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The Dawn of the Battle of the Sexes – Genesis 3:16

Leanne M. Sigvartsen and Jan A. Sigvartsen

The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. It functions as the introduction chapter to the Bible since all major biblical themes are introduced in this book, with the following biblical books expanding and exploring these themes. Richard M. Davidson¹ noted that “Gen 1-3 has been increasingly recognized as set apart from the rest of the Bible, constituting a kind of prologue or introduction. These opening chapters of Scripture are now widely regarded as providing the paradigm for the rest of the Bible.”² Based on a close reading of these three chapters, Davidson found a seven-faceted theological center,³ which, he suggested, are components of the Great Cosmic conflict concerning God’s character, the grand metanarrative of the Bible.⁴ However, Genesis 1-3 contains more than these seven facets and this chapter proposes that these creation accounts also reveal the dawn of the battle of the sexes. This chapter will briefly consider the origin of sexism as it appears in the creation account, and then more extensively review modern empirical research relating to sexism not only toward women, but also toward men.

1. Many examples used in this paper pertain to the Seventh-day Adventist faith community as this publication has been written to honor several of its scholars, thus, making this article more applicable for that context.

2. Richard M. Davidson, “Back to the Beginning: Genesis 1-3 and the Theological Center of Scripture” in *Christ, Salvation, and the Eschaton: Essays in Honor of Hans K. LaRondelle*, eds. Daniel Heinz, Jiří Moskala, and Peter van Bemmelen (Berrien Springs, MI: Old Testament Department, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2009), 11. Davidson continued by referring to the following four scholars who have made a similar observation: Phyllis Bird (“Bones of My Bones and Flesh of My Flesh,” *Theology Today* 50 [1994]: 525, 527); Lilian Calles Barger (*Eve’s Revenge: Women and a Spirituality of the Body* [Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2003], 128), John Rankin (“Power and Gender at the Divinity School,” in *Finding God at Harvard: Spiritual Journeys of Thinking Christians*, ed. Kelly Monroe [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996], 203); and Deborah F. Sawyer (*God, Gender and the Bible* [London: Routledge, 2002], 24, 29).

3. These seven facets are (1) creation and the divine design for this planet, (2) the character of the Creator (with implications for theodicy), (3) the rise of the moral conflict concerning the character of God, (4) the Gospel covenant promise centered in the Person of the Messianic Seed, (5) the substitutionary atonement worked out by the Messianic Seed, (6) the eschatological windup of the moral conflict with the end of the serpent and evil, and (7) the sanctuary setting of the moral conflict (Davidson, “Back to the Beginning,” 19).

4. Davidson, “Back to the Beginning,” 29.

The Dawn of the Battle of Sexes

In the first creation story (Gen 1:1-2:4a), God creates humans, both male and female, in His image and likeness to possess the earth and become caretakers of His creation (Gen 1:26-28). However, in the second creation story, the Eden Narrative (Gen 2-3), man is created first, he receives God's commandment regarding the forbidden tree, he names all the animals, and only then does the woman enter the story, as the man's helpmate and mate. The author of Genesis 2 concludes that the marriage custom, that the man should leave his parents in order to start a new family unit with his wife, has its origin in the creation itself (Gen 2:23-24). The chapter ends on a very positive note: they were both naked but were not ashamed (v. 25), emphasizing the perfect harmony and innocence experienced in the first marriage—they were indeed “one flesh” and carrying God's image and likeness. In Genesis 3, the narrator gives the account of how this perfect harmony between the first couple, the first man and woman, breaks down and reveals the ultimate consequences of their open rebellion against God.

The apparent discrepancies between these two versions of the creation account have given rise to multiple views regarding the pre-fall relationship between men and women or husband and wife (God's intended plan), how the fall affected this relationship, and finally, God's post-fall plan for male/female or husband/wife relationships. Davidson, in his major work on sexuality in the Old Testament,⁵ listed six major views regarding man-woman relationships in Genesis 1-3. The first three views are hierarchical in nature, where God intended the woman (or wife) to be subordinate to male (husband) supremacy/leadership, and the fall was caused by a violation of this God-ordained hierarchy or ruptured relationship. Genesis 3:16 records God's divine pronouncement concerning Eve; however, interpreters who adhere to this hierarchical God-given view understand this statement differently (as a description, prediction/prescription, or reaffirmation of the original hierarchical view), see Table 1 below. It should be noted that all three views consider male-female hierarchy as still valid in the post-fallen world.

5. Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007). I was privileged to work as Davidson's research assistant when he was concluding this publication and enjoyed many hours immersed in the manuscript and our many conversations regarding the content of his book.

Table 1. Man-woman relationships (ranking) in the beginning (Gen 1-3): Hierarchical views.

		Creation (Gen 1-2)	Fall (Gen 3)	Divine Pronouncement concerning Eve (Gen 3:16)
Hierarchical Views	1	Subordination/submission of woman to male supremacy/leadership	Violation of male-female hierarchy and/or ruptured relationship	<i>Description</i> of the perversion of hierarchical relationships (woman seeks to control man and/or man exploitively subjugates woman)
	2	Submission of woman to male leadership	Violation of male-female hierarchy and/or ruptured relationship	<i>Prediction</i> that woman would desire to get out from under man's authority, and <i>prescription</i> that man must exercise his "godly headship" to restrain her urge to control him
	3	Subordination/submission of woman to male supremacy/leadership	Violation of male-female hierarchy and/or ruptured relationship	<i>Reaffirmation</i> of original hierarchical roles as a continued divine blessing, or a statement of continued subjugation of woman by man

In a careful reading of Genesis 1-2, paying close attention to the literary structures of the two creation accounts, the words and word clusters used, and inter- and intratextual connections, it becomes difficult to find textual support for a God-ordained hierarchical pre-fall view (views 1-3).⁷ Instead, there is ample support for a pre-fall egalitarian view, where God intended full equality between human beings, male and female, husband and wife. This is one of the many implications of God's decision:

Genesis 1:27

So God created **earthling** in His image;
in the image of God He created **him**;
male and female He created them.

וַיְבָרֵא אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ
בְּצַלְמֵם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתָו
זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:

6. Tables 1 and 2 are both a modified version of Davidson's table listing the six major views on man-woman relation in Genesis 1-3, however, I have added Davidson's personal view, as stated in the book, as the seventh view; see Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 64-65, 76.

7. See e.g., Davidson's discussion on "Equality of the Sexes without Hierarchy," in *Flame of Yahweh*, 22-35; Jan A. Sigvartsen, "The Creation Order – Hierarchical or Egalitarian?" *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 53.1 (2015): 127-142.

