Dear Angel,

Please allow me to address your reading of my posted TOSC paper as it relates to headship in the Trinity and headship in Genesis 1-3. I have always valued your scholarship; however your attempt to undermine the concept of headship both in the Trinity and also in the relationship of Adam and Eve at creation lacks credibility for the reasons summarized below.

**Headship and the Godhead**

My major concern is that you rely extensively on philosophical and *ad hominem* arguments (appealing to emotion) especially as it relates to the Trinity. Functional differentiation of roles within the Trinity is clearly established from Scripture and the writings of Ellen G. White. Although the concept of ontological equality (equality of being) and *eternal* functional submission within the Godhead has been a common doctrine within the Christian church for centuries and has been embraced by such
notable theologians and historians as Louis Berkhof, Augustus Hopkins Strong, Charles Hodge, Philip Schaff, J. N. D. Kelley, and Geoffrey Bromiley, the concept of eternal submission of the Son to the Father is a non-issue with respect to the principle of authority and submission as observed from the beginning of creation by the first created beings.

From the viewpoint of the first created beings, the submissive role of the Son appeared to be inherent in the nature of the Son. To the angelic host the submission of the Son of God to the Father appeared to place the Son on a level perhaps only a little higher than themselves. If we accept the inspired nature of the writings of Ellen G. White, the angelic host correctly perceived the submission of the Son, but the ontological equality of the Son with the Father was unclear to them.

There had been no change in the position or authority of Christ. Lucifer’s envy and misrepresentation. . . made necessary a statement of the true position of the Son of God; but this had been the same from the beginning (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 38).

The Father then made known that it was ordained by himself that Christ, his Son, should be equal with himself. . . The word of the Son was to be obeyed as readily as the word of the Father. His Son he had invested with authority to command the heavenly host. . . endowing Him with such unlimited power and command. They rebelled against the authority of the Son (Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, pp. 17, 18).

Similar to the evidence above but based on Proverbs 8, Davidson concludes that at some point in eternity past, the Son was inaugurated/installed (nasak) in His role as the Son, as the Word, and as the Mediator between God and the created universe. (Richard M. Davidson, “Proverbs 8: A Christocentric Interpretation,” [Paper available from the author]. See also Davidson, “Proverbs 8 and the Place of Christ in the Trinity,” Journal of the Adventist Theological Society 17, no. 1 [Spring 2006]: 33–54.) Thus from the
viewpoint of created angels, the Son functioned as Mediator between the angels and the Father—a state of submission to the Father which appeared to them to be inherent in the Son’s being.

This misunderstanding necessitated a clear statement from the Father regarding the Son’s inherent equality with the Father. The obvious, non-inherent, functional role differentiation between the Father and the Son required no explanation. It is certainly conceivable, based on Davidson’s treatment of Proverbs 8, that prior to the inauguration of the Son as Mediator and the Word, no functional role differentiation existed among the Godhead. This is in fact Davidson’s basic argument derived from Proverbs 8—namely, that the condescension of the Son to the Father began with the Son’s inauguration as Mediator between God and the created universe prior to the beginning of all creation and the appearance of the first created being.

Since we have no inspired evidence concerning the relation of the Father and the Son prior to the creation of the universe and the appearance of the first created beings, all philosophical speculation such as you wish to engage in is meaningless. In fact your rejection of functional differentiation within the Trinity prior to and following the incarnation, except for economic submission during the incarnation, is a departure from biblical truth. From what we can ascertain from Scripture and the writings of Ellen G. White, it is clear that the Son functioned in a subordinate role to the Father as Commander of the heavenly host prior to the incarnation. Moreover, the Father had bestowed upon His Son exalted honors that Satan coveted—a further indication of the subordinate role of the Son in prior to the incarnation.

He laid aside his kingly crown, and yielded up his high position as commander of the angels, who loved to do his bidding (Review and Herald, January 7, 1904, para. 7).
Satan, who was once an honored angel in heaven, had been ambitious for the more exalted honors which God had bestowed upon His Son (*Confrontation*, p. 9).

The Son of God, at least since the creation of the first intelligent beings, functioned in the submissive (condescending) role as Commander of the angels, and the Son will continue to be subject to the Father in eternity future (1 Corinthians 15:28). Ontological equality (equality of being) and functional submission therefore constitutes the image of God from the standpoint of the created universe and in the view of the first created beings.

