

Government Within the Ecclesia and Headship

What Is God Telling Us?

There is no subject more timely and pertinent today than the subject of government. We see it in action all around us, and in many ways in not a very favorable light. Let us first define what government is.

Webster's New World College Dictionary (Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2004) gives six definitions to the word government, but I will give the two most commonly used ones.

- Government.** 1. The exercise of authority over a state, district, organization, and etc.
2. A system of ruling, controlling, etc.; an established system of political administration by which a nation, state, district, etc., is governed.

These definitions reveal the authoritarian reality of government as it is understood and practiced in this society of ours ... but I am going to revise that definition a bit to give it a more inclusive character. ***Government is the nature of the interrelationships among people within a group, be it a nation, state, district, city, business, military, religious, or secular organization.***

Based on this definition we have essentially two major systems of government here on this earth, and they are diametrically opposed to one another.

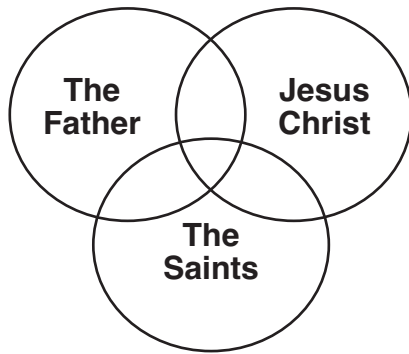
1. The world's system. We know that Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2), and it is he who has given rise to the dictionary definition we just read. It is top-down authority exercised by a king or prince over those below him in the structure, with the enforcement of the will of the leaders upon those below. Usually this authority is expressed in layers, with each layer of the organization dictating its will on those below, and can best be illustrated with a pyramid. Rulership is concentrated at the top, and is oppressive to those below.

2. God's system within the ecclesia, This form of government is radically opposed to Satan's system. It is one of freedom and liberty, with power distributed equally to every person within the structure and can be symbolized by three overlapping circles, the circles representing the Father, Jesus Christ, and the saints. Each one is "within" the others, as Christ so aptly described in John 17:21, "... that they may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me." This relationship of the Father, Jesus Christ, and us shows the true meaning of love and selflessness, as our relationships are defined as total sacrifice for one another.

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing, but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you." (John 15:12-15).

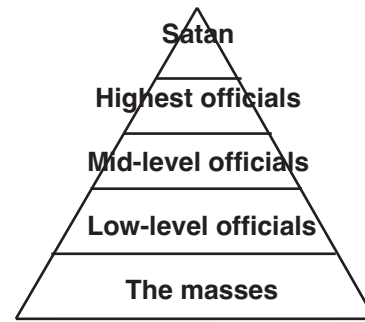
It is extremely important that we as God's called-out firstfruits do not mix the two types of government — one based on Satan's authoritarianism and the other based on God's lovingkindness: "For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" (II Corinthians 6:14). We must not mix a corporate hierarchy with the brotherly love of God's people as they utilize their spiritual gifts in service to one another. It is these gifts we express to one another that define government within the ecclesia, gifts that we must use to show our heartfelt love to one another (I Corinthians 12; Romans 12:6-9; I Peter 4:10).

God's government within the ecclesia



- The spirit of brotherhood, or each looking upon others as better than oneself (Matthew 20:25-28; Luke 22:24-27; John 13:2-15; 17:20-23; Romans 8:29; 12:10; Philippians 2:1-5; Ephesians 5:21; I Peter 5:5)
- Each is equally valuable, with “the least being the greatest” (Luke 9:48; Matthew 23:11-12)
- Service to others with one’s spiritual gifts, given at baptism and the laying on of hands, is one’s essential duty (I Corinthians 12; Romans 12:6-8; I Peter 4:10)
- A spirit of love and forgiveness (II Timothy 1:7; Galatians 5:22-23; John 13:34; 15:12, 17; Romans 12:10; 13:8; Ephesians 4:2; Luke 17:3-4; Matthew 18:21-22)

Satan's government within the world



- The spirit of domination over others, looking upon others as more inferior down the pyramidal structure (Matthew 20:25; Luke 22:24-25)
- Value depends on position within the pyramid, with “the highest being the greatest” (Luke 22:25; *lordship* = *kyrieuo*, “to exercise control over: and authority over = *exousiazō*, “to exercise power or authority over anyone”; Mark 10:42; *lordship* = *katakuriuo*, “to control, subjugate; authority = *katexousiazō*, “to wield full privilege over”)
- Control over others to order them as a slave (see the references above)
- A spirit of self-centeredness and narcissism (II Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 1:28-31; Galatians 5:19-21)

Now ... What About Headship?

