

LIBERATION OR SUBJECTION?

The Trinity and the Social Design of Creation

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If someone were to write a book entitled *Therapy of Subjection*, no one would buy it, because everyone craves liberation, not subjection. Actually, no one seems to be satisfied with the current situation in society. On the one hand there are abuses of power, and on the other hand there is disagreement with the role that God assigned to every human being in this creation. Therefore many do not want to submit to anyone on anything, and reject even the sexual identity that God designed for them. Nor do they want to adhere to the social order that God established in Eden, which intends to be re-established in the bond of unselfish love.

With this type of longing for individual liberation that is breathed everywhere, there is no home, no church, no government that can eventually survive. In extreme cases, we find people who live alone, completely isolated, because they believe that the world is evil, and that the only solution is to chew bitterness in loneliness. Therefore, in this document, we will deal mostly with the principles of subjection that many neglect in dealing with social problems, but which are required in the Bible for attaining peace and happiness in human society.

God made man to be sociable. After creating him, the Lord said, “it is not good for man to be alone” (Gen 2:18). No one lives for himself, and even after the introduction of sin and death, no one dies for himself. We were created to live in relationship and dependence, first of all with God who made us and to whom we belong, and also with our neighbors (Rom 14:7,8). The isolation and breakdown of human relations was a consequence of sin. But “it was not so from the beginning” (Matt 19:8).

How was it at first?

God’s unselfish love created perfect harmony in the universe for all eternity back in time. The Father loved the Son, the Son loved the Father; the Father loved the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit loved the Father; the Son loved the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit loved the Son. The Trinity is the most extraordinary example that love has always existed, and that love is as eternal as God Himself, because “God is love” (1 John 4:8). By creating living beings in the likeness of God, that bond of unselfish love held all the universal creation united. The Trinity itself is revealed as an example and model of such bonding and subjection of selfless love.

How then can we explain that in such a wonderful universe, that bond of love was broken, producing chaos and desolation? This began when an angel discovered how beautiful God had made him (Eze 28:17). As he began to look at himself, it occurred to him that he could go further, and occupy a place for which God did not create him. He wanted to be like God and draw the attention of all creatures to himself, above God (Isa 14:12ff). And to that end, he abandoned unselfish love for selfishness and worked to break the order which God had assigned to all creatures in order to hold together His creation in the bond of love.

That rebellious angel was banned from heaven to prevent the whole universe from being corrupted and destroyed. God is love and His commandments are life because they preserve unselfish love. Satan refused to believe God that only in this love could life exist. But he came to this world and managed to plant the first flag of rebellion against God’s unselfish love on this earthly creation. The result of his selfish philosophy breaks the order of love established by God. This reality is seen in the decaying death

of this creation. This obvious fact is in contrast to the foolishness of evolution that suggests the creation is improving! “Those who refuse to submit to the government of God are wholly unfitted to govern themselves. Through their pernicious teachings the spirit of insubordination is implanted in the hearts of children and youth, who are naturally impatient of control; and a lawless, licentious state of society results” (*GC* 584).

“It was not so from the beginning” (Matt 19:8)

So what was it like when God created our first parents? “Adam was appointed by God to be monarch of the world, under the *supervision* of the Creator... God gave Eve to Adam as a *help-meet*” (*BEcho*, August 28, 1899). “The angels cautioned Eve *not to separate* from her husband in her employment; for she might be brought into contact with this fallen foe. If separated from each other, they would be in greater danger than if they were together” (*ST*, January 16, 1879).

Adam and Eve’s strength and happiness could be kept only in mutual dependence and subjection. And as an example of this mutual dependence was the Trinity itself. The Deity revealed that everything God did, He did in common accord: “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness” (Gen 1:26). And God gave Adam a woman so that he could love a fellow being just as the three persons of the Godhead loved each other. Just as they are “one”, the couple must also become “one flesh” (Gen 2:22-24).

