

# Assessing Hierarchist Logic: Is Egalitarianism Really on a Slippery Slope?

DAVID C. CRAMER

## Introduction

Most evangelicals, regardless of our views on gender issues, recognize that within evangelicalism there will always be a diversity of views on any number of issues regarding faith and practice. Since for evangelicals there is no higher authority than Scripture, the inevitable result is that—for better or worse—there will always exist within evangelicalism competing interpretations of Scripture. Under the evangelical umbrella are Arminians and Calvinists, paedobaptists and Anabaptists, premillennialists and postmillennialists, egalitarians and male hierarchists. While most evangelicals realize that many of these positions may be irreconcilable, we also recognize that those who come to a different view than us may be just as honest, well-intentioned, and well-informed interpreters of Scripture as we try to be.<sup>1</sup> And while we do our best to share our views with others—even pointing out the weaknesses of competing views—we attempt to do so in an irenic fashion, knowing that one’s evangelical witness is not ultimately determined by the position one comes to on any one of these complex issues.<sup>2</sup>

However, within the hierarchical camp, there exists a vocal and influential minority of strongly hierarchist scholars who argue that a commitment to egalitarianism does indeed undermine one’s evangelical commitment. But, since many of us either are or at least know strongly committed egalitarian evangelicals, this argument seems strange. It would be easy for evangelical egalitarians simply to dismiss these hierarchists’ arguments as disingenuous or to respond in kind by excluding hierarchists from their vision of evangelicalism. However, I would caution against such a reaction for a number of reasons. First, Jesus explicitly commands us to refuse recourse to such *lex talionis* or “eye for eye” reasoning in a command that is just as relevant in scholarship as it is in other social contexts. Second, such a response would probably generate more heat than light and make the divide over gender issues even greater. Third, as Christians, we should always respond to dissent with charity rather than skepticism. That means that rather than questioning others’ motives, we should try to the best of our ability to understand the perspective of those with whom we disagree and lovingly respond to their concerns. When it comes to the hierarchists’ arguments, then, we must realize that they are motivated by very real concerns. They are not (necessarily) the result of a deep-seated hatred toward everything egalitarian; rather, they are motivated by a deep concern for evangelicalism. So, whether or not we agree with the hierarchists’ arguments, we should nevertheless sympathize with the motivation behind them, namely, the desire to see our sisters and brothers living out the *evangel*, the gospel, faithfully in every sphere of life. Where we perceive the gospel being compromised by fellow evangelicals, we should be ready to offer a gentle rebuke. On the other hand, when we perceive a misguided rebuke,

we should also be prepared to offer a gentle response. Such a response is what I intend to offer in the following.

## Assessing the logic of *Evangelical Feminism*

Instead of surveying the recent proliferation of hierarchical literature, my goal is much more modest. I want to focus particularly on a more pointed rebuke of evangelical egalitarianism, namely, the book entitled *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism*.<sup>3</sup> As the title suggests, the author fears that egalitarianism undermines one’s evangelical commitments and thus could begin “relentlessly leading Christians down the path to liberalism.”<sup>4</sup> Since such fears seem characteristic of many evangelical hierarchists, we would do well to assess the arguments. And, since many of the particular exegetical and hermeneutical arguments of the book are regularly debated among hierarchical and egalitarian scholars,<sup>5</sup> I focus my assessment instead on the underlying logic of the argument presented in the book. I argue that the book contains a number of logical mistakes and that, once these are corrected, the hierarchists’ concern proves to be chimerical. I conclude by arguing what many of us already know: despite our irreconcilable differences, there is room under the evangelical umbrella for egalitarians and male hierarchists alike.

### *The fallacy of hasty generalization or selective evidence*

The fallacy of hasty generalization occurs when certain evidence that supports one’s conclusion is emphasized, and evidence that contradicts one’s conclusion is downplayed or ignored entirely. In short, a hasty generalization is drawn when a universal claim is based on only partial evidence. In its first section, *Evangelical Feminism* sets out to prove the correlation between egalitarianism and liberalism. It makes much of the supposed historical connection between the two, claiming repeatedly that “egalitarian advocacy of women’s ordination goes hand in hand with theological liberalism.”<sup>6</sup> It discusses at length a number of undisputed instances where liberal denominations support women’s ordination. Indeed, it argues, “There is no theologically liberal denomination or seminary in the United States today that opposes women’s ordination.”<sup>7</sup> Such statements are relatively uncontroversial. But what are we to make of them? Does the fact that liberal denominations support women’s ordination entail