It is important to keep in mind that the noun “man” (*’ādām*) in Genesis 1 is not a proper name as is the case in Genesis 2, but a generic term for a human, or earthling, and is defined in the text as a combination of the two sexes, זכר ונקבה, *male and female* (Gen 1:27).⁸

Table 2 below outlines the major egalitarian views with Davidson’s personal view highlighted as the seventh view. They all hold a God-ordained pre-fall egalitarian view in which there is full equality between the sexes, with no subordination or submission of woman to male supremacy or leadership; however, these four views vary in what happened to the relationship at the fall, and the meaning of the divine pronouncement concerning Eve in Genesis 3:16. The fourth view considers God’s pronouncement as predictive, stating the natural consequences of sin upon the marital relationship and, by extension, in society at large—sexism, where men consider themselves as superior and should therefore usurp authority over women, is a result of sin and not ordained by God. The fifth view considers God’s pronouncement as a permanent prescription, a post-fall hierarchical reality instituted by God to preserve harmony in the home. The sixth view considers God’s pronouncement as a blessing. It should, therefore, be understood as God upholding the pre-fall egalitarian ideal even in the post-fall world. As becomes clear from Table 2, the seventh view, describing Davidson’s personal view, attempts to present the middle ground by combining the fifth and the sixth views. Thus, God’s pronouncement should be understood as prescriptive in the sense that the wife should voluntarily submit⁹ herself to her husband’s leadership as a result of sin in order to provide harmony in the home, but the pronouncement should also be understood as a “promised blessing of divine grace” in the sense that God

8. This emphasis that humanity as a whole, and not each individual, is the image or likeness of God, is crucial since this speaks against sexism, racism, and elitism, the main -isms that appear in most societies. This is also a reminder that everyone has worth, since each individual reflects a part of God’s image, and that all have a common origin, God himself. Moreover, in a religious community who worships a common Creator, it becomes important to listen to each member’s religious experiences, since each member has a different experience and picture of God, and each member carries a different aspect of God’s image. Only by taking these different perspectives into consideration will the community get a better picture of who the Creator God is. Paul, in Galatians 3:28, makes a similar argument in support of equality, interestingly covering the same three isms – racism, elitism, and sexism: “There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (CSB).

9. The term “voluntary submission” is an idealized application of והוא ימשל-בך, *and he shall will rule over you*. Robert D. Culver noted that the word *māshal* usually receives the translation ‘to rule,’ but the precise nature of the rule is as various as the real situations in which the action or state so designated occur. It seems to be the situation in all languages and cultures that words for oversight, rule, government must be defined in relation to the situation out of which the function arises” (“משל,” *TWOT* 1:534). Philip J. Nel observed that this verb could have both a positive and a negative connotation, and that the control a person has over another can be abusive as attested in Proverb 28:15 (CSB): “A wicked ruler over a helpless people is like a roaring lion or a charging bear” (“משל,” *NIDOTTE* 2:1137). Thus, the subject of the verb, the male in Genesis 3:16, determines if this relationship will be abusive. A “voluntary submission” would only make sense in a society where women have been given the freedom to make their own independent choices and carry the same value as men. However, this was not the reality for women in biblical times, nor in most cultures up to the present day. Even if a woman is provided the opportunity to submit herself voluntarily to her husband’s dominion, what will happen if she no longer feels comfortable in submitting to her husband? Is the word “voluntary” used to sanitize a submissive relationship as something beautiful? If the wife is no longer submitting, would she be doubly judged, as her submission is no longer voluntary either? Would her husband’s benevolence turn to hostility?

will empower the husband-wife team to strive for the God-intended egalitarian pre-fall relationship.¹⁰

Table 2. Man-woman relationships (ranking) in the beginning (Gen 1-3): Egalitarian views.

Creation (Gen 1–2)		Fall (Gen 3)	Divine Pronouncement Concerning Eve (Gen 3:16)	
Egalitarian Views	4	Full equality with no subordination/submission of woman to male supremacy/leadership	Ruptured relationship between the sexes	<i>Predictive</i> description of the consequences of sin – man usurps authority over the woman – which “curse” is to be removed by the gospel with return to egalitarianism
	5	Full equality with no subordination/submission of woman to male supremacy/leadership	Ruptured relationship between the sexes	<i>Permanent prescription</i> of divine will in order to preserve harmony in the home after sin: wife’s submission to her husband’s leadership
	6	Full equality with no subordination/submission of woman to male supremacy/leadership	Egalitarian relationship continues	<i>Blessing of equality</i> (no hierarchy of leadership/submission) in the midst of a sinful world and its challenges
	7	Full equality with no subordination/submission of woman to male supremacy/leadership	Ruptured relationship between the sexes, but Egalitarian relationship should continue	<i>Qualified prescriptive</i> divine sentence announcing the voluntary submission of the wife to her husband’s servant leadership as a result of sin; However, <i>promised blessing</i> of divine grace designed to lead back as much as possible to the original plan of harmony and union between equal partners without hierarchy.

Davidson concludes his discussion on “Sexuality and the Fall: Genesis 3” by suggesting a balancing act between a hierarchical and an egalitarian post-fall view:

With egalitarians (and against hierarchicalists) it can be affirmed that Gen 1-2 presents God’s divine ideal for men and women at creation to be one of equality in both nature and function, with no superiority or leadership of the male and no inferiority or submission of the female. With hierarchicalists (and against egalitarians) it can be affirmed that God’s prescription for harmony and unity after the fall does include the wife’s submission to the servant leadership of her husband. Against the hierarchical position, however, the evidence in 3:16 already seems to point to the implication that the servant leadership principle is limited to the relationship between husband and wife or at least should not be seen as barring women from roles of leadership over men in the believing community or society at large. Also against the hierarchical position, the evidence of this text points

10. It should be noted that Jacques Doukhan suggested an altogether different reading of the divine pronouncement given in Genesis 3:16 in light of Genesis 4:7, demonstrating that this pronouncement was given to both Adam and Eve, thus arguing that God’s statement points beyond the mere male-female relationship. Rather, Genesis 3:16 gives the explanation to God’s promised salvation in the preceding verse (Gen 3:15), which had become necessary due to Adam and Eve’s failure to control the temptation in Genesis 3:6, when evil was “desiring” them (this parallels Cain’s failed attempt to control the evil which caused him to kill his brother Abel). See, Jacques Doukhan, “From Subordination of Woman to Salvation by the Woman: An Exegesis of Genesis 3:16 in the Light of Genesis 4:7 and Genesis 3:15” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Adventist Society of Religious Studies, Chicago, IL, 16 November 2012).

toward a prescription qualified by grace, a prescription representing God's less-than-the-original ideal for husbands and wives, thus implicitly including both a divine redemptive call and enabling power to return as much as possible to the pre-fall total egalitarianism in the marriage relationship, without denying the validity of the servant leadership principle as it may be needed in a sinful world to preserve unity and harmony in the home.¹¹

It should be noted that only two of the seven views (views 1 and 4) presented in the above two tables consider the subjugation of woman as a natural consequence of sin.¹² With the exception of view 6, which sees God upholding the egalitarian view, the four remaining views (views 2, 3, 5, 7) consider the supremacy of the male sex in the post-fall world as God-ordained.¹³

This brief overview of the various views on God's pronouncement in Genesis 3:16 demonstrates the difficulties in determining how to understand God's

11. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 80.