“Adam [not Eve] was monarch in this beautiful *domain*” (*HR* May 1, 1873), until he and Eve decided to be free from God’s supervision, and became subject to the rebellious angel. “Having conquered Adam, the monarch of the world, he [Satan] had gained the race as *his subjects*” (*RH* February 24, 1874). Through deception he promised them freedom, when in reality he made them slaves to selfishness and to his despotic dominion (Rom 6:16-19; 2 Pet 2:19). See a critical analysis of the first four chapters of Genesis, in:

[\[http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/GenesisCritiqueDoukhan.pdf\]](http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/GenesisCritiqueDoukhan.pdf)

The need for a second Adam

Where did E. G. White find in the Bible the view that Adam would be the benevolent monarch of this creation? In the Bible, in both testaments (see Gen 1:28). The apostle Paul clearly teaches that Adam was created first, before the woman and before his offspring. He was “the first Adam.” He possessed the “principality” in this earthly creation, the primogeniture of this creation (see Eph 3:10; Col 1:16). Satan did not conquer this world when he deceived Eve. He had to conquer Adam! Only by snatching this honored responsibility from Adam could Satan become the “prince of this world” (John 14:30; 16:11). Therefore a “second Adam” had to come, not a second Eve, to recover this principality that the devil had usurped from the first Adam. This second Adam would have to be human and the generator of this world. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, he qualified—since he was now human and he had created Adam. Jesus became the first-born of this creation, and he would recover the kingdom of this world by his death and resurrection.

This is the context for that “welcome home” embrace of the two Adams in the Restored Eden, between the redeemed Adam and the Redeemer Adam. In that very meaningful embrace is the “welcome home” for the human race (*GC* 647-8). Nothing is said in the Spirit of Prophecy about a future meeting between the first Eve and a second Eve. Because “under God, Adam was to stand at the head of the earthly family, to maintain the principles of the heavenly family. This would have brought peace and happiness... When Adam sinned, man forfeited his centrality in the heaven-ordained plan for earth. A demon became the central power in the world” (6 *T* 236). And the second person of the Deity, in agreement with His Father, chose to come and recover that dignified position of Adam.

Liberation or subjection?

We live in a Western society that presumes to have achieved the greatest degree of independence and freedom in history. Therefore, therapies offered by non-Christian psychiatrists and psychologists are mostly release therapies. Even many religious people who end up entering the realm of politics, promote a “theology of liberation.” If they fight for liberation, it is because they feel that they are still under some degree of oppression. We can all agree that when there is abuse of power, when we are oppressed, a certain kind of liberation is necessary. But in the entanglement introduced by sinful selfishness in all strata of society, a presumed deliverance is often more damaging than subjection.

Subjection under pain

Once sin entered and broke the order of our creation, God approached Adam first, because he had been entrusted with the garden. As a consequence of his sin, death would pass to all mankind (Rom 5:12). But the Lord comforted the first couple, telling them that they could stay together if they respected the order of creation. Adam would continue being the “head” of the family, although he had lost his principality over all mankind, which would be restored to man by the “second Adam,” “the King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev 17:14; 19:16; see Mic 4:8). The subjection that had been pleasant for both men and women was now to be often experienced with pain.

Does redemption change the order or design of divine creation that made man head of the wife? God said to the woman: “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you” (Gen 3:16). The curse had to do with a submission under contention and rivalry, not with a voluntary and happy submission in a Christian context, which brings any couple closer to the Edenic ideal of mutual dependency. The purpose of redemption is to restore the happiness that comes when we are converted to the Lord, and return to the original subjection. E. G. White wrote:

“The husband is the head of the family... and any course which the wife may pursue to lessen his influence and lead him to come down from that *dignified, responsible position* is displeasing to God. It is the duty of the wife to yield her wishes and will to her husband. Both should be yielding, but the Word of God gives preference to the judgment of the husband” (*RH*, April 22, 1862 par. 9). “We women must remember that God has placed us *subject* to the husband. He is the head, and our judgment and views and reasonings must agree with his, if possible. If not, the preference in God’s Word is given to the husband where it is not a matter of conscience. We must yield to the head” (*Letter 5*, 1861).

“The husband and wife can so blend in labor that the wife shall be *the complement* of the husband... Through her unselfish interest to advance the cause of God, the wife has made her husband’s work much more complete” (6 *MR* 43). “I am trying to help my husband bear his burdens... *The work was not pleasant to me at first, but I have overcome my dislike for it...* I had for a time to study hard and pray much to overcome my weakness of character, and become, in some degree, what a woman should be, a true helpmeet. *I desire not to lead into sin, as did Eve* [see 1 Tim 2:14]” (14 *MR* 305.3).

We should be careful not to gloss over that last statement which depicts the struggle of a woman to fulfill the plan of God. She implies that Eve was led to sin when she sought independence, avoiding the fulfilling of her role of serving her husband as “a helpmeet.” She also infers that this is the sin which many modern Eves commit, something that they must and may overcome thanks to redemption.

