomberg finds it "overwhelmingly likely" that in [1 Tim 2:12](#) Paul is referring to "one specific kind of authoritative teaching rather than two independent activities." However, this represents a false dichotomy, since no allowance is made for partially overlapping terms as in a pattern from specific to general.⁴² Pointing to related passages such as [1 Tim 3:2](#); [5:17](#); and [Titus 1:5-7](#), Blomberg contends that the import of the two verbs in [1 Tim 2:12](#) is one thing only: women "must not occupy the office of elder/overseer."⁴³

To be sure, the parallels adduced by Blomberg suggest that [1 Tim 2:12](#) clearly means at least that—women ought not to serve in the office that epitomizes teaching and ruling authority.⁴⁴ Yet it appears that Blomberg's position, by reducing the issue solely to that of "no women elders/ overseers," may be unduly minimalistic. The principles adduced by the quotations of OT Scripture in [1 Tim 2:13-14](#) would seem to suggest that [1 Tim 2:12](#) is grounded in more foundational realities than a mere surface prohibition of women occupying a given office. For this reason a more nuanced application of the passage seems to be needed.⁴⁵

While critical of the chapter on hermeneutics in the first edition of *Women in the Church* (though see Robert Yarbrough's response in the second edition), another egalitarian scholar, William Webb, wrote that "I must commend the book for its exegesis in a number of the other chapters, written by other authors."⁴⁶ Later, he remarks, "In one of the finest *exegetical* treatments of 1 Timothy 2 available today, the authors of *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15* develop the text in its lexical and grammatical aspects in much the same way as I would be inclined."⁴⁷ Elsewhere, Webb comments that "the exegesis by Schreiner, Baldwin, Köstenberger, etc. is persuasive and will make a lasting contribution."⁴⁸ One surmises that this would include the syntactical analysis in the same volume. This is all the more remarkable as William Webb is an egalitarian.

In her critique of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's reconstruction of Christian origins, Esther Ng notes that Fiorenza apparently takes both infinitives in [1 Tim 2:12](#) as having a neutral sense (meaning "teaching" and "having authority" respectively), and as linked to *oude* to mean two separable actions, though both related to men. This, she notes, puts the matriarch of feminist hermeneutics in agreement with "the more historical and conservative interpretation."⁴⁹ In the same note, Ng also refers to the studies by Wilshire, Baldwin, and the present study.

Later, Ng acknowledges that some "scholars with feminist inclinations" take *authentēin* in a negative sense (e.g., Payne, Fee) and then see the two infinitives as so closely related as to mean "teaching in a domineering way."⁵⁰ She continues, "However, since a negative connotation of *didaskēin* is unlikely in this verse (see below), the neutral meaning for *authentēin* (to have authority over) seems to fit the *oude* construction better. . . . While the *oude* joins two separate activities, teaching and exercising authority are still closely associated, as the contrast with 'quiet learning in submission' makes clear."⁵¹ Hence it is clear that Ng follows the conclusions reached in the present study precisely and in their entirety.

In a review published in the *Review of Biblical Literature* in May 2004, Judith Hartenstein of Marburg University, Germany, interacts with the reprint of my essay on [1 Tim 2:12](#) in the essay collection *Studies on John and Gender: A Decade of Scholarship*.⁵² She notes that

Köstenberger shows through a syntactical study that [1 Tim 2:12](#) forbids women to teach and to have authority over men, not only to abuse authority. . . . This teaching of 1 Timothy is consistent with the praxis in Pauline churches, as Köstenberger [in an essay on women in the Pauline mission] cannot find

any evidence of contrary roles of women in the Pauline epistles. In Köstenberger's opinion, this role of women—where men bear ultimate responsibility—should be authoritative in the modern church.

While this reviewer has accurately summarized the contention of the present study, however, she proceeds to state,

I certainly do not agree with this result. My theological position is very different from that of Köstenberger. Nevertheless, I often find his analysis of texts and exegetical problems convincing and inspiring, especially if he uses linguistic approaches.

. . . Likewise, I agree with Köstenberger's reading of 1 Tim 2. Köstenberger shows that the text demands a hierarchy between men and women and is meant as normative teaching. But with a different, far more critical view of the Bible, I need not accept it as God's word. (It helps that I do not regard 1 Timothy as written by Paul.)