12. Davidson found this position unsatisfactory as the context of Genesis 3:16 is a legal trial (Gen 3:8-13), which is concluded by a legal sentence (Gen 3:14-19), thus, he argued, God's words to the woman should be considered executive—a part of God's prescriptive punishment on the woman. This conclusion, according to Davidson, is further supported by "the use of the first person singular 'I'" referring "to the Lord, who is pronouncing the judgment, and the Hebrew infinitive absolute followed by the finite verb implies 'the absolute certainty of the action,'" therefore, "God is not merely informing the woman of her fate; God is ordaining the state of affairs announced in 3:16. God is the Judge announcing his personal sentence for Adam and Eve's guilt" (*Flame of Yahweh*, 67-70). If, as Davidson suggested, Genesis 3:16 is God's divine sentence in response to Eve's transgression, it would also follow that the physical pain and potential mortality experienced in the context of childbearing and birth is also a part of God's prescriptive punishment on all women, in addition to her "desire" (for a discussion on the meaning of the word *šhūqā*, desire, see Joel N. Lohr, "Sexual Desire? Eve, Genesis 3:16, and תשוקה," *JBL* 130.2 [2011]: 227-246). Thus, would a woman who consents to an epidural during her labor or undergoes a c-section violate a divine sentence? And should maternal prenatal and postnatal health be ignored, as any intervention for both the mother and child would violate God's curse? This is not a hypothetical question as Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn observed: "In most societies, mythological or theological explanations were devised to explain why women should suffer in childbirth, and they forestalled efforts to make the process safer. When anesthesia was developed, it was for many decades routinely withheld from women giving birth, since women were 'supposed' to suffer" (*Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* [New York: Vintage Books, 2009], 116). A predictive interpretation would leave room to utilize technological and medical advances that could preserve the health and lives of both mother and child. An executive judgement suggests that the lives of both mother and child are not worth saving because to do so would transgress God—a concerning position indeed, especially for religious people who also espouse a prenatal prolife position.

13. Matthew Henry, although considering female submission as a part of the creation order (hierarchical – View 3), made the issue clear: "This sentence amounts only to that command, *Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands*; but the entrance of sin has made that duty a punishment, which otherwise it would not have been. If man had not sinned, he would always have ruled with wisdom and love; and, if the woman had not sinned, she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness; and then the dominion would have been no grievance: but our own sin and folly make our yoke heavy. If Eve had not eaten forbidden fruit herself, and tempted her husband to eat it, she would never have complained of her subjection; therefore, it ought never to be complained of, though harsh; but sin must be complained of, that made it so. Those wives who not only despise and disobey their husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider *that they not only violate a divine law, but thwart a divine sentence*" ("Gen 3:16," *Matthew Henry Commentary* on Gen 3:16, www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/genesis/3.html; emphasis added). Umberto Cassuto argued for an egalitarian pre-fall view, however, he considered the post-fall women submission as God's divine sentence (View 5): "Measure for measure: you influenced your husband and caused him to do what you wished; henceforth, you and your female descendants will be subservient to your husbands. You will yearn for them, but they will be the heads of the families, and will rule over you" (*A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 1:165-166; emphasis added).

statement addressed to the woman. Does God introduce a hierarchical structure for male-female relations after the fall to reintroduce harmony and unity in a post-fallen world—as an antidote to the effect of sin—or is God only describing the effect sin will have on all human relations, an effect already seen in the blame-game between Adam and Eve upon eating the forbidden fruit? Is it possible to entertain a voluntarily hierarchical structure in which a wife submits to the servant leadership of her husband without creating a potential abusive relationship,¹⁴ or to keep this voluntarily hierarchical structure purely within the context of the home? Should a wife be submissive to her husband's every whim? Or should she only submit to his leadership if it is in line with God's instructions, her conscience, and her critical thinking? Or should she only have to submit to a God-fearing and righteous husband? If a woman's voluntary submission is prescribed by God, then it becomes easy to argue that a wife who is not willingly submitting to her husband's will in any situation not only disobeys her husband, but also God's instructions or command, as her husband serves as her "god."¹⁵ Is it even possible to condone a hierarchical structure without running the risk of also condoning various types of sexism, and by default, racism or elitism? To state it plainly, should the ultimate goal for a married couple be to recreate the pre-fall harmonious egalitarian relationship in their home, or should the goal be for the wife to become perfectly willing to submit herself freely to her husband's will to preserve and sustain their marriage in this post-fallen world?¹⁶

Assuming that God has the best interest of humans in mind and given that the meaning of God's words spoken to Eve in Genesis 3:16 are not completely clear, as they have been understood as descriptive (view 1), reaffirmation (view 3), predictive (view 4), prescriptive (view 5), blessing (view 6), a combination of predictive and prescriptive (view 2), or a combination of prescriptive and blessing (view 7) by interpreters, a biblical exegete needs to show some caution before promot-

14. By most western ethical standards, Abraham's treatment of Sarah (Gen 12:11-20; 20:1-18), Lot's willingness to hand his daughters over to the people of Sodom (Gen 18:8), Laban's scheming involving his two daughters (Gen 29:22-30), Judah's treatment of his daughter-in-law Tamar (Gen 38:1-26), and the David and Bathsheba incident (2 Sam 11) are some examples of sexual exploitation, disempowerment, and abuse of women even by some God-fearing men who attempted to safeguard their own best interest and desires.

15. Interestingly, in Modern Hebrew, the word for husband is *ba'al* and women would refer to their husbands as *הבעל שלי*, literally "my god."

16. If the latter, it becomes easy to blame the woman for her husband's extramarital affairs, incest, and divorce, all sentiments insinuated in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: An Exposition of the Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 2nd ed. (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association and General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005), in the exposition on Fundamental 23, Marriage and the Family (329-346). Regarding the issue of incest, the commentary states: "Often this results when the normal husband-wife relationship has been neglected and one of the children has been chosen to play the role of the spouse," placing the blame on the person who did not fulfill their partner sexually (337). Regarding divorce, pressure is placed on the injured spouse to forgive as "adultery need be no more destructive to your marriage than any other sins" and "when you are ready to forgive and let go of your negative attitudes," God will mend the relationship (337-338), thus suggesting the divorce is due to lack of a forgiving heart by the injured spouse.

Anecdotally, a female friend of the authors expressed that in a presentation by her Seventh-day Adventist conference president's wife (at a gathering for ministerial spouses), it was stressed that as pastors' wives, it was their responsibility to dress attractively to ensure their pastor-husband did not commit adultery with one of the female members of his congregation, essentially placing some fault/responsibility on wives if this were to happen.

ing a certain interpretation to make sure that he/she does not cause more harm than good when applying God's words to modern times. Athalya Brenner raised a valid point regarding Genesis 3:16 when she stated: "Any interpretation of this utterance—as a curse, aetiological statement of fact, blessing or otherwise—is largely dependent on the reader's gender position and may vary considerably."¹⁷ Joel N. Lohr expanded on the "gender position" aspect by noting: "Clearly there are a variety of factors in play, not the least of which is one's religious or theological persuasions, or one's place in history, society, and culture. All of this, to be sure, contributes to one's 'gender position,' but we need to be clear. The effects of one's wider presuppositions are truly far-reaching and profound in reading this verse."¹⁸ Thus, the second half of this chapter will consider empirical behavioral research, which may add some further insight into the ramifications of viewing female submission as a God-given prescription, blessing, or both. This consideration should in no way be considered as an attempt to change the meaning of the biblical text, as multiple views already exist among biblical scholars of how to understand Genesis 3:16. However, the empirical behavioral research presented may give some additional factors to take into consideration when deciding which view of God's pronouncement may be both the most plausible and contextually consistent with God's character.

