

Male and Female in the church

Gender in the
Ordained Ministries

**TB-Studievers.
262.14
BRE**

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Commissioned by the *Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereniging*

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Foreword

On 16 August the GTV (*Gereformeerde Teologiese Vereeniging* [Reformed Theological Society]) adopted the following motion [our translation]:

That the GTV should request professors Fika van Rensburg, Jorrie Jordaan and dr Douw Breed (chairman) to conduct an in-depth study of the theological problem of women in ordained ministries.

They are requested to find ministers in the GKSA (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika [Reformed Churches in South Africa]) with the necessary talents to collaborate with them in the study of this problem. In the process they should take full cognisance of previous studies of the problem undertaken by the GKSA.

All participants in this study are requested to work in humble and prayerful dependence on the Lord, for it is only through the Holy Spirit that we can truly hear the Lord's revelation.

Their aim should be to complete the study before the GTV meeting next year. They are also requested to submit their findings to a GTV meeting in the course of 2007 in such a manner that the meeting can likewise reflect on it in genuine humility and prayerful dependence on the Lord.

The aforementioned three persons held a first workshop on 25-27 September 2006. Subsequently the following workshops were held:

- 27-29 December 2006 in Potchefstroom: Group of Three.
- 10-11 January 2007: Group of Ten, plus the aforementioned Group of Three
 - Kobus van der Walt, Braam Kruger, Wim Vergeer, Piet Venter (Potchefstroom East), Sarel van der Merwe
 - Danie Snyman, Henk Stoker, Ronald Bain, Gerard Meijer, Jacques Howell
- 12-14 April 2007: Group of Three, plus Dries du Plooy and Danie Snyman
- 17-19 July 2007: Group of Three, plus Dries du Plooy and Danie Snyman
- 26-27 November 2007: Group of Three
- 3-5 January 2008: Group of Three
- 21 January 2008: Group of Three and Group of Ten, plus Dries du Plooy and Callie Coetzee

The Group of Ten and Callie Coetzee and Dries du Plooy acted as valued sounding boards, and their individual evaluations of the manuscript in its various phases were extremely helpful.

Many thanks to André Grové, Paul Krüger and Herrie van Rooy for their advice on certain parts of the manuscript. The English translation we owe to Marcelle Manley. We are grateful to have had the benefit of her linguistic expertise and theological background.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the GTV, the *Pro Reformando Trust*, and the *Research Unit: Reformational Theology and the Development of South African Society* of North-West University.

Biblical quotations are from the New International Version or, where specified, the New Revised Standard Version.

The book is structured as follows. First we examine relevant aspects of church polity and give a brief historical survey of the issue at hand (chapter 1), followed by an exposition of the scriptural premises (chapter 2) and hermeneutic premises (chapter 3). Chapter 4 explains the exegesis and hermeneusis (application of the exegesis) presented in the book, as well as the principles applied in evaluating the exegesis and hermeneusis. Chapter 5 summarises the relevant scriptural data from the Old Testament, while chapter 6 gives an overview of data on women in the Gospels. Chapters 7 to 15 contain focused exegesis and hermeneusis of the following New Testament passages: Ephesians 5:21-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7, Galatians 3:26-29, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 14:26-40, 1 Timothy 2:8-15, 3:1-16, 5:3-16, and Romans 16:1-2. Chapter 16 presents the conclusions and the final chapter, chapter 17, spells out possible implications of the study for the GKSA, together with recommendations on how gender should be handled in die GKSA.

We have experienced how the Holy Spirit guides believers to find one another, so that some differences could be resolved and others discussed in brotherly fashion. We trust that this book, the fruit of our labours, will inform believers about subject and will guide their reflection, so that it can be a source of blessing and counsel to the churches.

Douw Breed
Fika J van Rensburg
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February 2008
Potchefstroom

Chapter 1

ASPECTS OF CHURCH POLITY AND CHURCH HISTORY

1.1 Aspects of church polity pertaining to ordained ministries

1.1.1 Terminology¹

1.1.1.1 The words 'ministry' and 'office'

Remarkably, the Belgic Confession (art. 31) uses the word '*amp*' ('office'), whereas the Church Order and Formularies consistently speak of '*diens*' ('ministry').

In the New Testament the term διακονία is used specifically for work done at somebody else's behest. Louw and Nida (1988b:59) indicate that διακονία is used in five semantic fields:

- **Service:** Acts 17:25; 13:36; Matt 20:28; Rev 2:19. Helping or assisting by performing certain duties, often of a menial nature.
- **Ministry:** Acts 20:24. A serving role or position.
- **Providing:** Acts 6:1. Procedure of meeting others' needs.
- **Waiting on:** Mark 1:31. Waiting on people when they are eating a meal.
- **Contribution:** Money given to someone in need.

The sense in which the term 'office' is used in the church is clearly comparable to the meaning 'serving role or position' in the semantic field of 'ministry'.

Although some canonical scholars (eg Bouwman II:328f) consider the words 'ministry' and 'office' synonymous, the term 'ministry' is more apposite, since 'office' has come to connote status or position. The term 'ministry', on the other hand, renders New Testament words like διάκονος and δοῦλος more accurately, since it does not indicate any special position or status.

The connotation attached to the concept of ministers (such as preachers, elders or deacons), however, is important, because the New Testament avoids using the ordinary terms for offices (officials) that were current in political and civil life, like ἀρχή, τιμή and τέλος, when referring to functions or activities in the church. The usage of words like διάκονος (διακονία: Rom 11:13) and δοῦλος (Phil 1:1; Tit 1:1) shows that

¹ Dries du Plooy and Danie Snyman made a special contribution to the compilation of 1.1 of this chapter on relevant aspects of church polity.

church ministry requires humility and commitment to Christ, the sole head of the church.

Because all Christian work can be described as ministry, the term 'office' needs to be defined as 'ordained ministry' in order to distinguish it from the ministry of all believers. Note that the word 'ministry' is sometimes applied to ordained ministries as well, for instance when referring to the ministry of elders/deacons/preachers. In this book the term 'ordained ministry' is used in preference to 'office'.