DAVID C. CRAMER is a doctoral student in religion at Baylor University. He has published numerous essays on theology and ethics and recently co-edited *The Activist Impulse: Essays on the Intersection of Evangelicalism and Anabaptism* (Pickwick, 2012). David lives with his wife, Andrea, and their children, Wesley and Liza, in Waco, Texas, where they are active members of the Mennonite church, Hope Fellowship.



that there is a necessary or universal correlation between egalitarianism and liberalism? Clearly not, for it also mentions in a footnote some important counterevidence:

Chaves lists many other denominations, such as some Baptist and Pentecostal denominations, that were ordaining women much earlier and were not affected by theological liberalism. Many of these other groups placed a strong emphasis on leading and calling by the Holy Spirit (such as Pentecostal groups) or on the autonomy of the local congregation (such as many Baptist groups) and therefore they were not adopting women's ordination because of theological liberalism. My point here is that when liberalism was the dominant theological viewpoint in a denomination, from 1956 onward it became inevitable that the denomination would endorse women's ordination.<sup>8</sup>

And again at the conclusion of his historical discussion, the author concedes,

I am not arguing that all egalitarians are liberals. Some denominations have approved women's ordination for other reasons, such as a long historical tradition and a strong emphasis on gifting by the Holy Spirit as the primary requirement for ministry (as in the Assemblies of God), or because of the dominant influence of an egalitarian leader and a high priority on relating effectively to the culture (as in the Willow Creek Association).<sup>9</sup>

It is a bit perplexing why, with such ample evidence of evangelical egalitarianism, the book nevertheless concludes that there is such a strong correlation between egalitarianism and liberalism. Perhaps it dismisses the counterevidence as insignificant. But this would surely be unfair to the many Pentecostals, Baptists, Assemblies of God churches, and associations such as Willow Creek, around the world, not to mention numerous other evangelical denominations and groups<sup>10</sup>—including not a small number of black churches—that “place a strong emphasis on gifting by the Holy Spirit as the primary requirement for ministry.” Indeed, Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE), the group that receives the harshest criticism in the book, explicitly places “a strong emphasis on gifting by the Holy Spirit as the primary requirement for ministry.” As CBE's Statement of Faith reads, “We believe that men and women are to diligently develop and use their *God-given gifts* for the good of the home, church and society.”<sup>11</sup> If all such denominations and groups that serve as exceptions to the supposed correlation were included as evidence, the apparent correlation would diminish significantly, if not dissipate entirely. Indeed, given the global rise of denominations focusing on the leading and gifting of the Holy Spirit,<sup>12</sup> the evidence of liberal churches in the United States from 1956 onward is almost negligible. Certainly, it does not constitute a wide enough sample to justify the claim that egalitarianism and liberalism “go hand in hand.”

Rather, by ignoring the counterevidence of the many evangelical egalitarian denominations and groups, the argument for a correlation is reduced at best to the tautology:

- (1) All egalitarian denominations that become liberal are liberal,  
and all egalitarian denominations that remain evangelical are evangelical,

and at worst to an instance of the formal fallacy of affirming the consequent:

- (2) If a denomination is liberal, then it is egalitarian; therefore, if a denomination is egalitarian, it is (or will inevitably become) liberal.

Neither (1) nor (2) is reason for concern for evangelical egalitarians or their evangelical hierarchical friends who are worried about them, since neither (1) nor (2) actually establishes a correlation between egalitarianism and liberalism.

#### *The fallacy of equating correlation with causation*

If we grant, contrary to fact, the argument for the correlation between egalitarianism and liberalism discussed above, another problem with the main argument still persists. For, in order to support the main thesis that evangelical egalitarianism leads down the path to liberalism, more than evidence for mere *correlation* is required. What is required is evidence that evangelical egalitarianism *causes* liberalism. This at least seems to be the claim implicit in the book title's wording that evangelical egalitarianism is a “path to liberalism.”