Empirical Research Relating to the Subordination of Women

This section will first consider empirical research relating to the subordination of women, giving a brief description of *hostile sexism* and *benevolent sexism* before briefly considering *benevolent sexism* in religious groups. This chapter will conclude by considering *ambivalent sexism* and the Lindy Chamberlain case. Some readers may question how recent empirical research can provide any valid insight for a biblical exegete regarding human behavior due to the great timespan and cultural differences between biblical time and the present. Modern psychology and behavioral science is a fairly recent scientific discipline. However, it follows a transparent, empirical research and publication standard as stipulated by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* and has thus come a very long way from how it was practiced, and condemned, in the 19th century by some religious leaders.¹⁹ These standards assure transparency and replicability in an endeavor to ensure that the findings and conclusions are sound and to determine if the findings are only culturally or regionally specific. Małgorzata Mikołajczak and Janina Pietrzak suggested the questionable belief

17. Athalya Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and 'Sexuality' in the Hebrew Bible*, Biblical Interpretation Series 26 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 53.

18. Lohr, "Sexual Desire? Eve, Genesis 3:16, and תְּשׁוּקָה," 227.

19. In 1862, Ellen G. White warned against the danger of psychology: "The sciences of phrenology, psychology, and mesmerism are the channel through which he [Satan] comes more directly to this generation and works with that power which is to characterize his efforts near the close of probation" (Ellen G. White, "Phrenology, Psychology, Mesmerism, and Spiritualism," *Review and Herald* 19.12 [February 18, 1862]: 6), however, Merlin D. Burt noted: "When Ellen White used the terms 'psychology' and 'science,' she was speaking of these spurious and erroneous movements and not the modern definitions of these terms" ("Ellen G. White and Mental Health Therapeutics," *Dialogue* 21.1 [2009]: 12-15).

of “essential differences between men and women, making each more or less adequate to fill particular roles in society, appear to be relatively universal. The ambivalence this division entails for both men and women has been observed in a number of countries.”²⁰

Sexism research throughout the 20th century concentrated mainly on investigating sexist attitudes towards women, often without investigating sexism towards men. These studies primarily focused on overtly hostile forms of sexism, which for a long time was the only aspect of sexism that was considered relevant.²¹

In 1996, however, sexism research took a new direction when Peter Glick and Susan Fiske²² empirically identified that there existed two distinct forms of sexism: a proverbial good cop/bad cop, where one seemingly hostile form (bad cop) punished those who rejected a stereotypical traditional gender role, and a seemingly benevolent form (good cop) rewarded those who did. Unlike previous research, which only focused on sexism by men towards women, these two forms of sexism were applicable to both men and women, by both men and women, and reinforced gender hierarchy and inequality among the sexes.²³

Hostile Sexism

The first type of sexism was, unsurprisingly, *hostile sexism*, which most readers would agree should be avoided. *Hostile sexism* endorses antipathy, resentment, and overtly hostile behavior towards individuals who cast off traditional gender stereotypes. This sexism perpetuates gender inequality as well as dangerous and even unlawful behaviors towards men and women. For example, men of definite marriageable age who choose not to get married or are unable to find a female spouse with whom they would like to spend their lives are perceived as rejecting a traditional gender role that men should marry and have children (Gen 1:28) because it is “not good for man to be alone” (Gen 2:18). Thus, they can be subjected to treatment such as social ostracism from other male groups, accusations of homosexuality regardless of whether they are or not, or overt exclusion from

20. Małgorzata Mikołajczak and Janina Pietrzak, “Ambivalent Sexism and Religion: Connected Through Values,” *Sex Roles* 70 (2014): 387.

21. Peter Glick and Susan T. Fiske, “An Ambivalent Alliance: Hostile and Benevolent Sexism as Complementary Justifications for Gender Inequity,” *American Psychologist* 56.2 (2001): 109-118.

22. Some readers not familiar with behavioral scientific research may find it strange that this section seems to refer to the work of primarily two academics. However, this is not the case. Ambivalence theory comprising of *hostile and benevolent sexism* has been explored in many hundreds of peer reviewed papers published in scholarly behavioral scientific journals and is currently a premiere theoretical model for sexism. The journal articles cited in this chapter concentrate on those written by Glick and Fiske because they developed the initial theoretical model and were the lead researchers of a number of papers written regarding this empirical research. Subsequent research has taken place, particularly by Fiske, who heads the Fiske Lab at Princeton University – a research lab which studies intergroup relations, social cognition, and social neuroscience. See <http://www.fiskelab.org>.

23. Peter Glick and Susan T. Fiske, “The Ambivalence Towards Men Inventory,” *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 23.3 (1999): 519-536; and idem, “The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70.3 (1996): 22-48.

certain professions or positions which give preference to males who are married.²⁴ If they pursue a non-gender stereotypical career, they can also be subject to social penalties, mockery, and social ostracism, even violence. Should they pursue a career which does not earn sufficient funds to wholly support a family, they can be treated with disdain by others, have limited or no influence among their male peers, and be overtly rejected by women regardless of their personal merit. Should they be homosexual, rejecting marriage to a woman altogether, they may be subjected to exclusion from societal groups, hostile discrimination, violent behavior, and in some societies, even death.

Hostile sexism also affects women in that those who reject the traditional gender role of making marriage and motherhood their sole career may be subject to discrimination and poor treatment, regardless of whether they submit to their husband's servant leadership. A woman who has a child out of wedlock can be treated badly by both men and women who endorse traditional gender roles because she has rejected a traditional (sometimes religious) mandate that sexual relationships and children should only exist within the context of marriage. Her child may also be subject to this hostility and labeled illegitimate, which is then justified by some because this derogative term is a consequence of his/her mother's rejecting the prescribed gender role of women having children within marriage.

Not very long ago, maternal mortality was very high, but medical advances have significantly decreased death as a result of childbirth. However, in a number of developing countries that do not have access to this medical care, becoming a mother can still be deadly. A woman who chooses not to marry or have children for this reason may be subjected to hostile sexism by those around her because a traditional gender role requires women to be married mothers. Thus, a woman is left no choice but to marry and risk death by having children. In addition, because of the biblical mandate "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children" (Gen 3:16), traditional religious communities that endorse this belief can discourage the provision of medical attention to women giving birth, which may result in complications and death for both mother and child.²⁵

A woman who chooses to pursue a career may also be subjected to a range of hostile behaviors in the workforce and in her community. She may be labeled as being a bad mother who puts her financial needs ahead of her children. She may be paid less than her male counterpart because it is perceived that she has a husband who can support her (or should have a husband to support her if she is unmarried, widowed, or divorced) and that her wages are merely pocket money

24. On the topic of selection criteria for the office of elders and deacons, the New Testament writer Paul makes it a requirement for the candidate to be both married to one wife and have children (1 Tim 3:2-5, 12). Interestingly, this passage is often used by those who oppose the ordination of women, as this list seems to suggest that females would not qualify for the job as they are "not married to one wife."