1.1.1.2 Latin words for ministry as used in the Church Order

Scripture uses various words for ordained ministries (like those of elders and deacons), often describing the function or task. Examples include the following: the word ποιμήν, 'shepherd', refers the manner in which elders should work, that is pastorally; or elders are instructed to manage (κυβερνέω, to steer, indicating that they should do their work like people capable of navigating a ship accurately between rocks) (cf 1 Cor 12:28: κυβερνήσεις).

The conventional Afrikaans text of the church order consistently refers to '*diens*' (ministry), not '*amp*' (office), in the process forfeiting both something of the scriptural information about the ministry concerned and of the Latin words.

The Latin text uses various words with different nuances, although all of them relate generally to the concept of ministry. For example:

- *ministerium* – ministry in general
- *munus* – as in art 18, CO: ministry in the sense of an assignment or task
- *officium* – as in art 16, 23 and 25, CO: performing or working at a ministry/task
- *functio* – as in art 2, CO: the functioning or exercise of a *munus* or assignment as a ministrative task

All these words show that ministry in the church is conducted in a spirit of humility, not dominance.

1.1.2 Origin of ordained ministries

The origin of special ministries lies in God himself, not in human beings. God the Father sent his Son into this world. At his baptism Jesus Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the real office bearer in the church. He has a threefold ministry – *munus triplex* – in which the unity of his ministry or mediatory task is pre-eminent, yet its threefold nature is discernible. He is in fact our supreme prophet and teacher, our one high priest and our eternal king (Matt 23:8, 10; Rom 15:8; 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 3:1; 8:6; 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4; cf Heidelberg Catechism 12).

The special nature of Christ's ministry (office) on earth is apparent when Peter calls him the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4), when he is described as the 'apostle' in Hebrews 3:1, and when Paul refers to him in terms of sovereign rule (1 Cor 15:25) and a servant (Rom 15:8). The clearest evidence that he worked under orders is in Christ's high-priestly prayer in John 17 where he says that he has accomplished the work that he was given. The origin and continuation of the church are grounded in his perfect accomplishment of this ministry given to him by the Father. Through his ministry, his total obedience, he effected salvation for sinful humans. Through his ministry sinful humankind becomes a royal priesthood that has to proclaim God's acts. On the strength of the ministry he exercised it becomes possible for human beings to enter God's ministry. Through his ministry believers have an office and may conduct special ministries.

After his ascension Christ continued his ministering work. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Peter stressed that Christ is *κύριος*. The same point is emphasised elsewhere in Scripture as well (cf eg 1 Cor 12:3). Christ the victor was given all authority in heaven and on earth by the Father (Matt 28:18) and now rules as *κύριος* (cf Rev 5). As *κύριος* he continues to carry out his mandate from heaven, only now he is the mandator. He gives the disciples a mandate to be his witnesses (Matt 28:19; Acts 1:8). Through their witness to him people must be brought to acknowledge Christ as *κύριος* in their faith and their living.

Christ also employs human services to accomplish his ministry. He uses certain people as his tools and as organs in his body, the church.

He no longer uses the Old Testament ordained ministries, for in and through him these have been fully accomplished. But he institutes new ordained ministries which display both continuity and discontinuity with the Old Testament ministries of prophets, priests and kings. This is evident in both the threefold nature of charisms (three categories: teaching, helping and leadership/rule – cf Du Plooy 2005:560), and in the three ministries relating to teaching, rule and charity/care.

In the first place he appoints apostles, first directly (Mark 3:14; Luke 6:12-16), and then the substitute apostle (Matthias), indirectly by means of the other apostles, the church and by casting lots (Acts 1:15-26). Later he called Paul to be an apostle (Gal 1:15-16).

In the churches that Christ called into existence via the apostles' ministry the Holy Spirit bestows diverse charisms (*χαρίσματα*), which the faithful have to use to accomplish God's will. These *χαρίσματα* consist in talents and abilities that the Holy Spirit confers on people, thus enabling them to build up the church by way of certain ministries (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12; 1 Pet 4:10-11).

These gifts were and are applied in different kinds of ministry.

As a rule believers minister spontaneously (at their own initiative) and incidentally when the occasion presents itself. This kind of service by every member of the church is part of what is known as the 'ministry of the faithful' (Luke 10:38; Acts 16:15; 19:26; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 4:10a; Appendix 1988, pt 7.2).

Sometimes charisms are also deployed in long-term, more organised ministry. This kind of ministry appears to have related mainly to assisting apostles (Luke 8:1-3; 10:1-17; Rom 16:3,6,9,12; 1 Cor 16:15-16; Col 4:7,10-11,14; 1 Tim 5:9).

Some believers are designated and appointed by the Lord via his church to exercise their gifts in one of the permanent ordained ministries that he instituted in the church². In the New Testament church the ordained ministries were those of pastor and teacher, elder and deacon³.

All this is confirmed by Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4:11-12 shows that as κύριος Christ perpetuates his ministry from heaven through the agency of human beings, whom he employs in ordained ministries. After emphasising Christ's triumphal ascension in a distinctive way with reference to Psalm 68 in Ephesians 4:8-10, Paul goes on in 4:11-12 to say that as victor and glorified Lord (κύριος) he gave people to serve in special ministries. Christ provided people with special gifts to serve in the various ordained ministries that are listed. Paul clearly did not intend to list all these ministries. This was merely the introduction to what he proposed to say next and he was simply stating the principle that Christ conferred special gifts (Roberts 1983:115). Paul speaks in the past tense, indicating that Christ gave in the past (Roberts 1983:115). In so doing Paul relates the giving of some to be this and others to be that to Christ's triumphal ascension. From this, and from the description of the tasks of people whom Christ gave as ordained ministers, one infers that Christ instituted a particular method of church organisation (cf Roberts 1983:115). In the dispensation that Christ rules from heaven he will appoint people to serve in certain special ministries.