The fallacy of equating correlation with causation is common and thus seductive. In the philosophy of mind, for example, many materialist philosophers argue that, because neuroscience has demonstrated a *correlation* between brain activity and mental activity, the former must be the *cause* of the latter. But a number of dualist philosophers (many of them Christian) have cried foul, pointing out that correlation and causation are two completely different things.<sup>13</sup> There are a number of ways to make sense of such correlation. Perhaps brain activity is indeed the cause of mental activity,<sup>14</sup> but perhaps mental activity is the cause of brain activity. Moreover, there is a competing materialist view which holds that brain activity is simply mental activity, and vice versa.<sup>15</sup> So clearly arguing that two things “go hand in hand” is quite distinct from arguing that one is the cause of the other. Rather, there are at least four ways that two things could correlate:

- (3) A could be the cause of B,
- (4) B could be the cause of A,
- (5) A could be the same thing as B, or
- (6) A and B could both be caused by another variable C.

Options (3) through (5) were already illustrated by the example from the philosophy of mind, but (6) can be illustrated by a less pedantic topic. A study once demonstrated that in New York City the consumption of ice cream directly correlates to the city's murder rate.<sup>16</sup> When ice cream sales go up, so does the murder rate. When ice cream sales go down, the murder rate does too. But even given these findings, one would be hard pressed to convince anyone that ice cream consumption is a new path

to homicide. Rather, there is a lurking variable—presumably, the temperature—that serves as an underlying factor for both. In hot summer months, people consume more ice cream, but more people are also out of the confines of their homes and on the city streets, where murders tend to take place. So, though there is no causal connection between eating ice cream and the tendency to murder, there is a strong correlation.

While the title *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism* clearly suggests the possibility of a causal relationship between egalitarianism and liberalism, the arguments only suggest a correlation. How is this correlation to be understood? Is it an instance of (3), namely, that egalitarianism causes liberalism? This certainly seems to be the book's thesis. So, for example, in the introduction, the author asserts that his argument is "of a 'slippery slope' from evangelical feminism to liberalism. . . . Once an evangelical feminist position is adopted, the development only goes in one direction, again and again."<sup>17</sup> Despite the fact that he has conceded that there are many exceptions to this supposed trend (see above), many of his arguments actually point instead to instances of (4), that *liberalism* causes *egalitarianism*. So, for example, he discusses the Christian Reformed Church, which left an official inerrancy position in 1972 and approved the ordination of women in 1995.<sup>18</sup> How evangelical egalitarianism is the path to liberalism in this instance, when inerrancy was rejected *more than twenty years before* women's ordination, is perplexing. Indeed, the author notes that the trend he finds among such denominations is *first* to abandon biblical inerrancy officially and then *second* to endorse the ordination of women officially. So, in his support for (3), the main thesis of his book, he only cites instances of (4). It may be an interesting historical fact that liberalism is one path to egalitarianism, but why this should concern evangelical egalitarians who have come through a different path (evangelicalism) is difficult to see.

It seems unlikely that the author would argue for (5), that evangelical egalitarianism is identical to liberalism, since he repeatedly identifies evangelical egalitarians "who have not moved one inch toward liberalism in the rest of their doctrinal convictions, and who still strongly believe and defend the inerrancy of the Bible."<sup>19</sup> Moreover, by his very definitions, evangelicalism and liberalism are mutually exclusive. Thus, if a form of egalitarianism is evangelical, then it must not be liberal.

That leaves us with (6), that evangelical egalitarianism and liberalism share a common underlying variable that gives rise to each in different ways. And, perhaps they do. After all, liberals are not wrong about everything. Perhaps evangelical egalitarians and liberals share the same convictions about justice and the plight of the oppressed, a variable that has led them each in their own way to supporting egalitarianism. Or, perhaps liberals came to this view by affirming the inherent dignity of each member of the "human family," while evangelicals came to this view from their reading of Scripture. In such a case, a correlation could exist without any causal relationship one way or the other.