25. Kristof and WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, 93-108.

and not essential income that she and her family relies on.²⁶ If she questions this, her contribution can be downplayed, her position misclassified or mislabeled to justify lower wages, and she can be subjected to unfavorable treatment or even dismissal. She may experience bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination in the workplace, which is justified by the hostile belief that if she were at home where she belonged, this would not be happening. The extreme end of *hostile sexism* towards women is, of course, rape, sex trafficking of women, and domestic violence,²⁷ where the traditional gender role of male rulership and women's submission to men and their needs is exploited or used to punish women perceived as not endorsing a traditional gender role. In this case, it is justified by the underlying belief that she was, in some way, deserving of it.²⁸

Benevolent Sexism

The second type of sexism identified by Glick and Fiske is a more subtle, gentler sexism that often slips under the interpersonal radar and has been named

26. Merikay Silver's lawsuit against Pacific Press in the early 70s regarding equal pay for equal work between male and female workers serves as an example that this issue is not unknown to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At that time, the SDA Church followed the head-of-household rule, which paid a person a higher wage if he/she was supporting a family. In this case, Merikay, who was the sole breadwinner of her family, did not receive this extra pay as she was a woman and not a man. The last of the four lawsuits regarding this issue ended in December 1983, ten years after Silver brought the issue to the attention of the courts on January 31, 1973. Pacific Press settled their case involving Silver (April 1978), lost the other three cases, and was required to reimburse 140 female employees who were a part of a larger lawsuit. This summary of the case is based on "The Merikay Silver Case," <http://www.sdadefend.com/MINDEX-M/Silver.pdf>. For further reading, see: Merikay McLeo, *Betrayal: The Shattering Sex Discrimination Case of Silver Vs. Pacific Press Publishing Association* (Austin, TX: Mars Hill Publications, 1985) and Richard H. Utt, *Pacific Press Lawsuit: The Other Side of the Story* (Rialto, CA: The Author, 1988). Some may ask how far this denomination has come since this very public wage issue and if wage discrimination has morphed into a job description issue where certain positions are intended for women and are classified as mere secretarial positions while their day-to-day responsibilities are fairly similar to that of their "boss" who receives a significantly higher wage. The gender pay gap is also a problem in the larger society. In the United States, the wage of a woman working full time typically is 79% of the wage of a man. Although great progress has been made since 1979 when women earned only 59% of the wage of a man, there is still a long way to go. The District of Columbia has come the furthest in closing the gender pay gap by reaching the 90% mark, while the state of Louisiana has only reached the 65% mark. This information is sourced from a report entitled "The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap," <http://www.aauw.org/files/2015/09/The-Simple-Truth-Fall-2015.pdf>, published by the *American Association of University Women* (AAUW).

27. For more real stories relating to women who have experienced this type of *hostile sexism*, see Kristof and WuDunn, *Half the Sky*, 93-108. See also Jimmy Carter, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), who aptly wrote: "Some selected scriptures are interpreted, almost exclusively by powerful male leaders within the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and other faiths, to proclaim the lower status of women and girls. This claim that women are inferior before God spreads to the secular world to justify gross and sustained acts of discrimination and violence against them. This includes unpunished rape and other sexual abuse, infanticide of newborn girls and abortion of female fetuses, a worldwide trafficking in women and girls and so-called honor killings of innocent women who are raped, as well as the less violent but harmful practices of lower pay and fewer promotions for women and greater political advantages for men" (*A Call to Action*, 3-4).

28. Most of these examples were compiled from the qualitative responses of 142 Seventh-day Adventists who participated in a study investigating sociocultural attitudes of individuals within this religious organization. See Leanne M. Sigvartsen, *Religious Verbal Fluidity: What Nice Christian Folk Really Think...*, Religious Verbal Fluidity 1 (Berrien Springs, MI: ClergyEd.com, 2015), 28-49.

benevolent sexism.²⁹ Unlike *hostile sexism*, *benevolent sexism* is motivated by genuine feelings of affection and concern where individuals are judged favorably and receive favorable treatment because of their endorsement of traditional gender roles. These traditional gender roles are similar to those mentioned in the Eden Narrative after the fall (where Adam is the provider and protector of Eve, the subordinated child bearer, Gen 3:16-19). On the surface, this type of benevolence may seem innocent and something one should strive for—even a fulfillment of the “promised blessing” portrayed in view six of Davidson’s list of six views of man-woman relationships as described earlier in this chapter. However, a closer look at benevolence reveals that it can have some negative consequences for both sexes,³⁰ thus, questioning its place as a “promised blessing” or a divinely mandated ideal, rather than a consequence of sin.³¹

Benevolent sexism becomes problematic because it can place unreasonable expectations on individuals who may not be in a position to endorse such a traditional gender role. For example, a man working to support his stay-at-home wife who raises their children may seem the ideal, but what if his wage is insufficient

29. Glick and Fiske, “The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory,” 22-48.

30. This is a complex issue, thus, for the purpose of this chapter we found it necessary to simplify the discussion so it would be easier for the general reader to comprehend. For a more detailed discussion/description of the theory of *ambivalent sexism*, see Glick and Fiske, “An Ambivalent Alliance,” 109-118.

31. The recently translated manifesto on women by the Al-Khanssaa Brigade, the all women police/religious enforcement unit of the ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), better known as IS (Islamic State), provides a fascinating insight into their ideology. The main goal of the *Islamic State* is to reinstitute the Caliphate and Sharia law, idealizing the time and culture of Prophet Mohamed. This document idealizes traditional gender roles, noting that women’s main responsibility is the home, marriage, and childbearing: “The greatness of her position, the purpose of her existence is the Divine duty of motherhood. Truly, greatness is bestowed upon her, and it is God’s will that her children honor her. The Righteous were distinguished from the others, ‘And [made me] dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me a wretched tyrant’ (Quran 19:32), and the Prophetic ruling was ‘Paradise is under the mother’s feet’, narrated by Ibn Majah, authenticated by al-Albani” (page 18). This manifesto also outlines the failure of the western model of women – feminism (pages 19-23), the ideal model for Muslim women (pages 24-26), and concludes with several case studies (pages 27-40). For the full text, see www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/women-of-the-islamic-state3.pdf. This idealized view is, however, a far cry from the many reported cases of abuse of women in the territory under the rule of *Islamic State*, which, interestingly, is perpetrated by women committed to the cause. See e.g., www.clarionproject.org/analysis/isis-points-sharia-law-justify-slavery-women#; www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2014/03/isis-enforces-islamic-law-raqa-syria.html; fortune.com/2015/05/05/isis-women-recruiting/. Although most Evangelical Christians are horrified by the ideology and methods of *Islamic States*, many conservative Evangelical Christians would agree that women should stay in the home and are critical to the many achievements of modern feminism, as noted by Samuel Koranteng-Pipim: “Though many are not aware of it, the most powerful ideology driving the campaign for women’s ordination is feminism. This ideology is very seductive because it is rooted in the pervasive thinking of egalitarianism, which holds that full equality between men and women can be achieved by eliminating gender role distinctions in the home and in the church” (www.adventistsaffirm.org/article/141/women-s-ordination-faqs/4-feminism-s-new-light-on-galatians-3-28). The idealization and promotion of traditional gender roles also appear in the official exposition of the 28 Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventism, which gives the following statement on Fundamental 23, Marriage and the Family: “Motherhood is the closest thing on earth to being in partnership with God...God created the mother with the ability to carry the child within her own body, to suckle the child, and to nurture and love it. Except for the extenuating circumstances of severe financial burdens or being a single parent, if she will accept it, a mother has the unique privilege of remaining with her children all day; she can enjoy working with the Creator in shaping their characters for eternity” (*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 340). The promotion of traditional gender roles is also a part of the ministry of the *Focus on the Family*; See: www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/gods-design-for-marriage.

to cover the cost of their legitimate expenses? He must sacrifice his own personal wellbeing by working more, or take a high-paying position he may not enjoy, or that could even be dangerous. In pre-industrialized societies, a husband was often able to work from home, on the farm, or within a short walking distance, thus being able to be involved in the family or having children work alongside him. However, due to industrialization, the husband often has to remove himself from the family for most of the day (or months at a time in military or offshore mining positions), returning at night exhausted to a group of people who have bonded in his absence.³² This may result in a male feeling like a stranger in his own home, where the children prefer and feel closer to their mother. It can also produce tension with his wife, who may have an expectation that now that he is home, it is his turn to care for the children, allowing her to have a break from them, regardless of whether he is exhausted (or suffering post-traumatic stress in the case of some military families).