Jesus Christ as glorified Lord (Eph 4:11f) is prominently active when all the gifts and ministries are permanently instituted in the church (ἤθετο, 1 Cor 12:28; ἔδωκεν [Aor], Eph 4:11).

² Cf Acts 6:1-6; 14:23; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11; Phlp 1:1; 1 Thess 5:12-13; 1 Tim 3:1-13; 5:17-20; 2 Tim 2:2; Tit 1:5-9; Heb 13:17; Jas 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1-4; Rev 4:4.

³ Cf 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 3:1-12; 5:17.

In sum: God reveals himself as the great Giver: giver of his Son, Jesus Christ, to the church; giver of the Holy Spirit; and, via the Son and the Spirit, giver of χαρίσματα, πνευμάτικα, ἐνεργήματα, διακονία (1 Cor 12:1-6; Rom 12).

1.1.3 Nature of ordained ministries

1.1.3.1 Essential components

An ordained ministry, as distinct from the ministry of all believers, entails the following:

1. a special task/assignment (special responsibility)⁴ given by the Lord to provide leadership⁵ for the service others have to render in the church⁶ (Matt 16:19; 18:18; 23:2-3; John 17:18; 20:23; Eph 4:12-16);
2. a specific, permanent⁷ list of duties to be performed on the Lord's instructions (John 21:15-17; Acts 6:3; 20:28; 1 Thess 5:14; 1 Tim 3:1,5,10; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:2-3) (for duties, cf 1.1.3.3.2 below);
3. particular requirements that people should meet to be ordained to these ministries (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim 3:2-12; Tit 1:6-9);
4. a vocation by the Lord via the church, consisting in the church's recognition and appointment of persons with the requisite gifts who meet the requirements (Mark 3:13-14; Acts 1:20-26; 6:3,5; 14:23)⁸;
5. public (= at a church assembly) acceptance and assumption of duties and consecratory promise of God's power (Acts 6:6; 13:3; 14:23; 1 Tim 4:15; 2 Tim 1:6)⁹;
6. the church's obedient submission to the good leadership provided (Heb 13:17; 1 Tim 5:17).

1.1.3.2 Distinction between general and ordained ministry

The New Testament makes it clear that all believers are called by God to serve others. They are all anointed in Christ (Heidelberg Catechism Sunday 12) and are called to minister as prophets, priests and kings (1 Pet 2:9). All believers have the office of the faithful (cf Belgic Confession 29). To this end the Lord also endowed each with the necessary gifts according to his sovereign will (Eph 4:8; 1 Pet 2).

⁴ Cf section 1.1.4 on the implications of the headship of Christ for this special responsibility.

⁵ Such leadership entails equipping people, promoting unity, coordinating and keeping order, teaching and discipline. Some facets of this leadership can only be exercised in mutual consultation (Matt 18:17-20; 1 Cor 5:4-5).

⁶ That is why the congregation is in duty bound to respect and obey pastors (1 Thess 5:12-13; Heb 13:7,17).

⁷ An ordained ministry requires continuity. Hence it is not a ministry exercised incidentally but is permanently vested in the person of the incumbent (Versteeg 1988:49-50).

⁸ People may not take ordained ministries upon themselves; they have to be appointed by the Lord via his church (Acts 1:24-26; 6:4, 5; 8:18-23; 13:2-4; 20:28; Heb 5:4).

⁹ The term of service is 'temporary' until the Lord's return: until either the death or the dismissal of the incumbent (because of valid circumstances or disaffection) (Jer 31:34; 1 Cor 12:8; 15:28).

At the same time it is clear from the New Testament that there is a distinction between those who minister by virtue of the office of the faithful and those with an ordained ministry such as that of a prophet or elder. When Paul refers to overseers and deacons in Philippians 1:1 it is evident that he has specific people in mind, not all believers generally (also see Versteeg 1988:49-50). That implies that when someone is called and ordained the person has to do something additional and special as required by that ministry.

What distinguishes ordained ministries from other forms of service in and by the church is not the *special gifts* of the incumbents, for other church members also have gifts of teaching, leadership and helping people, but for various reasons they do not exercise them in an official capacity.¹⁰

Neither is it the *substance of the ministry*, for in diverse ways and all sorts of situations every believer has to give others scriptural guidance, must see to it that they do the will of the Lord, and must extend charity to those in need (HC 12). Thus the teaching and proclamation, pastoral comfort and admonition, and charitable work in which the ordained ministries have to lead the church do not preclude mutual teaching, comforting, admonition and assistance among other believers. In fact, the ordained ministries are supposed to stimulate these activities among other believers by counselling and equipping them and setting an example (Matt 18:15-16; Acts 4:32-35; Gal 6:10; Eph 4:12; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 4:18; 1 Pet 2:9; 5:3).

Finally, the distinction does not lie in the *superior importance* of ordained ministries compared with the general ministry of the faithful, or imply that those in ordained ministries have received more gifts from the Spirit than other believers (Versteeg 1988:50). Such a quantitative approach would be counter to the essence of ordained ministries.

What is unique about ordained ministries is the *special care* they should take to ensure that the true faith is maintained, true doctrine is disseminated everywhere, transgressors are admonished spiritually and restrained, and the poor and those in distress are helped and comforted according to their needs (Belgic Confession 30).

1.1.3.3 Aim and substance of ordained ministries

1.1.3.3.1 Overall aim of ordained ministries

The *principal goal* of all church ministry is that Christ's *kúpioq*-ship will be acknowledged and heeded. Ministry (whether in the office of the believer

¹⁰ Naturally a person cannot be called to an ordained ministry if that person does not have the necessary charisms.

or ordained) that is aimed at confirming or enhancing the authority of a person or an institution is not true ministry.

In Ephesians 4 Paul underscores *equipping* (NRSV) as a purpose of ordained ministry. In Ephesians 4:11-12 he writes that the victorious and glorified Lord, Christ, has given people to exercise the various ordained ministries with a view to equipping the faithful.