In his defense, the author does suggest a common underlying variable, namely, that both groups undermine the authority of

Scripture. But if this is really true, then we are back to a case of (5), the identity view, since he defines liberalism as "a system of thinking that denies the complete truthfulness of the Bible as the Word of God and denies the unique and absolute authority of the Bible in our lives."<sup>20</sup> The author could have then spared us from his slippery-slope argument and simply argued that evangelical egalitarianism is *simply* the new liberalism. But this argument would be much harder to credit, especially when groups such as Christians for Biblical Equality include as the first point in their Statement of Faith: "We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, is reliable, and is the *final authority for faith and practice*."<sup>21</sup> If evangelical egalitarians are simply liberals, then that is news to them, not to mention that it goes against the explicit statements of the author himself. So, neither (3), (5), nor (6) has been established, though some support has been given for (4). It appears, then, that we have been given no reason to worry that evangelical egalitarianism is a cause of liberalism. Indeed, in some instances, it may be the other way around. But if liberals are becoming *evangelical* egalitarians, this should be a cause for rejoicing, not for concern.

### The slippery-slope fallacy

If we grant, contrary to fact, the book's argument for the correlation between egalitarianism and liberalism (see above), and, if we further grant, contrary to fact, its argument that this correlation is the result of evangelical egalitarianism causing liberalism (see immediately above), then yet another problem with the argument persists. For it is one thing to demonstrate that there is a contingent, historical causal relationship between two views, but it is quite another thing to show that such a causal relationship is a necessary or inevitable one that will occur in all future cases.<sup>22</sup> But the book's thesis would be significantly weakened if evangelical egalitarianism is only a historical, contingent path to liberalism. After all, many positions that are inherently good can be used as paths to bad positions. So, for example, as I understand it, the author is himself a committed Calvinist. But, as any historian can tell you, six of the eight Ivy League colleges and universities were founded by committed Calvinists.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, I doubt that he would be happy with any of these schools' theological positions today. Should we conclude, then, that Calvinism is an old path to liberalism? Each of these schools did, after all, slowly shift from Calvinism to liberalism. But, of course, noting this contingent, historical trend says nothing about the intrinsic worth of the Calvinist system itself. There are too many variables that cause large institutions to shift theologically over time. Trying to isolate one particular variable as the cause for the shift is a quixotic task. And that, of course, is the problem with slippery-slope arguments in general. They attempt to show that one position is wrong or bad because it possibly leads to another position that is wrong or bad. But, unless the causation from the first to the second position is a logically necessary one, the wrongness or badness of the second position does not reflect on the value of the first.

The author twice explicitly notes that he is offering a slippery-slope argument,<sup>24</sup> apparently not realizing that the slippery-slope

argument is ordinarily considered the slippery-slope *fallacy* in any introductory logic text.<sup>25</sup> Here the author—and, indeed, all of us—would all do well to recall N. T. Wright’s insightful words on the gender debate:

Part of the problem, particularly in the United States, is that cultures become so polarized that if you tick one box many assume you must tick a dozen other boxes down the same side of the page—without realizing that the page itself is highly arbitrary and culture-bound. We have to claim the freedom, in Christ and in our various cultures, to name issues one by one with wisdom and clarity, without assuming that a decision on one point commits us to a decision on others.<sup>26</sup>

So, despite the author’s impassioned contention that evangelical egalitarianism “inevitably leads” to a whole host of “liberal” positions—such as “the denial of anything uniquely masculine,” the rejection of biblical language about God, the church’s acceptance of homosexual practices, and the “denial of the authority of the Word of God”<sup>27</sup>—there is simply no logically necessary relationship between these positions. His contingent, historical examples might provide at best an emotional or psychological connection between these positions, but that is a far cry from establishing a logical connection.

Indeed, in his discussion of the “trajectory hermeneutic,” he notes that “the process of determining a ‘trajectory’ is so subjective that the same argument could be used in just the other way.”<sup>28</sup> The author might have done better to remember his own words when he began charting the trajectory in which evangelical egalitarianism is headed. His argument that egalitarianism leads to a “rejection of anything uniquely masculine” tells us more about his subjective view of masculinity than it does about the trajectory of egalitarianism. Apparently, he believes that, if males and females are not ordered hierarchically, then they cannot be truly differentiated—in the same way that he believes that, if the persons of the Trinity are not ordered hierarchically, they cannot be differentiated.<sup>29</sup> This is a rather peculiar argument. I can differentiate between any number of things that are not hierarchically ordered. I can tell the difference between oak trees and pine trees, owls and cardinals, white people and black people, Father and Son, and men and women, all without making a distinction of hierarchy between each pair. Only by presupposing such a hierarchical structure would one ever suggest that egalitarianism inevitably leads to undifferentiated androgyny. In the same way, there is no logical connection between affirming the full equality of men and women in the church and home and the rejection of biblical language about God, the church’s acceptance of homosexual practices, or a rejection of biblical authority.<sup>30</sup> These connections are purely psychological ones in the mind of the author and likeminded hierarchists. They are supported (when at all) only by circumstantial historical evidence, which itself establishes neither a strong correlation, nor much less that such a correlation is causal. Once the psychological connections between these views are subjected to logical scrutiny, we find that the supposed connections are nothing but that—psychological. We must there-

fore conclude that, rather than offering a sound argument, the book is instead engaging in emotionally based rhetoric, however intuitive and persuasive it may initially appear to some.