In a remarkably honest and candid fashion, therefore, this reviewer affirms the present analysis of [1 Tim 2:12](#) and acknowledges that she differs not for exegetical or linguistic reasons but because she holds a "far more critical view of the Bible." Especially since she does not regard 1 Timothy as having been written by Paul, she need not accept the teaching of 1 Timothy 2 as God's word though it is "meant as normative teaching." While space does not permit a full-fledged critique of her stance toward Scripture in general or 1 Timothy 2 in particular, it seems clear that Hartenstein's presuppositions are problematic and unacceptable even for inerrantist evangelical egalitarians.

This is not to say that *every* disagreement with the present essay by egalitarians must necessarily stem from an errantist stance toward Scripture, nor is it to imply that no exegetical or linguistic arguments could be advanced within an inerrantist framework. Nevertheless, this reviewer's candor makes explicit what may often be an unacknowledged factor in feminist or egalitarian interpretations of [1 Tim 2:12](#), namely, presuppositions that in fact override the actual exegesis of the passage. Whether or not this is acknowledged by egalitarian or feminist interpreters, their choice of which exegetical arguments to embrace may be (and often seems to be) motivated by their prior commitment to egalitarian-ism. How refreshing it is when this is openly acknowledged as in the case of Hartenstein's review.⁵³

Finally, Wayne Grudem, in his encyclopedic work *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions*, accurately summarizes the contribution of the original essay and concurs with its findings.⁵⁴ Grudem properly interacts with Sarah Sumner's objection that I have made a "mistake" in saying that the word *didaskō* in [1 Tim 2:12](#) has a positive force, because the same word is used negatively in [1 Tim 6:3](#) and [Titus 1:11](#).⁵⁵ In fact, in [1 Tim 6:3](#) it is not the same word, but the word *heterodidaskalein* ("to teach falsely") that is used, and in [Titus 1:11](#) the context clearly indicates a negative connotation by the qualifier "teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach." No such negative qualifier is found in [1 Tim 2:12](#), however.

Grudem also deals with I. Howard Marshall's objection to my taking the word *didaskō* in [1 Tim 2:12](#) in a positive sense, claiming that this "overlooks the fact that to say 'But I do not permit women to give false teaching' in this context would imply 'But I do allow men to do so.'" Yet as Grudem rightly points out, Marshall himself argues that *authenteō* has a negative nuance of "exercising autocratic power."⁵⁶ Hence the same objection he lodges against my essay would equally apply to his interpretation.⁵⁷

Conclusion

As the above survey of scholarly responses to the original essay on the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) has shown, the identification of two distinct syntactical patterns has met with virtually unanimous acceptance, even among egalitarian and feminist interpreters, and has held up very well to scholarly scrutiny. Only Keener hinted at and Belleville expressed criticisms. Belleville alleged that, first, *didaskein* and *authentein* are not verbs; that, second, the construction is a poetic device following grammatical rules of its own; and that, third, there are no parallels for a pattern from specific to general.

However, as mentioned, all three objections can be met. First, Greek grammars regularly and rightly treat infinitives under the rubric of verbs. Second, poetic device or not, Belleville has not overturned the clear and consistent syntactical patterns demonstrated in the present study, a pattern that has been accepted as valid even by virtually all other egalitarian scholars, including Marshall, Keener, Padgett, Giles, and Webb. Third, Belleville does not consider [Acts 21:21](#), a genuine NT parallel, nor does she take adequate note of the almost fifty extra-biblical parallels adduced in the essay on the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in the first edition of *Women in the Church*.

Marshall, finally, while accepting the overall validity of our syntactical analysis, contends that *didaskein* is negative (see also Padgett, Giles). This, however, is unlikely in light of the fact that all instances of this verb in the Pastorals (to go no further) carry a positive connotation barring clear contextual qualification to the contrary. Marshall's arguments have been effectively refuted by Mounce and Blomberg.⁵⁸ For this reason, even after a decade of scrutiny, the results of the present study should not only be upheld as valid, but should now be considered as an assured result of biblical scholarship and hence ought to constitute the foundation upon which a sound exegesis of the present passage is conducted.