Καταρτίζω means 'to equip/qualify for something' (cf Louw & Nida 1988[1]:680). Paul also specifies what believers should be equipped to do. They should be equipped for their ministry. In 4:7 he says "each one of us", that is everyone who is a member of Christ's body, has been given a charism.¹¹ Christ's aim in giving people to exercise the various ordained ministries is to equip them so that they can use their gifts to fulfil the purpose for which they have received them.

In Ephesians 4 Paul also dwells on *unity* as a goal of the ordained ministries. In this chapter church unity is a cardinal theme. In 4:1-6 he enjoins the church to maintain unity in its ranks. In 4:7-16 he continues this theme, pointing out that everybody in the church has received the gift of grace and how that gift can further church unity for everybody. From the thought structure of 4:7-16 one infers that the ministry of the people whom Christ has given to render the various services must culminate in the deployment of believers' gifts to further the unity of the church.

Ephesians 4 furthermore highlights *coordination* as a goal of the ordained ministries. The word ἀφῆς in Ephesians 4:16 can also be rendered with 'ligament' – as in the NIV – (Versteeg 1988:55-56; cf Louw & Nida 1988(2):101-102), and refers to the ordained ministries mentioned in 4:11-12. According to that enumeration the task of the ordained ministries is, for example, that people given as 'pastors and teachers' must ensure, like ligaments in a body, that the body of Christ is properly joined and remains knit together. They are given to the body so that the faithful will not pursue different or even conflicting goals.

In addition Ephesians refers to *provision* or *nurture* as a goal of the ordained ministries. The word ἐπιχορηγίας in Ephesians 4:16 can also be rendered with 'provision' (Versteeg 1988:56-57; Louw & Nida 1988(2):461-462). If, as we argued above, Paul's ἀφῆς designates people in ordained ministries as ligaments, 4:16 is about ligaments of provision. It was accepted in those days that ligaments are channels for supplying the body with food (Versteeg 1988:56-57). This suggests that Paul is explaining that people who have been given for ordained ministries have the task of providing the body of Christ with food – the food of the word.

¹¹ Cf Roberts (1983:110) and Versteeg (1988:50-52) for a detailed exposition of why one can assume that Paul's reference is to a gift of grace rather than salvation in Christ.

But Ephesians 4 does not present upbuilding of the church as a direct goal of the ordained ministries. A superficial reading of Ephesians 4:7-16 could create the impression that people in ordained ministries have church upbuilding as their task. In that case Ephesians 4:12 is taken to mean that, besides the goal of equipping the congregation, people in ordained ministries have to build it up. But if 4:16 is read in conjunction with 4:12, the body is clearly responsible for building up itself. If people in ordained ministries fulfil their duty and equip the faithful for ministry, the body is able to build up itself.

1.1.3.3.2 Substance of the ordained ministries

1.1.3.3.2.1 Substance of elders' ministry

An elder's ministry entails the following:

- to guard the flock vigilantly (προσέχετε, Acts 20:28; γρηγορεῖτε, Acts 20:31) by being alert (Acts 20:31); to care for¹² (ποιμαίνειν/ποιμάνετε) God's flock as shepherds (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2); to set an example to the flock (τύποι ... τοῦ ποιμνίου, 1 Pet 5:3)
- to minister to the church as overseers (ἐπισκόπους) (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2), which includes discipline (John 20:23; 1 Thess 5:12)
- to care for the church (ἐπιμελήσεται - 1 Tim 3:5)
- to be the steward of God's household (θεοῦ οἰκονόμον) (Tit 1:7)¹³
- to be constantly mindful of the example of apostolic ministry when ministering to his flock (μνημονεύοντες ... νοουθετῶν, Acts 20:31)¹⁴
- to equip the faithful for their ministry, namely building up the body of Christ (πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν ... εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, Eph 4:12)
- to teach (διδακτικόν, 1 Tim 3:2; τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, Eph 4:11)
- to teach in sound doctrine (παρακαλεῖν, Tit 1:9)
- to refute dissidents (τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν, Tit 1:9)

¹² This puts the focus on the comprehensive care that a shepherd provides for the flock and the relation between shepherd and sheep. The shepherd/flock image in Scripture refers to compassionate leadership and care (Ps 23, Isa 40:11); protection (Jer 31:10; Eze 34:5; Micah 5:4); and guidance (Isa 63:11) (Van der Walt 1976:80-81). This is also evident in the example of the good shepherd who looks for the lost sheep and rejoices when finding it (Luke 15:4-6) and the shepherd who gives his life for the sheep (John 10). Hence the command, ποιμάνετε, calls elders to provide leadership, care and protection.

¹³ It implies that God is the κύριος (landlord) with the *episkopos*, who has a mandate from the landlord to administer the household. To this end the *episkopos* is given the necessary authority or power.

¹⁴ Elders are built up by the word, which gives them the inheritance (τῷ λόγῳ ... τῷ δυναμένῳ οἰκοδομῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν κληρονομίαν, Acts 20:32).

- to provide leadership (προεστῶτες, 1 Tim 5:17)
- to preach and instruct (οἱ κοπιῶντες ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλία, 1 Tim 5:17)¹⁵
- to pray for the sick, "anointing them with oil" (Jas 5:14)
- to take decisions, based on revelation, that are binding on the church (Acts 15:2 – 16:4)

Thus elders have to exercise pastoral care and vigilance, and ensure that the church is nourished and guided by Scripture.

1.1.3.3.2 Substance of the ministry of ministers of the word

The distinction commonly made between ruling and teaching elders is a familiar one. Usually it is based on 1 Timothy 5:17 ("The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching "). From this one infers that there is in fact a distinction between elders who concentrate on leadership and guidance and those whose labour consists mainly in preaching and teaching the Word.¹⁶ Apart from what ministers of the Word do together with elders, then, their ministry focuses on inculcating the word and doctrine.

Yet from 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6ff it is clear that one cannot make a sharp distinction between ruling and teaching elders. Teaching elders also had to direct and directive elders to teach.