## Conclusion

The author can, of course, argue against egalitarian interpretations of Scripture, which he does throughout the book. But, even if he were to establish cases of incorrect egalitarian interpretations of Scripture in certain instances,<sup>31</sup> this would be a far cry from establishing that evangelical egalitarians undermine or deny the authority of Scripture and are thus on the inevitable path to liberalism.<sup>32</sup> All it would show is that they have misread a particular passage of Scripture—perhaps because of their own biases. We all have biases, and, the sooner we admit it, the better interpreters we will be. Indeed, New Testament scholar Gordon Fee argues that the author’s own biases are read into a particular biblical passage. And while Fee somewhat polemically states that the author’s interpretation of that one particular passage is “a marvelous example of a prior hermeneutical agenda’s preceding the reading of texts—so much so that the plain reading of [the passage] is subjected to, and thus rejected because of, language that is not biblical at all,”<sup>33</sup> this argument is not used as evidence that the author is on the path to liberalism (or fundamentalism, or any other kind of *ism*). Instead, it is a simple instance of iron sharpening iron—of one evangelical Bible scholar who is fully committed to biblical authority pointing out where another evangelical Bible scholar who is fully committed to biblical authority has allowed his presuppositions to cloud his reading of the text. Such critiques should be welcomed from both sides of the gender debate, while we all continue to affirm biblical authority and strive to understand Scripture better together. But when in addition to biblical arguments, one side begins questioning the evangelical credentials of the other, then we may truly be on a slippery slope to some real problems in the church.<sup>34</sup>

## Notes

1. For further discussion of biblical underdetermination and the gender debate, see David C. Cramer, “Creating a Culture of Equality as Witness to the Truth: A Philosophical Response to Gender Difference,” *Priscilla Papers* 24, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 18–22.
2. For a prime example of such irenic and open debate, see William and Aida Spencer and Steve and Celestia Tracy, *Marriage at the Crossroads: Couples in Conversation about Discipleship, Gender Roles, Decision Making, and Intimacy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009).
3. Wayne Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006). I believe that the logical fallacies identified in Grudem’s work are shared *mutatis mutandis* by a number of hierarchist scholars, though that claim will have to remain unsubstantiated for now.
4. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 261. Though Grudem prefers the term “feminism,” it is clear he has in mind what is typically considered “egalitarianism.” In what follows, I use these terms interchangeably.
5. See, e.g., Kevin Giles, “Book Review: *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?*” *Priscilla Papers* 22, no. 3 (2008): 27–30; cf. Karen Fulton, Ruth Gouldbourne, and Sharon James; John Wilks, ed., “Biblical Truth and Biblical Equality: A Review Article on Two Recent Books from IVP on Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Manhood and Womanhood,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 78 (2006): 65–84.

6. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 26, cf. 29. It is initially unclear how to understand this correlation, though, as will be shown later, the author intends for it to be interpreted as a causal relationship.

7. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 29.

8. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 24, n. 4.

9. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 29.

10. For example, in her study of the autobiographies of more than thirty Wesleyan-Holiness women ministers, Susie C. Stanley observes: "Many . . . have assumed, incorrectly, that women preachers were extremely rare outside Pentecostalism and recent mainline Protestantism and have no knowledge of the long tradition of Wesleyan/Holiness women preachers" (*Holy Boldness: Women Preachers' Autobiographies and the Sanctified Self* [Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2002], xxvii). Stanley notes that "a 1976 survey reported 1,801 women clergy in [mainline Protestant] denominations while the number reported for Wesleyan/Holiness groups was 4,131" (*Ibid.*).