With this backdrop concerning the form of government we are to have among ourselves, let us move into the issue of headship. What is it to be a head?

Let us look first at the meaning in the Greek of the word “head”. The word is used 57 times in the New Testament, and all but one time the word used is *kephale* (Strong 2776). One time, in Mark 12:4, the close derivative *kephalaioo* (Strong 2775) is translated as “head”. *Kephale* can mean the head itself, as part of the body, or be used in several non-literal senses.

Figuratively

- “Heaping coals of fire on a head.” Romans 12:20.
- “Your blood be on your own heads” (Acts 18:6), which is similar to “Your bloodguiltiness rest upon your own persons”, a phrase often used in the Old Testament, such as in Ezekiel 3:18, 10;

Metaphorically

- Authority or direction of God in relation to Christ, of Christ in relation to the ecclesia, and of the husband in relation to the wife. I Corinthians 11:3.
- Christ as the foundation of the spiritual building set forth by the Temple, with its “cornerstone”. Matthew 21:42.

Symbolically

The imperial rulers of the Roman power. Revelations 13:1, 3; 17:3, 7, 9.

In the New Testament the word *kephale* is used many times, in verses we know well, such as I

33:6, 8; Leviticus 20:16; II Samuel 1:16; I Kings 2:37.

- Christ in relation to the ecclesia. Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:19.
- Christ in relation to principalities and powers. Colossians 2:10.

Corinthians 11:3.

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.”

Also, note the use of *kephale* in Ephesians 5:22-23

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

Notice that just before Ephesians 5:22, in verse 21, Paul stated, “... submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord.”. What is going on here? First we have the statement that we are to submit to each other, and then Paul says the husband is the head, and the wife must submit to him. How can this be?

A clear understanding of headship must come from understanding the function of the head itself, and the brain within our skull. The brain controls the entire body, acting as a central switchboard that receives and processes information sent to it from all parts of the body. Not only that, but within the confines of the brain rests the pituitary gland, which is often termed the “master endocrine gland” that secretes hormones which trigger and control vital metabolic functions in tissues throughout the body. Nestled within the brain near the pituitary gland is yet another gland called the pineal gland, which has direct communication with the optic nerve from the eyes, and thus may be said to associate directly with the outside world through light frequencies, even though it is deep within the head. It produces melatonin which is involved with circadian rhythms (sleeping and waking cycles).

The brain, pituitary gland, and pineal gland are thus centers of electro-chemical control that influence every cell and tissue in the body. The instructions these organs give dictate metabolism, growth, and overall functions of the digestive, respiratory, circulatory, nervous, muscular, skeletal, reproductive, and en-

docrine systems involving all 10 trillion cells of the human body. What an amazingly designed body we have, created as it is by our heavenly Father in the express image of His own spirit body! What is even more impressive is what the spirit that the Father puts in His children will do to direct the body to His purposes. All of these systems make possible what we call thought, imagination, and creativity, the sublime qualities which the spirit of God directs in the brethren.

Functioning As a Head

We should know first of all that the over-arching essence of our interrelationships involves service. As Matthew 7:12 clearly states, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you; this is the meaning of the law and the prophets.” After His final Passover with the apostles, Jesus stated,

“The kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But you shall not act so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that serves. For whether is greater, he that sits at the meal, or he that serves [at the meal]: Is not he that sits at the meal? But I am among you as He that serves”. Luke 22:25-27.

The head, with its sensory and thought processing and endocrine controls, serves the entire body; without this “control center”, of course, the body could not function and grow. The entire body is the “temple of the holy spirit” — with which we are to glorify God in body, mind, and spirit (I Corinthians 3:16-17; 19-20) — and the head is the “directing servant,” as it were, of that entire body. Yet the head could not survive without the support of the rest of the body that nourishes it!

We already read I Corinthians 11:3 which defines the headship relationship of the husband and wife, Christ and the ecclesia, and the Father and Christ. We also see this relationship referred to in Ephesians 5:23, 1:22, and 4:15, and Colossians 1:18. It is interesting that in both I Corinthians 11 and Ephesians 5, nearby scriptures tie the headship relationship to gifts of the spirit, showing that the head — Christ — is directing the whole body through the spirit He grants, which

spirit gives us the wherewithall through these spiritual gifts to serve one another.

“And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ ... but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:11-12, 15-16.

“For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now has God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased him.” I Corinthians 12:12-18.