Endnotes

¹ Most of this material is taken from my essay on the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in the second edition of *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Tomas R. Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Baker, forthcoming in August 2005). Used by permission.

² See my review of Belleville's work in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 2 (2001): 344-46.

³ Linda Belleville, *Women Leaders in the Church: Three Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 173 (the same assertion is made on p. 175). See the critique of Payne's study in Andreas J. Köstenberger, "A Complex Sentence Structure in [1 Timothy 2:12](#)," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 82-84.

⁴ Belleville, *Women Leaders*, 175-76. It is unclear why Belleville disallows the converse word order, especially in light of the occurrence of this pattern in [Acts 21:21](#) (cited in my original essay in *Women in the Church*, 103, n. 15).

⁵ Belleville, *Women Leaders*, 177. However, see the critique of Payne's study in Köstenberger, "Complex Sentence Structure," 82-84.

⁶ Belleville, "Women in Ministry," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, ed. James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 135-36, with reference to Köstenberger, "A Complex Sentence Structure in [1 Timothy 2:12](#)," in *Women in the Church*, 81-103. But see the reviews by Andreas Köstenberger (cited in n. 2 above) and Tomas Schreiner in *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 6, no. 2 (2001): 24-30. In an apparent effort to marginalize the results of the study, Belleville calls it "traditionalist" ("Women in Ministry," 136), implying that it does not represent serious research but rather constitutes an effort to validate a traditional understanding of gender roles by means of the trappings of scholarship. This is hardly accurate, however, since the essay involves extensive interaction with primary material and presents a pattern of the usage of *oude* that has not previously been proposed.

⁷ Belleville, "Women in Ministry," 136.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 135

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² See also Henry Baldwin's convincing critique of Belleville's contention that nouns, rather than verbs, should be studied in relation to the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) in his essay on *authentēin* in the second edition of *Women in the Church*.

¹³ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 587-611, esp. 588.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 598-99.

¹⁵ With reference to the first edition of *Women in the Church*, 11-12.

¹⁶ Köstenberger, Schreiner, and Baldwin, eds., *Women in the Church*, 11.

¹⁷ This includes her argument that *authentēin* is rendered negatively throughout the history of translation and that only recent English translations have rendered the term positively (pp. 209-10; though she notes that both Martin Luther and William Tyndale translated the term positively as "des Mannes Herr sei" and "to have authority over a man" respectively). However, even if this argument were true, this would prove the accuracy of such a rendering as little as the Majority Text proves the superiority of the Byzantine NT text tradition, nor can this argument overturn the demonstrable rules of Greek grammar and syntax with regard to [1 Tim 2:12](#). What is more, Belleville's argument that the positive renderings of *authentēin* in [1 Tim 2:12](#) in virtually all the major recent and current English translations is "partly to blame" for a "hierarchical, noninclusive understanding of leadership" is open to debate as well.

¹⁸ Peter T. O'Brien, Review of *Women in the Church*, *Southern Cross Newspaper* (September 1966), published by Anglican Media in Sydney, Australia.

¹⁹ Helge Stadelmann, Review of *Women in the Church*, *Jahrbuch für evangelikale Theologie* 6 (1996): 421-25.

²⁰ Alan G. Padgett, "The Scholarship of Patriarchy (on [1 Timothy 2:8-15](#)): A Response to *Women in the Church*," *Priscilla Papers* 11, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 24.

²¹ Craig S. Keener, Review of *Women in the Church*, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41, no. 3 (1998): 513-16. In a perceptive comment that anticipates Craig Blomberg's 2001 essay (see below), Keener suspects that this reading would represent a challenge for "the more moderate complementarian view that allows women to teach men provided they are under male authority."

²² I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 454-60, esp. 458-60.

²³ *Ibid.*, 458.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Such as, "I do not permit the women to continue their false teaching." See Craig L. Blomberg, "Neither Hierarchicalist nor Egalitarian," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, 361, n. 137.

²⁶ Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 458.

²⁷ Blomberg, "Neither Hierarchicalist nor Egalitarian," 359, noting that this is conceded by the egalitarian Walter Liefeld in "Response," in *Women, Authority and the Bible*, ed. Alvera Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 220.