In an effort to deflect any implication of headship in Genesis 1, you state (p. 13) that “The decision to save the human race was an inter-Trinitarian one in which the three persons of the Godhead were involved until they together could say, ‘Let us save the human race.’ This is what they, as One, decided to do for us.” It would be better to take the Bible simply as it reads rather than imposing on Scripture your ideas. The declaration in Genesis 1 “Let *Us* make man in our image” reflects differentiation in the Godhead, “Us.” It is evident that the declaration by one member of the Trinity, “Let Us make man in our image,” suggests that the one speaking is giving permission to the other members to commence the creation of mankind. The one in authority gives the command, “Let Us.”

Ellen White confirms this conclusion when she states that “*They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God said to His Son, ‘Let us make man in our image’*” (*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 25, emphasis added). Thus, in addition to equality of being in the Trinity, we also see evidence for authority/submission roles with the Godhead. Consequently, if male and female are made in the image of God, we can be certain they would reflect the authority and submission roles operative within the Godhead.
Arguing about the eternal nature of the Trinity is fruitless, since the nature of the infinite God is beyond our comprehension and forever will be. We simply take our stand on Scripture and evidence from the writings of Ellen G. White that, at a minimum, the Son assumed a role of willing submission to the Father at some point in eternity past, prior to the creation of the universe and the appearance of the first created beings, and the Son will continue in that functional role of submission into the indefinite eternity future (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Pre-Fall Headship and Adam

Your assertion that support for the pre-Fall headship of Adam is dependent on the influence of evangelical scholars (p. 17) is simply not true. To the contrary, we have demonstrated the pre-Fall headship of Adam from the internal evidence of Genesis 1-3 alone (the 26 points of my January 2014 TOSC paper) with additional support from the writings of Ellen G. White.

It is a curious charge in view of the fact that advocates’ arguments for the ordination of women are almost always supported by citations from evangelical feminist authors. Significantly, Davidson’s July 2013 TOSC paper is a prime example where he cites evangelical feminist scholars and others resulting in a total of 326 endnotes. The assertion that it is always necessary for complementarians to use 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy 2 to derive the pre-Fall headship of Adam in Genesis 2-3 is a spurious argument. In fact, historical-critical and feminist scholar Rosemary Radford Reuther found it necessary to abandon a high view of Scripture because she clearly identified the principle of headship and submission as being built into the Genesis 2 record, not Genesis 3.

Even in the original, unfallen creation, women would have been subordinate and under the domination of man. (Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology,}

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Male-female hierarchy was not just a product of sin, it was a part of the natural order created by God. (Ibid., 97.)

The record in Genesis 2-3 is self-interpreting with respect to the pre-Fall headship of Adam. Despite your *ad hominem* arguments to the contrary, the twenty-six points of identification within Genesis 2-3 of the pre-Fall headship of Adam, which we previously delineated, speak for themselves---they need no defense. The apostle Paul saw it; Rosemary Radford Reuther saw it (and despised it); and others have seen the pre-Fall headship of Adam in the record of Genesis 2-3. Three obvious indications of Adam’s headship should supply sufficient evidence to even the casual reader.

For example, though Eve sinned first, they both become naked only after Adam sins (3:7). God apprehends, interrogates, and indicts Adam first, not Eve (3:9-11). God holds Adam accountable for heeding the voice of his wife (3:17). Thus Paul concludes from the record of Genesis 2-3 that because the woman came from man, who was created first (1 Corinthians 11:8; 1 Timothy 2:13), and the woman was created for man as a helper (1 Corinthians 11:9), therefore man is head of the woman (11:3).

Furthermore, the record of Genesis 2-3 enables Paul to conclude that death entered the human race by Adam’s sin, not Eve’s (Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22)---confirming the headship responsibility of Adam rather than of Eve, even though she sinned first. You refuse to allow Scripture to interpret itself to the extent that Paul’s interpretative statements of Genesis 2 and 3 are off-limits. You avoid addressing the scriptural evidence and instead employ philosophical and *ad hominem* arguments, which divert attention away from the Bible’s clear teaching on this point.