1.1.3.3.3 Institution and substance of the ministry of deacons

1.1.3.3.3.1 Institution of the deacon's ministry

The institution of diaconal service in Acts 6 is subject to dispute. At all events, the reformed tradition, as expressed inter alia in the order of ordination of deacons, takes Acts 6 to be the institution of their ministry. This view poses the following problems:

- The text speaks only of seven 'men', not seven 'deacons'.
- Philip and Stephen also acted as evangelists
- The seven all have Greek names, which makes some exegetes think that a Greek-speaking group had emerged.

¹⁵ The Greek actually means 'work hard in word and doctrine'. This instruction applies to a particular category of elders, so in the New Testament the distinction between ruling and teaching elders is not explicit or mandatory.

¹⁶ But cf Pieter Kurpershoek's dissertation, which argues that the 'especially' in 1 Tim 5:17 is used epexegetically (as in 1 Tim 4:10), and does not signify a differentiation of ministries.

- The number seven corresponds with the seven elders in the synagogues, so some scholars believe that this might actually have been the institution of some sort of ministry of elders.
- There is no other reference to deacons in the book of Acts apart from one to “the seven” (Acts 21:8).

Counter arguments are the following:

- Even though the word δῆκονος is not used in Acts 6, the concept of service is focal. It concerned the daily “distribution of food” (διακονία – 6:1), that is waiting at tables (διακονέω – 6:2).
- The fact that some deacons later acted as evangelists as well does not negate the basic element of the special ministry that was organised in Acts 6. It could well have been that some of the seven were subsequently called to a more extensive ministry than purely diaconal duties.
- It is noteworthy that the ministry of deacons is mentioned prominently, without further explanation, in the pastoral letters and in Philippians 1:1. This confirms the view that it should be regarded as a ministry that had already been introduced in Scripture.¹⁷

Hence a deacon is a person who has the gift of showing mercy (Rom 12:8) and is called to that particular ministry.

1.1.3.3.2.3.2 Substance of diaconal ministry

Acts 2:42 identifies four features of the early church: persistence in teaching, fellowship, communal meals and prayer. Acts 6 explicitly states that after the appointment of the seven the apostles continued two of these ministries – prayer and the ministry of the Word. Thus the other two aspects – fellowship and communal meals – must have been key components of the seven’s duties. Major components of the elders’ task would have been prayer and ministry of the word. Hence it may be inferred that fellowship and communal meals – both associated with κοινωνία in the church – were part of diaconal ministry.

¹⁷ The view that the ministry of the seven described in Acts 6 was a prototype of all three the ministries that were instituted subsequently (cf Coetzee 1967:44-50) is unacceptable. In Acts 6 the ministry that was instituted is clearly distinguished from the ministries of prayer and the word, hence it could not have been their precursor. A better case can be made for the view that Acts 6 describes the institution of a proto-diaconal ministry – a special ministry that was initially not clearly circumscribed (cf the ministries of Stephen and Philip) and entailed a smaller field of operation (seven Greek men were chosen to attend to the needs of a particular group in the church – the Greek-speaking widows). The diaconal office referred to in Philippians 1 and 1 Timothy 3 evolved from this in due course.

We have pointed out (cf 1.1.3.3.1) that the purpose for which Christ gave people to fulfil the various ministries was to equip them to use their gifts to further the goal for which they were intended: helping to build up the body. Applied to diaconal ministry, the equipment that deacons must provide consists in seeing to it that the church practises loving fellowship through the special gifts that the Lord Jesus Christ gave everyone – all for the sake of upbuilding the church.

Deacons equip people by, as the order of ordination for deacons puts it –

- visiting everyone and encouraging them to demonstrate active love for their fellow believers and all human beings;
- ensuring, by visiting everybody, that nobody is estranged from the community of the faithful because of poverty, isolation, old age, illness or any other reason
- frugally administering the means given for ministry to the needy, spending it judiciously and distributing it with comfort from Scripture

Hence deacons have the duty of fostering mutual assistance and fellowship (κοινωνία) in the church by initiating, coordinating and organising this ministry (Acts 2:42; 6:3;¹⁸ 1 Tim 3:12)¹⁹ and equipping people for it (Eph 4:12).²⁰

1.1.4 Authority of the ordained ministries

Besides being head of all authorities and rulers (Col 2:10) and governing them with subjugating power, Christ is also head of the church (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:19). In 1 Corinthians 11 it is evident that Paul uses Christ's headship to emphasise Christ's authority in the church (Van der Walt 1976:34-37). In this passage the accent is on the requirement that the church submit to its head, Christ. Paul, with reference to the conduct of some women in the church who prayed without covering their heads, starts off by pointing out Christ's position of power. Women who behave thus not only reveal an improper attitude towards their husbands, but also fail to recognise Christ's unique position (cf 10.4 below).

¹⁸ This inference from Acts 6:3 applies, whether the passage is read as referring to a proto-diaconate or a general proto-ministry (cf Coetzee 1967:44-50; Venter 1996:50-51).

¹⁹ The phrase ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ ("to this task" in Acts 6:3), read in conjunction with 1 Tim 3:12, indicates that the diaconal ministry also entails a leadership role.

²⁰ Comparison of the requirements for deacons and elders in 1 Tim 3 reveals considerable correspondence between the two sets of duties. One observes, however, that the capacity to teach is required only of elders, indicating that deacons' task does not include proclamation or teaching. Another striking feature is that deacons, like elders, must be able to manage their own households well.

His headship circumscribes all behaviour in the church and determines all relationships (Van der Walt 1976:39).

The word ἐξουσία (authority) expresses the sovereign power and authority which God embodies and which he gave to his Son (Matt 28:18-20 – “all authority”). As head of the church Jesus Christ disposes over all authority (also see John 10:18).

Christ does not delegate his authority to any person or institution (Rev 3:7). The church has but one head: Jesus Christ. There is no deputy head. There is no intermediary between Christ, the head, and the church, his body (Van der Walt 1976:63).