11. "Statement of Faith," Christians for Biblical Equality Web site, <http://www.cbeinternational.org/?q=content/statement-faith> (accessed 2010). Italics mine.

12. See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

13. See, e.g., John Hick, *The New Frontier of Religion and Science: Religious Experience, Neuroscience, and the Transcendent* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

14. A view in philosophy of mind known as epiphenomenalism.

15. A view known as brain/mind identity.

16. I recall reading about this study long ago in an introductory sociology book. See, for example, "Causal Inferences," University of California at Fresno Web site, <http://psych.csufresno.edu/psy144/Content/Masurement/causation.html> (accessed 2013).

17. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 12 .

18. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 25.

19. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 20.

20. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 15.

21. "Statement of Faith," Christians for Biblical Equality. Italics mine.

22. Another way of stating this critique is that Grudem is attempting to offer deductive arguments, when his historical evidence at best can be used to support inductive arguments. Deductive arguments are universal and necessary, whereas inductive arguments are probabilistic and contingent. Throughout the book, there seems to be a fundamental confusion between these two types of logical arguments.

23. Specifically, as I understand it, Brown was founded by Calvinist Baptists; Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth by Puritans; Princeton by Presbyterians; and Columbia by Calvinist Anglicans. The University of Pennsylvania and Cornell are the only two exceptions, the former founded by Benjamin Franklin and the latter founded explicitly as a secular institution.

24. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 12, 240.

25. See, e.g., Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks, *Come, Let Us Reason: An Introduction to Logical Thinking* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990), 113–14. As with the other fallacies discussed, the slippery-slope fallacy is informal, meaning that the use of such an argument is guilty until proven innocent. It is not my argument that there are no possible sound uses of such arguments, but rather that Grudem's arguments do not constitute such uses.

26. N. T. Wright, "The Biblical Basis for Women's Service in the Church," *Priscilla Papers* 20, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 5.

27. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 262, 224, 263.

28. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism*, 61.

29. See the debate, "Do relations of authority and submission exist eternally among the Persons of the Godhead?" held on 9 October 2008 at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where Bruce Ware and Wayne

Grudem argue the affirmative answer and Tom McCall and Keith Yandell offer the counterargument; outline available at <http://www.henrycenter.org/blog/?p=36> (accessed 2009). Audio and video of the debate are available at <http://www.henrycenter.org>. Cf. Thomas McCall and Keith E. Yandell, "On Trinitarian Subordinationism," *Philosophia Christi* 11 (2009): 339–58.

30. Christians for Biblical Equality sees no contradiction among the following Statements of Faith: (1) "We believe the Bible is the Word of God, is reliable, and is the final authority for faith and practice"; (2) "We believe that men and women are to diligently develop and use their God-given gifts for the good of the home, church, and society"; and, (3) "We believe in the family, celibate singleness, and faithful heterosexual marriage as God's design" (see [www.cbeinternational.org](http://www.cbeinternational.org)). I, too, see no contradiction here.

31. My own assessment of Grudem's arguments is similar to that of hierarchical New Testament scholar Robert Yarbrough, who states on the endorsement page of the book that the "chapters and charges carry varying weights."

32. Moreover, as a number of evangelical scholars are beginning to realize, even the dichotomy between evangelical and liberal is too simplistic; in some instances one may be *more* evangelical, i.e., able to interpret the Bible more faithfully, by being *less* conservative, i.e., less tied to tradition. For the sake of discussion, I will bracket this interesting hypothesis for now. See Roger E. Olson, *Reformed and Always Reforming: The Postconservative Approach to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007); see also my review of Olson's book in *Ethics and Medicine: An International Journal of Bioethics* 24 (2008): 189–90.

33. Gordon D. Fee, "The Priority of Spirit Gifting for Church Ministry," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 247.

34. This paper was first presented at the Evangelical Philosophical Society Midwest Regional Meeting, 19 March 2010, St. Paul, Minnesota. Thanks to those in attendance for their insightful and charitable dialogue. Special thanks to Brother Tim Erdel for helpful comments on an earlier draft.