Subjection and dependency in the Trinity

The three persons of the Deity act in common accord, and subject themselves to the decisions made by them in their eternal councils (Zech 6:13; Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 3:9; Col 1:26; 2 Tim 1:9úþ). Unlike

the rebels, the components of divinity are subject to the law that they themselves determined in the creation of the universe. So that when sin was introduced into this creation, “the Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order fully to carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, should give Himself an offering for sin...” (CH 222).

Should this mutual subjection of the three persons of the Godhead change after sin? Were the three beings who rule the universe to fight among themselves, in their decision to redeem the creation of the breakdown introduced by the rebellion of Lucifer? No! That is why David and the Apostle Paul tell us that God took an oath in establishing their plan of redemption, to show that their plan to redeem humanity is immutable, and from which He will not retract, for it is impossible for God to lie (Psalm 110:4; Heb 6:17,18; 7:21).

The Son does not act on his own, but says and does all that he hears and sees the Father do (John 5:19,30; 8:20; 12:49; 14:10). The Father also restricts Himself to the plan established by the Deity to the point of surrendering his Son to die for all of us (John 3:16-17; Rom 8:32). The Holy Ghost does nothing on its own either. It is the Spirit of Truth that brings instruction, love and unity to the churches, in contrast to “the spirit of lie” that introduces a discordant voice in the world (1 King 22:22; 2 Thess 2:11-12; 2 Cor 11:14). While the Spirit of Truth, submissively, at the request of the Son fulfills the Father’s decision, come into this world and says all that He hears (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7,13).

This mutual submission of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to the plan traced in their council, also passed through a crisis. When the time came to be delivered in Gethsemane, the cup of pain the Son was to drink to save mankind trembled in his hands. And when the Son was executed, He cried in anguish from his humanity to the Father, “why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46). Jesus could have called ten thousand angels, to be freed. But choosing to be the submissive Son He was responsible and obedient to the unalterable love and will of the Father. A path that the Trinity agreed on from the beginning (Heb 5:8; Philip 2:8). What an example of submission and subjection is given us by the Deity!

Subjection and dependency in the home and the church

Today, many psychologists talk about not maintaining what they call “toxic love.” But the unselfish submissive love of Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is not toxic. It is life giving. It is by engaging in Their unselfish love that we can be restored to the harmony of the Universe. If their “love” had been selfish, they could have long ago come to the conclusion that we were not worth the sacrifice to save us. Such selfish and unsubmitive toxic “love” would have given us no hope or faith that we could ever be saved from death.

There are women who have endured the burden of home with unfaithful husbands, but because their love was unselfish and not toxic, they ended up succeeding. They won the hearts of their husbands. The same has happened with husbands who patiently and humbly endured quarrelsome wives and children, where love ended up prevailing. Here is the real description of real love! “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails” (1 Cor 13:4-7).

Submission is also required of men and women to the pastors in the church who, as in the Old Testament, were always men (Heb 13:17; see 1 Tim 2:12). They also had to submit to civil authorities (Rom 13:5; 1 Cor 16:16; 1 Pet 2:13)]. The “authority” of men in any context, is determined by God. That authority was to be like His. It had boundaries marked more definitely by the law of God.

[See my book, *Jubilee and Globalization* (2000), where I show that even slavery in the OT had to do with a kind of temporary social security for defenseless people].

In the Bible, women also had authority over other women in both testaments. This was also regulated by God (Gen 17:7-10; Titus 2:3-4). Women served Jesus and the apostle Paul as helpers on his missionary trips (Mark 15:40-41; Philip 4:2-3). Noticeable in this context is that E. G. White never claimed “the position of leader of the denomination” (8 T 236-7).

The same order of submission that originated at creation is the one that God wants to be respected in the church. And since corruption often enters the church with the introduction of people who do not know, or have forgotten, the unselfish submissive love of God, crises occur that require the intervention of a human authority. That self-sacrificing authority that God gave in the government of the home and the church God gave to the male in both the home and the church. Let us keep in mind that in the Bible, self-sacrificing headship is a blessing! It is not a curse—as pretended by many—but a dignified responsibility.