Notice that in I Corinthians 12 Paul does not mention any of the gifts as being the *brain*; that is reserved for Jesus Christ; Christ heads the church. He is the coordinator through service of the entire ecclesia, each with his or her specific gifts granted through the spirit. The brethren function as eyes, ears, feet, legs, arms, fingers, and other parts of the body that are integrally attached to the Head (Christ) and its brain and pituitary gland. They are directed in service and function for the good of the whole by the brain ... a process known in medical science as “accommodation”. The body ac-

commodates the shortcomings of any organ or tissue by adjusting the entire organism so it will survive the best it can under the circumstances, and hopefully thrive.

Note also from Ephesians 1:22-23 that Christ lives in each part of the body, showing how the influence of the brain is pervasive throughout the body. Actually, research has shown that our memory, previously thought to be only a brain function, is located in all tissues of the body!

The Husband and Wife

Let’s get into specifics regarding the headship in marriage of husband and wife. This knowledge of Christ’s responsibilities to the ecclesia, and conversely the brethren’s responsibilities to Christ, places the husband and wife in a very humble position. They must emulate that headship relationship of Christ and the church.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body.” Ephesians 5:22-23.

This command is on top of the stipulation of Ephesians 5:21, just before this: “Submitting yourselves [Strong 5293, *hupotasso*] **one to another** in the fear of God.” How is this possible if the husband is the head? That question has already been answered: ***the brain — the head — exercises service to the body for its own best good, as does the body to the brain to maintain its optimum condition, so that both the head and the rest of the body function together as the temple of the holy spirit ... full complementary service!*** The only difference in the husband’s and wife’s role in marriage is **responsibility**, which is defined by the Creator for the optimum joint functioning of the unit in love.

Let us examine specifically a few of the responsibilities God has placed upon the head and the body in the marriage relationship. There are many more than these six points mentioned below that could be discussed.

1. The husband is the savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23). *Savior* [Strong 4990] = *soter*, “a deliverer,

savior, or preserver”. As the head, the husband must use sense and discernment to deliver his wife from danger in the world, protecting her, even giving his life for her if necessary. Where would the body be without a head?

2. ***The wife is to be subject unto her husband in everything, submitting in all things*** (Ephesians 5:22, 24; see also Genesis 3:16; I Corinthians 14:34; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; I Peter 3:1). *Subject unto* (Strong 5293) = *hupotasso*, “to subordinate or obey, originally a military term meaning to arrange troops in a military fashion under the command of a leader, but in non-military use a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.” *Submit* also is Strong 5293, *hupotasso*.
3. ***The husband must love the wife, and be willing to sacrifice and even die for her*** (Ephesians 5:25, 28-29). *Love* (Strong 25) = *agapao*, “love, affection, benevolence.” The head — the brain and master endocrine gland — must do all it can to deliver life and vitality into the rest of the body by directing the body’s members on a right pathway: proper nourishment, protection from accidents, hygiene, sunshine, and everything the body needs to grant optimum health for the entire organism. The husband is to love and care for his wife as he does his own body, fulfilling Matthew 7:12 by doing to others as he would want done to himself.
4. ***The husband and wife must be unified, “one flesh”*** (Ephesians 5:28, 31; John 17:21; Genesis 2:24). There cannot be a schism [division] in the body (I Corinthians 12:25) or else there will be a brain fighting against the arms, legs, and organs, leading to disease and suffering. They are to submit themselves to each other (Ephesians 5:21), and live as the brethren, Christ, and the Father are one (John 17:21).
5. ***The wife must reverence her husband*** (Ephesians 5:33). *Reverence* (Strong 5399) = *phobeo*, “to show reverential fear”. The body — the wife — must respect the direction of the brain and master gland, for upon it she utterly depends for her life. Remember that I Timothy 5:8 states, “But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”
6. ***The husband must strive to present his wife as***

clean, spotless, perfect, and blemish-free (Ephesians 5:26-27). The head must direct the body into every proper pathway to achieve these ends by being an excellent teacher of the word of God to his family, by providing food, clothing, and shelter, and by attracting uplifting friends and family to surround them.

Remember too that *cleansing is really forgiveness*, for both the husband and wife fall short of perfection and need to forgive one another. This is so critical an issue when the two of them are in constant close contact, and the chances for conflict are high if forgiveness does not prevail.

Life in this current evil world system does not set a proper example for the Godly headship model. All around us are the fruits of Satan’s intervention: divorce, homosexuality, women’s liberation, and a plethora of other fruits of forsaking God’s perfect ways. If we are to avoid becoming a victim of this world’s corruption we must strive daily to read His work, mediate upon His ways, pray frequently, and fellowship with the brethren. Only then will we gain the proper understanding of what it truly means to have Christ as our head, and to live in love and harmony as husband and wife, and as brothers and sisters in Christ, and in oneness with Christ and our Father in heaven.