You cite Ellen White as providing evidence that God instructed both Adam and Eve how to tend the Garden and also warned both of them regarding the Forbidden Tree (p. 22). We do not deny that God spoke to both of them regarding these issues. This, however, does not negate the scriptural evidence that God put the man in the
Garden to tend and keep it prior to the creation of Eve (Genesis 2:15), and that God spoke to Adam first regarding the Forbidden Tree (2:16, 17). Thus Scripture supports the understanding that Adam was given priority of responsibility as related to Eve, which conveyed the role of headship. A summary of pre-Fall headship evidence from Ellen G. White may be helpful here.

1. Adam was to stand at the head of the earthly family (Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 236).
2. Adam [was] the monarch of the world (Signs of the Times, April 29, 1875).
3. Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator (The Desire of Ages, p. 129).
4. Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 48).
5. Adam was crowned king in Eden (Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1082).
6. [God] made Adam the rightful sovereign over all the works of His hands (Ibid.).
8. Adam was lord in his beautiful domain (Fundamentals of Education, p. 38).

You comment on 1 Corinthians 11:8, 9 (the woman was created from man and for the man) and conclude, through complicated and perplexing reasoning based on Greek grammar and analogy with Mark 2:27, that the phrases “from Adam/for Adam” emphasize the equality of the two within gender differentiation and not the subjection of the one to the other (27-29). Paul, on the other hand, uses his assertions in 1 Corinthians 11:8, 9 to support the headship of the man over the woman. This is a clear example of where you abandon the plain reading of the text and spiritualize the text so
that the text no longer means what the literal reading brings out. We are faced with two choices: accept the plain reading of the text and Paul’s teaching based on Genesis, or accept your strained interpretation.

In an effort to refute the idea that the naming of the woman by Adam in Genesis 2 implies headship, you conclude your argument by stating that God brought the animals to Adam for naming; but then amazingly you assert that “[T]his explicit divine intention is absent in 2:23—it is not said that God brought Eve to Adam to name her” (30). However, your assertion is explicitly contradicted by the Genesis account which states that “He brought her to the man. And Adam said: . . . ‘she shall be called woman’” (2:22, 23). Your assertion is patently not biblical and ignores the plain reading of the text.

You claim that both Adam and Eve were monarchs and kings over the world. You state “In Genesis the role of ruler or monarch over the world was given to both Adam and Eve. Why would she [White] limit it to Adam? The answer: She [White] does not limit it to Adam. Both were monarchs in Eden. She is very clear about this: ‘While they remained true to God, Adam and his companion were to bear rule over the earth’” (p. 33). Your misapplication of Ellen White writings regarding “monarch of the world” is unacceptable.

Ellen White never states that Eve was a monarch or king. The very word “monarch” means “sole ruler.” It is impossible for someone to be a monarch and have a co-ruler. Your basic supporting argument is that they were both “to bear rule over the earth” and thus they must be co-rulers. It is true that “Adam and his companion were to bear rule over the earth” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 50). But this does not contradict the thrust of all her other statements concerning the relationship of Adam to his helper. The passage does not say, “Adam and his companion were to bear co-rulership over the earth,” since it is not detailing the relationship of Adam to his companion, but their
relationship to the earth and other creatures God had made. Adam’s “companion” was his “helper” (see Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 46). At his creation Adam was made “ruler over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him” (Ibid., p. 59).

With Eve as Adam’s “helper” (companion), they both were to “tend and keep” the Garden. But primary responsibility was given to Adam. Eve was to bear rule over the earth with him. Eve may well have functioned as “queen” of the Garden home, being second in authority to Adam, but this does not mean she was a “co-ruler” in the sense of being appointed co-monarch, co-sovereign (no such designations are possible), vice-gerent, etc.

You assert that a “pre-fall headship was unnecessary in the garden of Eden” (p. 26) and to support your claim you cite on Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 58, 59 where, after the Fall, it is stated that Eve “was now placed in subjection to her husband.” The statement of Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 58, 59 is within the context of a pre-Fall harmonious relationship and restoring that harmonious relationship after the Fall. Prior to the Fall there existed a natural and harmonious headship/submission relationship of the man and the woman. Now after the Fall, the woman was placed in subjection to her husband by divine decree.