It is appropriate to emphasize this truth. It is God who laid down authorities in governments, and requires our submission to such authorities in all that does not force our conscience which, in turn, are to be submitted to the Word of God. It is God who laid down authorities in the church, to which we must submit in all that does not run over the conscience, a conscience which must always be governed by the Bible (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11-12). And it is God who designed man to be the head of his wife, so that his wife should submit to him in everything that did not alter her conscience governed by an “it is written” (Eph 5:22; 1 Pet 3:1). Just as the members of the Godhead submit to each other in the bond of love, so in this world we must also “submit to one another,” trusting in God’s direction (Eph 5:21).

In the next article we will see more clearly the divine order of subjection that God established for the happiness of His creatures, not only in this world, but in the entire universe. There is a chain of submission that we must respect here, if we want to one day enjoy the social order of heavenly creation.

THE DIVINE ORDER OF AUTHORITY AND SUBJECTION

The subjection, submission or dependence of one person to another has nothing to do with the essence of Deity or humanity. None of the members of the Godhead or human genders are inferior to one another. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have the same divine nature, and possess the same attributes of eternity, love, and justice. But this fact does not deprive them of revealing themselves to the world and the universe in different roles. And none of them feel discriminated against by the role they voluntarily submitted themselves too. The same is true of the divine order of creation. This unselfish order, must still be maintained despite the crises introduced by sin. A crisis, because the creatures wanted to occupy a “higher” or different position than what God had designed for them. When our first parents desired to be more than what God intended, they were rebelling against God’s wisdom in designating their role in creation! In reality, they were destroying their own happiness.

In the Old Testament, men and women were required to be subject to the leaders of their clans and tribes, in a headship context as specified by the word *rosh*, “head” (Exod 18:25; Judg 10:18; 11:8-9,11, etc.). Let us keep in mind that the word *rosh* (head), is employed in the OT in relation to *tsaqen* (elder), *nashi’* chief), *sar* (prince), *qasir* (ruler), and even with *qohen* (priest). Worthy of notice is the fact that many versions translate the word “head” in the Old Testament, by “chief,” “leader,” etc. In addition, the word “head” was never applied to a woman. In addition, the word “head” was never applied to a woman. See documentation, in p. 19:

<http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/Typordinationchurchstructure.pdf>

Of course, no one was expected to exert an imperial or abusive dominion over either men or women (1 Pet 5:2-3; see Matt 20:25-27). Keep in mind the fact that God was the supreme “head” of Israel, without implying that other men, under Him, could not be heads of the people (2 Chr 13:12). If the elders of Israel were considered “heads” of the people, why could the elders of the church not also be considered “heads” of the congregation, in the sense of leaders in the government of the church? That is precisely what we find in the New Testament.

As already seen, *in the New Testament*, submission is also required of men and women to the pastors of the church who, as in Old Testament times, were always men (Heb 13:17; see 1 Tim 2:12: for the meaning of *didascalos* in the latter text, see:

[<http://www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com/English/Documents/Divinetitlecstructure.pdf>].)

Submission of woman to her husband is also definite.

A chain of authority and subjection

Proper leadership moves within a chain of responsibility. If the chain breaks at any link, the authority is impaired or deteriorated. Perhaps the example of the Roman centurion can help you understand how a head of the family and a church pastor should see their position. The centurion said to Jesus, I am a man under authority, and I have soldiers under my command (Matt 8:9). He could have said: I am a man with authority, but he was wise enough to recognize that as a Roman officer he was aligned in a chain of command that culminated in the emperor. Thus also, in the spiritual sphere, he recognized in Jesus an authority aligned in the chain of command of God. And it is in that same sphere of authority that we must consider the leaders of the church, for it is God who establishes them (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28).

Children should be obedient to parents and honor them for life (Eph 6:1-5; cf. Exod 20:12), subject to them at least until they marry (Eph 5:31). Since the head and body cannot exist apart, the wife must be subject to the husband who is her head (Eph 5:22-23). The husband, for his part, must be equally subject to Christ as his head, for Christ is the head of every man. Christ himself is also submitted to his Father, so Paul continues to say that God is the head of Christ (1 Cor 11:3).

Superiority or equality?

We are accustomed to think that being a head is related to superiority. It may be, but not necessarily. In the case of the Son of God, for example, the fact that the Father is His head does not mean that He is inferior in nature, for Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). So, his subjection to the Father implies equality, not inferiority or superiority, as was understood by those who wanted to stone Him (see v. 33).