Nonetheless certain people in the church must mediate Christ’s authority in a distinctive way, different from that of believers generally. Initially the apostles led the way by mediating Christ’s authority in this special way (Matt 10:14, 40; 16:19; John 20:23; 1 Cor 9:1; 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10). Later on the Bible records that God also requires recognition of and submission to other persons in ordained ministries (cf eg 1 Cor 16:16-18; 1 Thess 5:12; Heb 13:17). They, too, have been called to mediate Christ’s authority in special ways.

But because Christ alone is head of the church this should be taken to mean that these people do not have authority in their own right but merely mediate Christ’s authority by virtue of their ministry. Hence they act with ministrative authority²¹ and are accountable for it to the king of the church (Tit 1:7 [“steward”]; Heb 13:17).

Important scriptural passages in this regard are Matthew 16:18-20 and 18:17 on the mandate over the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Here Christ grants the church a threefold mandate (*potestas*) (Calvin Inst 4,8,1; 11,1; 4,10):

- *potestas doctrinae* (mandate to teach);
- *potestas iurisdictionis* (mandate to rule);
- *potestas in legibus ferendis* (mandate to pass laws)

The church, and thus the ministries that it exercises, has a huge responsibility to open or close the gates of the kingdom in the name of Christ, who wields actual power over the keys. The Lord gave the church a mandate to use them. Hence it is a matter of mandated powers (*potestas*) rather than *auctoritas* (personal power).

The fact that Paul depicts the ordained ministries as ligaments in a body clearly indicates their status in relation to the church. People in ordained ministries are not **above** the church in some position of power.

²¹ Such mediation of authority is also exercised by office bearers in mutual consultation and under mutual supervision (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 4:14).

Nor do they operate **alongside** the church in some sort of external counselling capacity. Nor do they fall **under** the church as though they take their orders from it. Nor do they **oppose** the church in a confrontational way. People in ordained ministries, like ligaments in a body, are **part of the church**. Like ligaments, they fulfil a specific function. They fulfil that function, as part of the church, in order that the κύριος-ship of the head of the body will be recognised and actualised (Eph 4:7-16; 1 Cor 12:28ff).

Hence there is no hint of a hierarchy or differences in status in the church as the body of Christ, or of men (including those in ordained ministries) belonging to a superior order from other members (eg women) (cf Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4).

Thus the ministry of those who are called to it is authoritative only inasmuch as it is performed faithfully according to Christ's commands. In this regard the expressions διάκονος Χριστοῦ (1 Tim 4:6) and δοῦλον κύριου (2 Tim 2:24) in the pastoral letters are pertinent (Venter 1988:106). People who are given by Christ to conduct ordained ministries should be like servants or slaves: on no account must they act by virtue of supposed personal authority; they may only mediate the authority of their κύριος.

This view is confirmed by the fact that in the pastoral letters this authority is consistently linked with the word, for instance with preaching the word (2 Tim 4:2), with the instruction (1 Tim 1:18), with putting "these instructions before the brothers and sisters" (1 Tim 4:6, NRSV) and with paying "close attention to ... your teaching" (1 Tim 4:16, NRSV) (Venter 1988:106). We note that in the major decision that had to be taken, recorded in Acts 15, Peter and James invoked revelation (Van der Walt 1976:65). Thus Christ's authority is mediated only when mediating his word. Those who have been called to witness to him can only witness authoritatively if they heed his word. And to heed his word the ones who have been sent need the Spirit's guidance. After all, the Spirit was sent to guide the church into all the truth (cf John 16:13).

This is also the basis of the equality of the ordained ministries. They are all equal, since all of them mediate Christ's authority, although with different orientations. The ministry of ruling elders is aimed at mediating Christ's kingship; that of deacons at mediating his priesthood; and teaching elders seek to mediate his prophethood.

Although Paul maintains that people in ordained ministries should be respected, he consistently calls himself Christ's servant (δοῦλος) (cf Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; Philp 1:1; Tit 1:1) (Kleynhans 1988:173). The fact that Jesus Christ is the chief shepherd (1 Pet 1:5) and head of the church precludes any human hierarchy in the church.

1 Corinthians 12 makes it clear that the labourers in God's kingdom, being servants of God, are equals (Calvin 1948(1):395f).²²

1.1.5 Ordained ministries and χαρίσματα²³

In a technical sense the expression χαρίσματα (gifts of the Spirit) refers to certain abilities and functions that the Holy Spirit graciously bestows on people. Gifts of the Spirit are bestowed for the sake of the church and should be exercised in the church, which is a totally new creation of the Spirit (2 Cor 5:17) functioning as a single, close community of believers (1 Cor 12), out of motives of love with a view to service, upbuilding, usefulness, and order and restraint (1 Cor 12-14).

As the body of Christ the church is given gifts of the Spirit, not according to gender, status or age, but by virtue of Christ's redemption. Each is given certain gifts according to God's sovereign will (Eph 4:8) so that, for instance, sons and daughters, menservants and maid-servants will prophesy (cf Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-18; 21:9).

Charisms signify a task and vocation imposed by God. He bestows a particular charism to equip and enable a person to perform some task or service aimed at building up the church. Thus a ministry automatically ensues from a charism.

Hence it is a mistake to see a contrast between charism (χαρίσμα) and ministry (διακονία).²⁴ The New Testament shows no trace of any such contrast. The contours of the ordained ministries are prefigured by the gifts mentioned in the New Testament. The gifts call for an ordained ministry and the ordained ministries are in fact gifts that are publicly recognised by the church. The charism is aimed at the ministry and the ministry cannot do without the charism (Ridderbos 1966:156).

Not all gifts culminate in an ordained ministry, hence the two do not necessarily coincide. Many believers minister with the aid of their special gifts as and when the occasion arises (spontaneously, ad hoc). But other gifts are bestowed on people who are called to utilise them in an ordained ministry.

Furthermore, the gifts needed for a particular ordained ministry do not automatically afford access to that ministry. There are other requirements as well (1 Tim 3:1-12; Tit 1:6-9; cf 1.3 above).

²² Ministry should therefore always be exercised in the spirit of a servant and should take the form of service (Matt 20:25-28; Acts 20:24; Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 4:1-2, 5; 10:8; 11:23; Col 1:25; 1 Tim 4:6; 2 Tim 2:24; 1 Pet 5:2-3).