²⁸ Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 458, n. 157.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 460.

³⁰ See Köstenberger, "A Complex Sentence Structure in [1 Timothy 2:12](#)," 91.

³¹ See further the objection dealt with and answered by Wayne Grudem discussed below.

³² William Mounce, *The Pastoral Epistles* (WBC 46; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 120-30, esp. 124-26 and 128-30.

³³ *Ibid.*, 125, 129.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 128.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 130.

³⁶ Kevin Giles, "A Critique of the 'Novel' Contemporary Interpretation of [1 Timothy 2:9-15](#) Given in the Book, *Women in the Church*. Parts I and II," *EQ* 72, no. 2 (2000): 151-67 and *EQ* 72, no. 3 (2000): 195-215. See my response "*Women in the Church: A Response to Kevin Giles*," *EQ* 73 (2001): 205-24.

³⁷ Giles, "Critique, Part I," 153.

³⁸ Giles, "Critique, Part II," 212.

³⁹ Craig Blomberg, "Neither Hierarchalist nor Egalitarian," 363.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 364.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Though it is not entirely clear to me how this conclusion renders Blomberg "neither hierarchicalist nor egalitarian," as he suggests in the title of his essay. I see how he wants to avoid some of the negative connotations associated with the term "hierarchicalist" and how he is more open to women in leadership than strict non-egalitarians, but clearly he shares with the latter their central tenet and thus hardly occupies a true middle position between those who believe in women holding positions of ultimate authority in the church and those who do not. Also, in his title he erects somewhat of a strawman by positing "hierarchicalist" as one of the two polar opposites. This is accomplished only by stereotyping his fellow-complementarians. Is Blomberg implying that Tomas Schreiner or Ann Bowman, for example, the authors of the two non-egalitarian essays in the same volume, are "hierarchicalists"? It appears Blomberg is able to occupy the center in the debate only by pushing others with whom he shares their central tenet further to the right.

⁴⁵ On issues of application, see Dorothy Patterson's chapter in the second edition of *Women in the Church*.

⁴⁶ William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 35. It is beyond the scope of the present chapter to respond to Webb's categorization of this work as "patriarchal" (p. 282 *et passim*), other than to note that the label is tendentious, inflammatory, and inaccurate.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 244, n. 3.

⁴⁹ Esther Yue L. Ng, *Reconstructing Christian Origins? The Feminist Theology of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza: An Evaluation* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 285, n. 170.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 287, n. 184.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Judith Hartenstein, Review of Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Studies in John and Gender*, *Review of Biblical Literature*, posted at www.bookreviews.org (since the posted review contains no page numbers, no page numbers will be cited below). See Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Studies in John and Gender: A Decade of Scholarship* (Studies in Biblical Literature 38; New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 261-82. The reprinted essay is "Syntactical Background Studies to [1 Tim 2.12](#) in the New Testament and Extrabiblical Greek Literature," in *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and D. A. Carson; JSNTSup 113; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 156-79 (a slightly modified version of the essay that appeared in the first edition of *Women in the Church*).

⁵³ See Tom Schreiner's comment on p. 107 in *Women in the Church* that "[t]hose scholars who embrace the feminist position, such as Paul Jewett, but argue that Paul was wrong or inconsistent in 1 Timothy 2, are exegetically more straightforward and intellectually more convincing than those who contend that Paul did not actually intend to restrict women teaching men in 1 Timothy 2."

⁵⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism & Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More Than 100 Disputed Questions* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004), 314-16.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 315, n. 111, with reference to Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 253 n. 21, who in turn cites Padgett, "Scholarship of Patriarchy," 24. See also Tom Schreiner's similar critique of Sumner in his essay in the second edition of *Women in Church*.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 316, with reference to Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 458. See also Tom Schreiner's critique of Marshall in his essay in the second edition of *Women in the Church* and Grudem's interaction with the views of Blomberg and Belleville on the syntax of [1 Tim 2:12](#) on pp. 316-19 of his book.

⁵⁷ For a detailed interaction with Marshall, see already the discussion above.

⁵⁸ As discussed, Blomberg himself, while concurring with the overall thrust of the present study, takes its implications into a somewhat different direction than seems warranted.