There is a sovereign order designed by the Creator for his creatures, which we have no authority to change. In that order we are subordinate to God. But the required subjection of believers has to do with a mutual subordination between beings who are equal in nature, as Paul says in Eph 5:21: “submit to one another.”

Our problem is that ever since Lucifer tempted our parents with insubordination, proposing absolute sovereignty equivalent to that of God, we have deceived ourselves and became indomitable. Who can tame us or sooth us? Because only the meek will inherit the earth (Matt 5:5). In this age when rebellion grows everywhere, and the world is coming to an end, humanity wants to rid itself of everything that inhibits its self-centeredness. People want what they think is total freedom. They believe they have to break the divine order in society to get it. But there is no thing as absolute individualism or absolute freedom. Freedom cannot exist without unselfish responsibility to each other and to our Creator. Without

responsibility, freedom becomes an enslavement. Individual totalitarianism cannot bring happiness. It will inevitably bring misery and death. Just ask those who were ruled by Hitler, Stalin and Mao.

Such total freedom means everyone wants to be “heads,” and rule each other for selfish purposes. These gender wars of feminism and chauvinism reflect a behavior that disregards the order of creation. And in the eagerness for vindication and liberation, no one wants to be subject to any authority. At the first imposition by a husband or a boss, there is an outbreak. Everyone wants to be fully sovereign. Everyone wants to be like God (Gen 3:1-3).

We all have a head to depend on, we are all under subjection by divine disposition. We are what God judges us to be. And if, as men, we do not assume the headship role that God assigned to us; and if as women we do not assume the submissiveness that God assigned us to our husbands; then we spoil our own happiness! Either abdicating our responsibility or assuming responsibility that we were told not to ends in misery. The exercise of authority, in the divine order is to be implemented by the wisdom of love. And submission to the divine order is to be done with thoughtful, peaceful and respectful deference. That is how God rules His Universe. And it is how, with the exception of this world, the universe submits to His leadership.

Subjection does not degrade, but may cause suffering

Since sin entered, restraint has become painful, even for God. For in saving others, God also suffers. In our case, suffering is caused by having to live with sinful people like ourselves, respecting the social and spiritual structure in a context of imperfection. This requires self-denial, sacrifice, dedication, submission to God, and faith in his grace. And if we suffer for patiently enduring the yoke of the Lord, we will also reign with him (2 Tim 2:12; Heb 14:22).

God’s social order does not diminish or degrade men or women. God knows what He created in each. In our rebellious world some men want to be women because they don’t like the role God gave them. And some women want the man’s role for the same reason. But when God assigned genders their roles, He had in mind their full potential. When He says to women, wives, be subject to your husbands - He had great plans of happiness for women (Eph 5:22). God wants every woman to be a genuine and submissive person in home and in the church (1 Pet 3:1-2; 1 Tim 2:11). Her role is honorable, and is essential to the happiness, peace and success of the home and the church. One woman who captured this fact said: “The position God gave us in the family is an expression of his wisdom and love.”

How heavy or light the yoke that God placed us in at our creation will depend on how easy it is for us to love, to bend, to hold on, accepting the will of our Head that is Christ (Mat 11:28-30). Only when we are converted to the Lord’s unselfish love and accept His yoke of wisdom (His order determined by creation and redemption), we discover how good is God, and also how good His design for humanity.

After being subjected to suffering by his Father, in order to be a complete Savior (Isa 53:10), God subdued his Son “all things under his feet” (1 Cor 15:27), and empowered him with supreme authority both in heaven and on earth (Matt 28:18). Why did the Father subdue all things to His Son? So that, in due course, step by step, the Son might end up subduing again all creation to His Father. And the Son himself, even without being a creature, and being not inferior in nature, will subject Himself to the Father according to the pattern which the Trinity drew in His eternal councils (see Philip 2:5-7; 1 Cor 15:28). In this way, the Trinity will continue being an eternal example of submission between equals. As a matter of fact, the Son will keep forever our human nature (John 3:16). “He who was one with God has linked Himself with the children of men by ties that are never to be broken” (SC 14).

Subjection or submission is not competition or rivalry

The Son or the Holy Spirit was never seen competing with the Father to gain prominence, to be the head. There is no rivalry between them. No one fights to win or beat the other. They present to the world a united front, as we have already seen, and that same unity is the one that seeks the Deity in its people (John 17:11,20-23). God is part of that human relationship because He shares with us His spiritual nature, so that our unity as human beings can be assured (see 2 Pet 1:4). This is why the relationship of Christ as the head of the church is equivalent to that of the husband as the head of the woman. In this way, both man and woman are to be submitted to a head that is over them (Eph 5:22ff).