²³ Based largely on Du Plooy (2005:555-567).

²⁴ Floor (1988:75) cites the view of some researchers that church history started out with a wholly charismatic phase. This was followed (in their view) by a retrogressive phase, which entailed a shift towards institutionalism and the emergence of ministries. Floor demonstrates the untenability of this view in terms of the New Testament.

1.1.6 Conclusions

The foregoing treatise forms the background to the further study of gender in the ordained ministries. The following conclusions may be particularly relevant:

- 1.1.6.1 The ordained ministries entail humble service, not dominion over the church (cf 1.1.1.1 and 1.1.1.2).
- 1.1.6.2 Ordained ministries originate from God, not from human beings. Hence their nature and functioning are determined by God (cf 1.1.2).
- 1.1.6.3 In and through Christ the Old Testament ordained ministries were consummated. Christ gives new ministries (teaching, ruling, and charity/care), which display both continuity and discontinuity with the Old Testament ministries of prophets, priests and kings (cf 1.2).
- 1.1.6.4 Ordained ministries, as distinct from the ministry of all believers, entail a specific assignment, specific and permanent duties, a person meeting special requirements, a calling from the Lord, public assumption of duty, and the church's obedient submission to the good leadership provided (cf 1.1.3.1 and 1.1.3.2).
- 1.1.6.5 The *main aim* of all church ministry is to recognise and submit to Christ's κύριος-ship. Ministry aimed at confirming or enhancing the authority of a person or institution is not true ministry. Ordained ministries have the following additional goals: equipping the church, promoting church unity, coordinating members' charisms, providing assistance and care (cf 1.1.3.3.1).
- 1.1.6.6 Elders should exercise vigilance and care, and ensure that the church is nourished and guided by the Bible (cf 1.1.3.3.2.1).
- 1.1.6.7 Ministers of the word have the special task of teaching the word and doctrine (cf 1.1.3.3.2.2).
- 1.1.6.8 Deacons' ministry is to ensure mutual help and fellowship in the church by initiating, coordinating and organising it and equipping people for it (cf 1.1.3.3.2.3.2).
- 1.1.6.9 Christ is the sole head of the church, hence people have no authority of their own. Those in ordained ministries simply mediate Christ's authority. Hence they act with ministrative authority, for which they are accountable to the king of the church (cf 1.1.4),
- 1.1.6.10 Christ's position of authority circumscribes all activities and determines all relationships in the church. This applies to the conduct of male and female members and marital relations as well (cf 1.1.4).

- 1.1.6.11 The Lord gave the church a mandate only to use the keys to the kingdom. Hence the ordained ministries exercise this mandate (*potestas*) but not *auctoritas* (personal power) (cf 1.1.4).
- 1.1.6.12 As the body of Christ the church is given charisms, not according to gender, status or age but as redeemed people (cf 1.1.5).
- 1.1.6.13 Not all charisms culminate in ordained ministry. Thus charism and ordained ministry do not necessarily coincide (cf 1.1.5).

1.2 Brief review of church history regarding women in ordained ministries²⁵

1.2.1 Introduction

This review is based mainly on information from study reports of the GKSA (cf Appendix 1988), the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (*Eindrapport Deputaten voor de vragen rond vrouw en ambt* [Final report of delegates on issues pertaining to women in clerical office]) and the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (Report 9 of Synod 1997, Study Committee Women in the office of Deacon). We also acknowledge the sources used in these reports.

1.2.2 From the early centuries AD to the Middle Ages

First we need to point out that there was no uniform practice regarding the position of women in the early centuries of church history. In part this diversity should be viewed against the background of heretical trends that the church was facing. It is also attributable to developments within the church, such as marked differences between the Eastern and the Western church.

However, there is clear evidence of deaconesses' ministry at an early stage of church history. The first reference to deaconesses is found in Pliny's letter to Trajan in the late 1st century AD. He mentions two female slaves (*ancillae*) who, according to him, were called deaconesses (*ministrae*) by the church. One can assume that *ministra* is a Latin rendering of *διδάκω*. Their ministry was aimed mainly at assisting women, for instance in (adult) baptism and through pastoral visits to single women.

As far back as Ignatius's time there appears to have been a recognised ministry by widows. But there is no evidence that they were ordained or appointed to an official ministry, despite church recognition. Their ministry was diaconal and largely involved help to women.

Neither is there any evidence that women were used as assistant catechists or even that they brought the gospel to women in places that were inaccessible to males. Church literature actually mentions female assistant elders (*presbitides*, *presbiterae*,

²⁵ Callie Coetzee gave an exceptional contribution i.r.o. 1.2 of this book, the review of church history.

presbyterissae). Apparently they were women who assisted elders (and deacons) in performing their duties, such as admonition, visiting the sick and ministering to women.

The Alexandrine fathers Clement and Origen wrote a great deal about women but said little about their position in public life and the church's official ministry. Clement, however, believed that Paul's use of the word *γυνή* in 1 Corinthians 9:5 does not refer to the apostles' wives but to women who accompanied the apostles and assisted them in their ministry. In his commentary on Romans 16:1 Origen moreover states that women were appointed to the church's ministry.

Tertullian (late 2nd century) appears to have made no mention of any *diacona* or *ministra*, but did believe that the widows mentioned in 1 Timothy belonged to a special group in the church and played an active role.

A Syriac church order from the first half of the 3rd century – the *Didascalia Apostolorum* – contains an explicit reference to deaconesses, whose duties included visiting the sick and who appeared to have augmented the ministry of deacons in areas that focused particularly on women.

Schwertley (1988) gives a detailed account from early Christian writings on the position of women in diaconal ministry in the early church, from the *Didache* (c 100 AD) to the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). He shows that these documents never mention women ministering in the same official diaconal capacity as men, although there are clear references to women ministering in the diaconal field without being officially ordained like overseers, elders or deacons. They may be regarded as 'deaconesses'. Their position and activities were modelled on the requirements in 1 Timothy 5:9f, hence differed considerably from those of deacons. Also, unlike deacons, deaconesses had to be at least 60 years old. The council of Chalcedon lowered the age restriction to 40. Earlier the council of Nicea (325 AD) had ruled that deaconesses are not ordained by laying on of hands, hence had lay status.