A man may have to pursue a career which allows him to make more money, even though he would have preferred or held significant talent in a career choice that had less earning capacity. A risky venture such as starting a small business may also be less of an option for him too. He may have to turn a blind eye to behaviors or practices in his workplace that he finds morally questionable or illegal simply because he needs his income.

His earning potential, rather than his merit as a person, may become a large factor in what type of woman he is able to attract and how he will be treated by other males. Those associated with his wife may judge him unfavorably if his income does not meet their expectations. If he should lose his income, this highly vulnerable system collapses as there is no backup income for the family to rely on until another income can be secured, placing unnecessary stress on a family unit. In times gone by when employment opportunities were more plentiful, this may not have been a problem, as another position would be readily available. However, increased competition for positions can make long-term unemployment a reality in the current age. He may even have to take a significant pay cut in order to secure another job. A man who fails to find a position quickly or has to accept lower wages may be perceived as somehow lacking, rather than a victim of global economic forces.

Conversely, *benevolent sexism* can affect women too, even though there are significant rewards for women who endorse a traditional gender role. She will not be required to earn an income or pursue a difficult career path in a competitive job market, but she is wholly dependent on her husband's being able to do this, which, as mentioned previously, can be problematic. In addition, after working at great personal and emotional cost to earn a living, the expectation that a man is going to hand over his entire income to a woman to do with as she sees fit or include her in financial decision-making may not be consistent with reality in many families. Thus, income a woman has access to will be largely determined by her husband,

32. For further reading regarding the social impact of the industrial revolution, see Richard D. Fitzgerald, "The Social Impact of the Industrial Revolution," in *Science and Its Times: Understanding the Social Significance of Scientific Discovery*, eds. Josh Lauer and Neil Schlager (Detroit: Gale, 2000), 4:376-381.

and she will also have to defer to his final decision-making on all matters if she is to endorse a traditional gender role and continue to receive the financial benefits of it.

Benevolent sexism that idealizes the joy of motherhood and believes all women are innate mothers creates a very difficult environment for women who cannot have children or do not want to because of genetic predispositions. *Benevolent sexism* by nature creates an environment where women without children are automatically perceived as not endorsing this gender role and may be treated as though they are deliberately rejecting it, thus subjecting them to *hostile sexism*. If they do choose to pursue a career, they may be subjected to *hostile sexism*, similar to that outlined in the previous section, as they are again perceived as rejecting the stereotypical traditional female gender role of mother and homemaker. Women who suffer from postnatal depression may also be subject to hostility and lack of sympathy from others who believe motherhood is innate to all women. Thus, a woman may hide her depression or allow it to go untreated, resulting in significant stress to herself, her husband, and child/children.

As a homemaker, a woman may be required to meet certain expectations such as keeping the house clean, serving dinner at a particular time, fulfilling her husband sexually in spite of illness, work overload, or unexpected demands of children. Failure to do this is questioned by her husband and the all too familiar argument over whether her contribution is sufficient may manifest itself. In addition, a man who has worked all day and comes home to find his wife sitting on the couch reading a book or watching television because she has completed her tasks for the day may view her as lazy or that her contribution is not equal to his own, which may result in resentment toward her.

Benevolent sexism may also have negative consequences among women because when women are not encouraged to seek their own income or success, but rather, seek it through aligning themselves with a male who will do this for them, they can become competitive with other females as they seek to secure the scarce males who will provide significant income and high social status.³³ When motherhood becomes the measure of the success and worth of a woman, achievement and perceived achievement of their children may become evidence of a wom-

33. The theme of barrenness plays an important role in the Old Testament. This theme demonstrates the importance of the role of childbearing and how it related to the status a woman in, especially, a polygamous setting within Old Testament society. The theme is first introduced in Genesis 11:30, when the narrator reveals that Sarah is barren, a crucial element to keep in mind in order to fully appreciate the Abraham narrative. The association of childbearing and status becomes a central element in the relationship between Sarah and Hagar, her surrogate, who treated Sarah with contempt upon realizing that she had become pregnant with Abraham (Gen 16:4-6). Competitiveness among subordinated women reveals itself with Leah and Rachel, who even used surrogates Zilpah and Bilhah (Gen 29-35) in their battle to win favor in their husband's eyes and secure status within the family and also with Hannah who was barren and Peninnah who had several sons and daughters (1 Sam 1-2); Peninnah provoked her (1 Sam 1:6-7), again suggesting not only contempt and competition, but also that ridicule from peers was strongly associated with being childless. Even women who were still the favorite wife of their husband (e.g., Rachel and Hannah) had a strong desire to have a child of their own. Curiously, when a barren woman mentioned in the biblical text does eventually have a child, this child often becomes the next important character in portions of the biblical narrative (Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Sampson, Samuel, John the Baptist).

an's success. Thus, they may push their children into activities³⁴ or exaggerate their children's abilities, placing enormous pressure on them to perform. This may even result in a "soccer mom" mentality, where humiliation and questioning adults who hold a contrary view of their children's abilities arises. They may also minimize the accomplishments of other children to reinforce their own children's performance and success. Women who have children with disabilities are at a distinct disadvantage and may be erroneously perceived as bad mothers, particularly if their children's disability is associated with challenging behaviors.³⁵

Benevolent Sexism in Religious Groups

Benevolent and *hostile sexism* do not exist independently. *Benevolent sexism* rewards those who adhere to these traditional gender roles and reinforces gender hierarchy and inequality while utilizing hostile sexism to punish those who cast off traditional gender roles. The original researchers, Glick and Susan Fiske, named the theoretical model describing the relationship between *hostile* and *benevolent sexism* the "*ambivalent sexism*" theory because of the seemingly polar opposite motivations of these two complimentary sexism.³⁶ Over the past two decades, a wealth of research has been undertaken investigating *benevolent* and *hostile sexism* in both men and women with regard to a range of issues.