In some of the world's great cities, modern psychiatrists break the divine order of creation in order to presumably feel free. The professors send their students to a brothel as a first step to liberate themselves. No wonder that among doctors, the highest rate of divorce is found among psychiatrists. Hence many modern therapies do not strive to fix a social situation broken by sin. And they do not realize or care that by irresponsibly breaking the social bonds established by God, they abandon men and women, with all their deranged conscience, to repeat their traumatic experience with the new person they find.

Yes! A new order is required, once the original was deteriorated and broken! But it has to do with an order which returns to the original pattern given by God. This is possible because the Lord promises us to make a new creation by healing the wounds and tears of the heart. "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:17-19). "For the Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Submission does not mean that everyone always agrees. There's room to dialogue. Being a responsible leader means listening and dialoguing with those you lead. And being a submissive follower means you have the responsibility to dialogue so as to come, as far as possible, into harmony with the leader. Influence flows both ways. But it is bad to make a war over every difference. Although head and submission are roles or functions in a home and in the church, it should be noted that there is room for an infinite variety in the details of different temperaments, abilities, tastes and dislikes of each child of God. In God's divine order both the leader and the followers have rights and privileges which are to be respected. When both the divine order and the persons are respected, it is easier to live in peace at home and in the church.

The joy of submission is one of God's surprises, because it is something totally unexpected that is experienced when the individual will is disrupted or thwarted. Instead of being left in a tantrum, it is better to see it as a sign that confirms the order of God. The well-being it produces, if we are humble, will never be known by those who clench their fists and raise their arms against every difficulty that appears. It is also an act of faith in what God determined. It is to trust that God can change the hearts of a husband or a wife, of a pastor or of the members of the church, even if at any given time they cannot agree on tastes and desires.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer 29:11). The divine design of head and submission helps us to enter into that plan and future. After God's creation was led astray and moaned as a result of human abuse, God subjects it in hope. "For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope" of the final redemption (Rom 8:20).

Submission or subjection implies responsibility

Many modern therapies offer escapism, not support. Everyone wants to escape reality, the responsibility that overwhelms them, fear and frustration. When some have problems in Puerto Rico they are advised to

go to the USA, and after a while, they are advised to return to Puerto Rico, which represents a geographical therapy. These are intended to be therapies of liberation. But they retain the problem wherever they go. The therapy of subjection offered by the Bible entails a much more intimate, deeper and encompassing spiritual liberation.

The authority of the husband in the home, and of the pastor or leader in the church, increases in proportion to their submission to Christ. They lead the family or the church as personal representatives of Christ. Their sight is set on Christ above anything else, even above their family or the church (Luke 14:26), and focus the regard of the family and of the church in Christ also. In this way, the family and the church are blessed.

So too, true family therapy will not bring liberation to the forefront, but to Christ. It's good to be free, but not to turn freedom into an obsession. We must not let go of the family. Submission to authority is always proven when you reach a point where you do not want to obey. If we always agree with the human head we are under, we would never know what submission is. We discover whether we are truly submissive or not when we do not want to do something that the body determines, in matters that do not go against the higher head that is Christ. This principle applies to the family as well as to the church, where subjection to the leader is required by God, as the leader subjects himself to his head, "the prince of the shepherds" (1 Pet 5:1-4; see 1 Cor 11:1; Philip 3:17).

Every act of escapism by one of the parties in the chain of dependence and subjection, produces traumas that affect the whole body. The wife or child who decides to pass over the authority of the husband and father, members who want to pass over the leadership of the church, probably never knew what it is to be responsible. And men who overwhelm their wives and children, or the members of the church in their legitimate role ordained by God, do it because they don't want to subject themselves to their head that is Christ. We all have a head to whom we must subject our will, and we all have to learn to carry the burdens of life, no matter how much suffering it can bring (Heb 11:25-26, 34ff). Every link in the chain of love and subjection matters.

Fortunately, we are not left alone with our problems. The cross of Christ helps us in our Christian submission. It is there we see pain, selflessness, responsibility, and liberation. And there every frustrated soul finds the power to overcome their pains, their bitter disenchantments, from all suffering caused by the breaking of the social God-designed order.