The harmonious headship/submission relationship of the man and the woman could only be restored through divine decree. In the context of the full statement that “harmony [could be] preserved only by submission” and that Eve was “placed in subjection to her husband,” the author distinguishes between pre-fall harmony and the necessary means for preserving harmony in a post-Fall condition. Pre-fall harmony was natural with the principle of headship/submission as part of the natural creation order, as documented by the 26 points of pre-Fall headship in Genesis 1-3 in my paper. But upon Adam’s relinquishing of his headship role to Eve, harmony in a post-Fall
condition now could be preserved only by divinely mandated headship/submission (unnatural in the initial, inherent post-fall condition) on the part of the one or the other.

It was necessary for God to spell out a “law for the family,” since submission was no longer natural anymore. Therefore God said, "Thy desire shall be for [against] thy husband, and he shall rule over you.” This is analogous to the necessity of God spelling out the existence of a law in heaven after Lucifer rebelled and it came to the unfallen angels as something unthought of, because they naturally obeyed the law. You fail to follow your own emphasis on relying on the internal context of the passage to arrive at a correct interpretation. In this case, the context of pre-Fall harmony with maintaining post-Fall harmony is all important in elucidating the pre-Fall headship of Adam.

Finally you argue about points you want to critique, but you avoid the main arguments of headship both within the Trinity from the beginning of creation, which will continue into the indefinite future according to 1 Corinthians 15:28, and also within the pre-Fall headship of Adam, which is reinforced in Genesis 3.

Summary

• The Son of God, at least since the creation of the first intelligent beings, functioned in the submissive (condescending) role as Commander of the angels, and the Son will continue to be subject to the Father in eternity future (1 Corinthians 15:28). Ontological equality (equality of being) and functional submission therefore constitutes the image of God from the standpoint of the created universe and in the view of the first created beings. Consequently, if male and female are made in the image of God, we can be certain they would reflect the authority and submission roles operative within the Godhead.
• The internal evidence within Genesis 1-3 (the 26 points in my January 2014 TOSC paper) is more than sufficient to demonstrate the pre-Fall headship of Adam. The apostle Paul’s interpretation of Adam’s headship in Genesis 2 and 3 (Adam
was formed first then Eve; Eve, not Adam, was deceived; the woman was created for the man) reinforces the internal evidence of Genesis. Rodriguez’s unwillingness to accept Paul’s confirmation of this interpretation of Genesis 2 and 3 violates the methods of biblical interpretation as endorsed by Ellen G. White and articulated in the 1986 Methods of Bible Study Document.

- God brought the woman to Adam and he named her ("she shall be called woman"). Rodriguez ignores the divine intention for Adam to name the woman in Genesis 2:22, 23 and simply rejects the plain reading of the text. This interpretation is patently unbiblical.
- The statement in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 58, 59 regarding submission of the woman is within the context of a pre-Fall harmonious relationship and restoring that harmonious relationship after the Fall. This statement reinforces the pre-Fall headship role of Adam.
- Adam was the sole and singular monarch and sovereign of the world under God. The terms sovereign and monarch exclude Eve and demand absolute singularity.
- The record of Genesis 2-3 enables Paul to conclude that death entered the human race by Adam’s sin, not Eve’s (Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22), confirming the headship responsibility of Adam rather than of Eve, even though she sinned first.
- Paul uses his assertions in 1 Corinthians 11:8, 9 to support the headship of the man over the woman (the woman was created “from Adam and for Adam”). Rodriguez abandons the plain reading of the text and spiritualizes the text so that the text no longer means what the literal reading brings out.
- Ellen G. White repeatedly endorses and supports the pre-Fall headship of Adam.
  1. Adam was to stand at the head of the earthly family (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 236).
  2. Adam [was] the monarch of the world (*Signs of the Times*, April 29, 1875).
3. Adam was the vicegerent of the Creator (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 129).
4. Sabbath was committed to Adam, the father and representative of the whole human family (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 48).
5. Adam was crowned king in Eden (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1082).
6. [God] made Adam the rightful sovereign over all the works of His hands (*Ibid.*).
8. Adam was lord in his beautiful domain (*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 38).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE: Currently a pastor in the Pennsylvania Conference, John W. Peters received a Ph.D. in Chemistry from UCLA in 1971 and following post-doctoral work, labored in the aerospace industry for 15 years. A miracle of conversion took place in 1984 and seven years later John received an M. Div. at the Andrews University Theological Seminary. He is known for his commitment to Biblical truths and their presentation without compromise—all within the context of the Gospel story.