34. Mothers promoting, positioning, or pushing their sons is also a biblical narrative element. Rebekah was the main character in the plot of stealing the birthright blessing from her older son Esau for her favorite younger son Jacob (Gen 27:1-28:5). According to the prophecy mentioned earlier in the narrative (Gen 25:23), her older son (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). It could be argued that she loved Jacob above Esau not only because he stayed home among the tents and his temperament (Gen 25:27-28), but also due to the prophecy that he would become the founder of the greater nation (Gen 25:23). It was Rebekah who discovered Isaac's plan to bless Esau (Gen 27:5), who made the plan of deception (Gen 27:6-13), who prepared the needed food (Gen 27:14), who dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes (Gen 27:15), who covered parts of Jacob in goatskin (Gen 27:16), and who sent Jacob to complete the plan (Gen 27:17-29). After this act, Rebekah also orchestrated Jacob's escape (Gen 27:42-46) following the death threat voiced by her older son Esau (Gen 27:41).

Bathsheba excelled in harem politics in King David's court. Rather than an innocent victim, it would seem she was successfully able to trade her Hittite husband for King David and became a part of his harem. While in the harem, she was able to successfully position her son Solomon, who was not in direct line, by using her skills to manipulate King David. With the help of Prophet Nathan (1 Kings 1:11-40), she was able to place her son on the throne of Israel, becoming the reigning monarch's mother, and sitting on a throne on the right side of King Solomon (1 Kings 2:19). For further reading, see Beverly W. Cushman, "The Politics of the Royal Harem and the Case of Bat-Sheba," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30.3 (2006): 327-343.

The mother of Zebedee's sons (Matt 20:20-28) was also involved in promoting and positioning her sons. She approached Jesus and asked him to promise her that her two sons, James and John, would be seated on his right and left in his kingdom, the two most honorable and exalted positions. D. A. Carson notes "what the sons of Zebedee want and their mother asks for is that they might share in the authority and preeminence of Jesus Messiah when his kingdom is fully consummated" ("Matthew," in *Expositor's Bible Commentary* 8, 1st ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984], 431). Jesus responded that she did not know what she was asking and added that it was not his decision to make, as it would be up to his Father. The narrative reveals that the other ten disciples became indignant by this request and Jesus needed to calm down the situation.

35. Most of these examples from this and the preceding sections were compiled from the qualitative responses of 142 Seventh-day Adventists who participated in a study investigating sociocultural attitudes of individuals within this religious organization; see Sigvartsen, *Religious Verbal Fluidity*, 28-49.

36. Glick and Fiske, "An Ambivalent Alliance," 109-118.

Very few studies, however, have investigated the predictability of *benevolent* and *hostile sexism* within a religious context and how religiosity can impact measures of *benevolent* and *hostile sexism*. Three studies, two conducted on Christian faiths in the United States³⁷ and one on Catholics in Spain,³⁸ all found that religiosity was able to predict *benevolent sexism* but was unable to predict *hostile* attitudes. Put simply, these studies show that a person's religiosity is not a good indicator of the presence of *hostile sexism*. This does not imply that religious individuals cannot be *hostile sexists*. Further study is required to identify what other factors may be influencing *hostile* sexist attitudes in a religious person. A fourth study conducted on Catholics in Poland³⁹ reached the same conclusions regarding hostile attitudes. However, religiosity was only a predictor of *benevolent sexism* among the female participants. These researchers suggested that cultural influences embedded within religious practice, rather than religious belief, may have been an extenuating factor in this study with a relatively small participant pool (n = 189). A similar study undertaken on Turkish Muslim students,⁴⁰ however, identified a positive relationship between *benevolent sexism* and religiosity for both men and women. However, unlike its Christian counterpart, this study identified a positive relationship between religiosity and *hostile sexism* in men only. In other words, the presence of religiosity in Turkish Muslim men was an indication of the likelihood of *hostile* sexist attitudes. This difference may be indicative of a culture that strongly endorses the traditional hierarchy and authority of men.

A recent study undertaken on a Jewish population in Israel identified again that religion predicted benevolence; however, there was a negative association between religiosity and hostile attitudes, particularly among men. Put simply, as religiosity increased, the likelihood of expressing *hostile sexism* towards both men and women actually decreased. The author, Ruth Gaunt, suggested that in "the Jewish tradition, derogatory speech about other people is strictly forbidden . . . where slander in all its forms is subjected to the strongest moral disapproval."⁴¹

A major study of over 600 participants investigating the theory of ambivalence with regard to Seventh-day Adventists in Australia and New Zealand who identify as Protestant Christians, but unlike other mainstream Christian faiths observe a Saturday Sabbath much like the Jewish faith, is currently being concluded and results were not available at the time of publication.⁴² Seventh-day Adventism is an interesting case study not only because of its Sabbath observance, but also

37. S. M. Burn and J. Busso, "Ambivalent Sexism, Scriptural Liberalism and Religiosity," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 29 (2005): 412-418; E. L. Maltby, et al., "Religion and Sexism: The Moderating Role of Participant Gender," *Sex Roles* 62 (2010): 615-622.

38. Peter Glick, M. Lameiras, and Y. R. Castro, "Education and Catholic Religiosity as Predictors of Hostile and Benevolent Sexism Toward Women and Men," *Sex Roles* 47 (2002): 433-442.

39. Mikołajczak and Pietrzak, "Ambivalent Sexism and Religion: Connected Through Values," *Sex Roles* 70 (2014): 387-399.

40. N. Tasdemir and N. Sakalli-Ugurlu, "The Relationships Between Ambivalent Sexism and Religiosity Among Turkish University Students," *Sex Roles* 62 (2010): 420-426.

41. Ruth Gaunt, "'Blessed Is He Who Has Not Made Me a Woman': Ambivalent Sexism and Jewish Religiosity," *Sex Roles* 67 (2012): 477-487

42. Leanne M. Sigvartsen, "Sex and Sensibility: Hostile, Benevolent and Ambivalent Sexism of Seventh-day Adventists Living in Australia and New Zealand," (Ph.D. diss., pending).

because it is one of the few worldwide Christian religions that was largely shaped and influenced by a cofounding female church leader, Ellen G. White. It is also currently debating whether to ordain female clergy in a manner equal to their male counterparts. It is interesting to note that the countries previously investigated all have a dominant religion or a historically dominant religion, and it was that specific religion which was explored in the context of the corresponding study. The Australian and New Zealand study may prove interesting as Australia is considered a highly secularized, post-colonial country that does not have a dominant historical religion. With approximately 70,000 members,⁴³ Seventh-day Adventism in this region is also far from being a major religion. It would seem, from the findings mentioned above, that *benevolent sexism* does, for the time being, exist within religious organizations, but the full extent of how it interacts with hostility is yet to be determined.

Ambivalent Sexism and Lindy Chamberlain

Benevolence and its association with *hostile sexism* produces a conundrum for religious populations who endorse a traditional gender role for women (particularly populations where women are subordinated to males either by mandate or by choice) as a theological ideal. While this type of attitude may not be perceived as too damaging within the context of religion and a religious community, the endorsement of such roles for women perpetuates it in the greater society, resulting in unexpected consequences that religious organizations could never have predicted.