Submission or subjection is a sign of belonging and identity

Why is subjection required in marriage? Because without subjection there is no belonging. Why is subjection required in the church? (Heb 13:17). Because without subjection, there is no belonging in the spiritual realm either. I am a Seventh-day Adventist. That's my religious identity. And I thank God for giving me that identity before the world.

In ancient times, a woman without an owner was a disgrace, it was like having no identity (Isa 4:1). She belonged to the father, the master, or the husband who had to pay for her so that she could belong to him (Gen 29:34; Exod 21, etc). The husband thus entered into obligations that consisted in feeding her, clothing, and marital duty (Exod 21:10). If he did not comply with any of these three things, the woman could leave free [which usually meant to return to her parents or brothers], without needing to pay for her ransom (v.11)

Today too, the woman who marries receives a new identity. The husband says of her that she is his wife, the wife of no other. This also means feeding her, dressing, and fulfilling marital duty. What is marital duty? Giving to one another, because they belong to each other (1 Cor 7:3). The woman has no power of

her own body, but the husband. Similarly, the husband has no power of his own body, but the wife (v. 4-5).

The head-and-body relationship even more strongly highlights the bond of belonging and identity. The husband must love his wife as his own body. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, he nourishes it and cares for it (Eph 5:28-29). Therefore, the Apostle insists, each of you should also love his wife as himself (v. 33). And so we must love one another in the church, for we are all part of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-27).

Let us go again to the example of the Trinity. The Son subjected himself to the Father, and this warranted his identity and divine protection. The first time Jesus revealed his identity was in the temple when He was twelve years old. He then showed his earthly parents, very delicately, that his identity with his heavenly Father came first. He replied to them: “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house? (Luke 2:49). When eighteen years later he was baptized in the Jordan River, his Father confirmed the identification of His Son. “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matt 3:17). Jesus, our head, became the Son of God by birth (Luke 1:35), by baptism (Matt 3:17), and with power by the resurrection of the dead (Rom 1:4).

The same sense of belonging and divine identity extends to the third person of the trinity. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God (1 Cor 3:16), and the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9). In turn, the Holy Ghost begat the Son (Luke 1:35). If we are subject to God, we will also belong to Him as His children by adoption through His only begotten Son (John 3:16; Rom 8:14-17). Hence it is necessary to submit to each other in marriage and in the church. How many times vow breakers discover, often too late, what they have lost when they live alone! How many times those who fight in the church and leave it, regret the lost benefit of sharing together the faith, the problems, the dreams, and the understanding and strength that come from fraternal communion!

Subjection or submission implies trust and stability

What gives more cohesion and firmness to a couple, to a home, to a family, and to the church, is the bond of unselfish love. It is through that bond that God attracts his children. With “cords of human kindness” and “ties of love” the Lord keeps us subject to Him (Hos 11:4). Still, the pain of an unrequited love that a father and a mother can have, a husband or wife, a son or daughter, is the pain that the heavenly Father has with so many ungrateful children. “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” (John 1:11).

In the *Son of Songs*, king Solomon illustrated the desire to gain the affection of his beloved Shulamite in a manner as stable as a seal upon her heart (Song of songs 8:6). He resorted to this figure for being aware of how fickle and changeable the heart of human beings are (Jer 17:9). So too, the human heart that gives its will and affections to the Lord seeks to be reliable, seeks stability. The only being who can affirm a heart which by nature is so deceptive and contradictory, is the Spirit of God. He seals the divine love in the human heart and keeps it affirmed for the day of final redemption (Eph 4:30; 2 Cor 1:22).

Don’t live in anguish for not knowing if you will be saved or not, because “God is faithful” (1 Cor 10:13). “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion” (Philip 1:6; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3; Heb 10:23). Our part is to trust the Lord and be submissive to Him. And He is able to keep us from falling (Jude 24). He gave us the warranty of His Spirit, which confirms our subordination to Christ (Rom 8:16; 1 John 2:20,28; see Eph 1:13-14; 1 Cor 2:14-15; 2 Tim 2:19). By putting the seal of the Spirit in our heart and in writing His law in our heart (Jer 31:33; 2 Cor 3:2-3), God establishes His identity in us. “God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: ‘The Lord knows those who are his’” (2 Tim 2:19). “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him” (Rom 8:9).