The slippery slope fallacy is committed only when we accept without further justification or argument that once the first step is taken, the others are going to follow, or that whatever would justify the first step would in fact justify the rest. Note, also, that what some see as the undesirable consequence lurking at the bottom of the slope others may regard as very desirable indeed..." We often want to assess a proposal to take some action or adopt a new policy. One important and legitimate way of doing so is to examine the consequences that would result if the action were taken or the policy adopted. If the action or policy is likely to lead to undesirable consequences, then we have a good reason to reject it, and if it is likely to lead to desirable consequences, then we have a good reason to support it. Slippery slope-style arguments are often fallacious, but the reason why they are fallacious differs depending on the kind of slippery slope argument it is. For Causal Slopes. Causal slippery slopes can be fallacious when there is little evidence to support the idea that one event will cause another and so on. Fallacious causal slippery slope arguments rely on exaggerating the strength or severity of causal connections between events. Whether or not a slippery slope-style argument is reasonable depends on a number of factors including the type of slippery slope argument it is and the context of the argument. In some cases, it might not be clear if the argument is fallacious or not. How to Respond to Slippery Slope Arguments. Explore this list of slippery slope examples in real life to better understand this type of logical fallacy, including examples from TV commercials, politics, and even school! Let's say you're on a diet and you're trying to lose weight. One of the most common real-life slippery slope examples is when you're tempted by an unhealthy treat. The typical thought process goes something like this: If I eat this donut today, I'll probably eat another donut tomorrow. Assessing Hierarchist Logic: Is Egalitarianism Really on a Slippery Slope? more. by David Cramer. [N.B. This article is under the copyright of the publisher and is posted here by the author strictly for personal/educational purposes. David Cramer, in "Assessing Hierarchist Logic: Is Egalitarianism Really on a Slippery Slope," in Priscilla Papers 27.2 (2013) 5-9, takes the author of Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism? to task at the logical level. Cramer chose in uncanny fashion not to mention Grudem's name in the text in order to keep attention on the arguments and not the person. Priscilla Papers is a fine publication of the Christians for Biblical Equality. Link to article now available. Before I begin we observe that Cramer describes the position as "hierarchist" instead of its preferred "complementarian." T

David Cramer, in "Assessing Hierarchist Logic: Is Egalitarianism Really on a Slippery Slope," in *Priscilla Papers* 27.2 (2013) 5-9, takes the author of *Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism?* to task at the logical level. Cramer chose in uncanny fashion not to mention Grudem's name in the text in order to keep attention on the arguments and not the person. *Priscilla Papers* is a fine publication of the Christians for Biblical Equality. Link to article now available. Before I begin we observe that Cramer describes the position as "hierarchicalist" instead of its preferred "complementarian." This deserves some consideration. In general I prefer that a person be described the way that person wants, and since most of this view call themselves "complementarian" it is wise to give them that label. Slippery slopes are fallacious only if the premises are false or implausible. Everything turns on whether these conditional relationships hold. Sometimes they do, and if they do, it's not a fallacy. But very often then don't, and when they don't we've got a slippery slope fallacy. An Important Caveat. Now, there's a caveat to this way of analyzing slippery slopes. If it's very likely, then the logic is strong, if not then it's weak. So in a sense we're evaluating the logic of the argument, but it turns out that in cases like this, the strength of the logic turns on the content of the premises, so in the end we are evaluating the plausibility of premises, which makes this a content fallacy, and not a logical or formal fallacy. For our example the chain of inferences looks like this (SSA) Egalitarianism (or "feminism") is the first step onto the slippery slope that leads directly to dangerous and unacceptable "liberalism." After all, look at all the liberal churches out there; they all support women in ministry! Many of them used to be within the evangelical fold, but they have all strayed away. This essay is adapted from the article, "Assessing Hierarchist Logic: Is Egalitarianism Really on a Slippery Slope?," *Priscilla Papers* 27.2 (2013): 5-9. You can purchase your copy of the entire issue. This block is broken or missing. Even if it was real, it could have been nothing more than a tiny scrap of paper rolled up and worn in an amulet. But King, if nothing else, was media savvy, and "The Gospel of Jesus's Wife" catapulted her "discovery" to international fame. She had already gotten a taste of popular acclaim, hitching herself to Dan Brown's 2003 novel "The Da Vinci Code," which was to Biblical scholarship what "Raiders of the Lost Ark" was to archeology. Assessing Hierarchist Logic: Is Egalitarianism Really on a Slippery Slope? more. by David Cramer. [N.B. This article is under the copyright of the publisher and is posted here by the author strictly for personal/educational purposes.]