In 1980, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia came under intense national and international attention when Lindy Chamberlain (now known as Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton), the then wife of a Seventh-day Adventist minister, was accused and charged with murdering her infant daughter.⁴⁴ An enormous amount of media attention was given to the story and millions of people followed the case as it unfolded over subsequent years, particularly when Lindy Chamberlain was released from prison in 1986 when new evidence was provided to the court. The case was, understandably, a public relations crisis for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the question was asked repeatedly why the case drew so much public attention for so long and if this sort of situation could be repeated in the future,⁴⁵ particularly to other individuals in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The findings of a study by G. T. Viki, K. Massey, and B. Masser,⁴⁶ which investigated the part *ambivalent sexism* may play regarding women who are accused of committing counter-stereotypical crimes, may shed some light on why

43. For membership data relating to the South Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, see www.adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=D_SPD.

44. K. Hansen, "The Chamberlain Case: A Tragedy for Justice," *Spectrum* 17.5 (May 1987): 55-56; L. Tarling, "Who Killed Azaria? Adventists on Trial in Australia," *Spectrum* 15.3 (March 1984): 42-59.

45. J. Craik, "The Azaria Chamberlain Case and Questions of Infanticide," *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies* 4.2 (1987): 123-150; D. Johnson, "From Fairy to Witch: Imagery and Myth in the Azaria Case," *Australian Journal of Cultural Studies* 2.2 (1984): 90-107.

46. G. T. Viki, K. Massey, and B. Masser, "When Chivalry Backfires: Benevolent Sexism and Attitudes Toward Myra Hindley," *Legal and Criminological Psychology* 10.1 (2005): 109-121.

the Chamberlain case proved to be so popular with the public and media and may provide evidence of a harsher consequence of seemingly benign *benevolent sexism*. Previous research had identified that women accused of crimes were often not dealt with as harshly as men accused of a similar crime. For example, when a man murdered his wife, there was a public outcry; however, when a woman murdered her husband, it was generally felt that he, in some way, deserved it. It was identified that benevolent chivalry played a large part in this phenomenon, that there was a benevolent attitude towards women that suggested they were not a serious threat, were motivated to commit the crime because of psychological distress, and were not deserving of harsh punishment. Thus, female crimes are less likely to rate a mention in local news media bulletins and are often underrepresented in published crime statistics.⁴⁷

There is, however, an exception to this, and that is when a woman commits a counter-stereotypical crime—or a crime that defies what we would traditionally believe a woman capable of committing. A perfect example of a counter-stereotypical crime is a woman killing a child, as traditional stereotypes consider women innate mothers who care for and nurture all children. However, benevolence still influences this perception, particularly if she is deemed to have had a good reason for it, such as being psychologically unwell. However, if she is of sound mental health, the punishment and public attention given to this crime is profoundly harsher and more public than to a male offender for the same or comparable crimes.⁴⁸

Viki, Massey, and Masser found that negative public perceptions of females accused of counter-stereotypical crimes were strongly linked with attitudes of *benevolent sexism*.⁴⁹ Thus, when a society endorses *benevolent sexism* and advocates that women are idealized and special nurturers of children, incapable of harming them, this society (or church) runs the risk of having individuals accused of crimes that deviate from this gender role come under unrelenting, hostile public attention.⁵⁰

Given this finding, it is perhaps understandable why Lindy Chamberlain and her legal battle became such a public issue for so many years. Not only was she accused of an extreme counter-stereotypical crime like the murder of not just a child, but her own biological infant child, she was also the married wife of a clergyman at the time, had two other children, was not a victim of domestic violence, and was considered psychologically sound at the time of the alleged crime.

This finding is thought provoking, and the authors believe that more investigation into the influence *benevolent sexism* has on the legal and public

47. C. A. Sanderson, A. S. Xanna, and J. M. Darley, "Making the Punishment Fit the Crime and the Criminal: Attributions of Dangerousness as a Mediator of Liability," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 30 (2000): 1137-1159.

48. Viki, Massey, and Masser, "When Chivalry Backfires," 109-121.

49. Viki, Massey, and Masser, "When Chivalry Backfires," 109-121.

50. This study investigated benevolent attitudes using the case of Myra Hindley to illustrate counter-stereotypical crimes. Hindley was charged for murdering two children (not her own) and was an accomplice in a third murder. She was psychologically well at the time of her crimes. She spent 36 years in prison and was never considered for parole due to strong public opposition to her release. She died in prison.

treatment of women who are accused of counter-stereotypical crimes is certainly warranted. It provides valuable insight into how public opinion is influenced by *benevolent sexism* and the ramifications for other women accused of similar crimes, regardless of whether they committed them or not. This research also suggests that the continued endorsement of *benevolent sexism* by church organizations like the Seventh-day Adventist Church, particularly with regard to women being innate mothers, could perpetuate this phenomenon in society, a phenomenon that potentially puts members like Lindy Chamberlain at risk and brings unwanted negative public attention to a church organization. Mikołajczak and Pietrzak made a very salient observation when noting that most perpetrators and targets of *benevolent sexism* are unaware of its negative consequences due to “their indirect influence,” adding that “if churches and other trusted and powerful social institutions are unwittingly fostering discrimination...we can hardly expect imminent societal change.” They concluded “that one indirect effect of promoting tradition, stability, and security is the perpetuation of an unequal status quo.”⁵¹

Conclusion

The first half of this chapter briefly considered the origin of sexism as it appears in the creation account, outlining seven views regarding God’s words recorded in Genesis 3:16. The first three views (the pre-fall hierarchical views) find no exegetical support in the two creation stories which, instead, support an egalitarian creation order. Thus, the crucial issue is as follows: Should the subjugation of women be considered a natural consequence of sin and, as such, that an egalitarian pre-fall marital relationship should be considered the gold standard, or is this subjugation a result of God’s prescriptive punishment on all women and the antidote which will help reintroduce harmony and unity in a post-fallen world? The second half of this chapter considered empirical behavioral research relating to the subordination of women to introduce additional factors to take into consideration when determining which view may both be the most plausible and contextually consistent with God’s character.

In light of the discussion about the two forms of *sexism*, *hostile* and *benevolent*, it becomes clear that male headship and an associated hierarchical view (voluntary or involuntary), although, on the surface, it may seem good, can often have some serious consequences both within a marriage and within a faith group or a larger society. Thus, instead of viewing God’s statement “And he will rule over you” (Gen 3:16) as a God-given ideal and blessing in a post-fallen world—endorsing and perpetuating a relationship that seems to be caused by sin and is a direct result of sin—it may be better to view this statement as predictive (view 4), revealing that male headship and women’s submission is an additional new reality caused by sin. The creation narrative provides the answer to why the world is the way it is: sin causes death (Gen 2:16-17; 3:2-3 || Gen 3:19, 22); sin causes shame of being naked (Gen 2:25 || Gen 3:7, 10); sin causes disharmonious relationships—

51. Mikołajczak and Pietrzak, “Ambivalent Sexism and Religion: Connected Through Values,” 396.

between humans and God (Gen 3:8-10) and in human relationships (Gen 2:25 || Gen 3:7, 12-13); sin causes pain in childbearing (Gen 3:16a); sin causes tension between good and evil (Gen 3:15); sin causes hardship in survival (Gen 2:16; 3:2 || Gen 3:17-19); sin causes thorns and thistles to grow. As such, the pre-fall egalitarian relationship between the sexes should be considered the creation ideal which a faith community should strive towards and replicate in their marital relationships. It can effectively close the door to “sinful” adverse behaviors like the abuse and exploitation of women—again, something one would expect a faith community to condemn.