The gradual disappearance of the diaconate, hence the ministry of deaconesses as well, probably relates to the marginalisation of diaconal ministry under the sway of a monarchic episcopate. The ascetic approach also played a role. In terms of this trend 1 Timothy 5 included young women, even virgins, among the widows, who were recognised by the church and assigned a special position and duties. Under the influence of the episcopate and asceticism female ministry was eventually banished from public life, culminating in a chaste, virginal existence behind secure convent walls.

1.2.3 The age of the Reformation

Present-day clerical and ecclesiastic structures in the Reformed tradition developed mainly at the time of the Reformation. The reformers did not specifically follow the early church's practices, largely because it was not all that clear what these were during the first few centuries of the Christian era.

Luther rebelled against Rome's invocation of the hierarchically structured power and authority of the ordained ministry. Instead he put the accent on the priesthood of all believers. As for ordained ministries, apart from that of preacher he retained only diaconal ministry. Following the New Testament, he wanted to organise the diaconate differently from Rome (where deacons were no more than liturgical assistants to the priest), with the accent on active help to the poor and the needy. In practice, however, the diaconate in his church did not come to anything, for the poor were soon left to the care of the state.

Calvin worked out an elaborate, scripturally based doctrine of the various ministries. His doctrine had a lasting influence on churches of the Calvinist Reformed tradition.

In regard to women Calvin believed that they should not minister in a teaching or ruling capacity (cf especially his commentary on 1 Cor 14:33-36). In regard to diaconal ministry he did not adopt any particular stance, merely distinguishing between two kinds of deacons (cf his commentary on Rom 12:8 and Inst IV:3,9). The first category was in charge of receiving and distributing gifts. According to his *Ordonnances Ecclesiastique* they were called *procureurs*. The second had to extend charity to the poor and the sick. They were known as *hospitaliers*.

Both in his commentary on Romans 12:8 and his *Institutions* IV:3,9 Calvin felt that women could work alongside the second kind of deacons in helping and caring for the poor and the sick. He based this on 1 Timothy 5:9-10, which refers to widows. In Calvin's view this was the only special ministry that women could serve in (alongside deacons). It concurs with his view that deacons do not form part of the church council (consistory) and that their ministry should focus on the field of charity.

1.2.4 Developments after the Reformation

In contrast to Geneva (Calvin), deacons in the French and Belgian churches were included in the church council (or consistory). In addition to these there were also deaconesses, who did not serve on the church council. They were an unofficial group of women who tended the poor, the sick and the aged.

As for diaconal ministry in the Dutch churches, the most noticeable influence was that of the *Forma ac Ratio* of a Lasco. According to a Lasco the diaconate was a separate ministry not included in the church council, who focused on care for poor and the sick.

The Belgic Confession Art 30 includes deacons in the church council, probably under the influence of the French and Belgian church order. The church order of Dort, on the other hand, in keeping with the approach of Calvin and the Dutch churches, excluded deacons from the church council.

Between 1550 and 1560 some churches on the Rhine, in Emden, Middelburg, Utrecht and Amsterdam started introducing deaconesses, partly under French influence. In Amsterdam twelve deaconesses were appointed to run an old age home and an orphanage. They had to report to the deacons and the church council, since, in contrast to the French churches, they were not members of that body. These deaconesses were mostly older women of good character.

As regards church assemblies, the Articles of Wesel (1568) were heavily influenced by the French and Belgian positions, as well as by Calvin (via Datheen, the chairman at Wesel). Thus they respected Calvin's distinction between two kinds of deacons and also provided for deaconesses: "where convenient, we judge that, following the example of the apostles, women of good character, virtuous conduct and advanced years may also be admitted to this ministry" (our translation).

The synod of Emden in 1571 paid active attention to a church order. In the case of the church council it decided that it should be composed of ministers, elders and deacons. Deacons could also be delegates to various meetings. This rule caused confusion and the 1574 synod of Dordrecht started separating the diaconate from the church council once more, so that after 1578 virtually all references are to "the church council and the deacons".

Possibly this development is the reason why the deaconesses of Wesel fell by the wayside. At the synod of Middelburg in 1581, therefore, the church in Wesel inquired whether it would not be a good thing to reinstate the office of deaconesses. The synod's response speaks volumes: "No, because it will give rise to various inconveniences; but in times of pestilence or other diseases – when certain services have to be rendered to female patients that would be improper for deacons to perform – these may be performed by their wives or other competent women".

That put an end to 'official' deaconesses and subsequent synodal gatherings up to Dordrecht 1618-1619 did not speak out on this issue again.

1.2.5 Situation in denominations with which the GKSA maintains links

The GKSA has links with the following denominations: Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands; *Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken* (Dutch Reformed Churches); *Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland (Vrijgemaakt)* (Free Dutch Reformed Churches); Botswana Reformed Church; *Eglise Reformee Confessante au Congo*; Christian Reformed Church in North America;

Orthodox Presbyterian Church; Free Church of Scotland; Free Church of Scotland (Continuing); Christian Reformed Churches of Australia; Reformed Churches of New Zealand; the Reformed Church in Japan; the Presbyterian Church in Korea.

In regard to the position of women in ordained ministries, the following points are pertinent to these denominations.

The Christian Reformed Church in North America and the *Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken* have taken decisions that boil down to admitting women to ordained ministries. In the case of the *Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken* the implementation of this decision is left to the discretion of the various classes.

In 2003 the GKSA decided that women may hold the office of deacon. Following petitions that were accepted at the 2006 synod the issue of women in diaconal ministry is currently under scrutiny once more with a view to a report to the 2009 synod.

The Christian Reformed Churches of Australia have decided to admit women to diaconal office.

The Presbyterian Church in Korea employs women as deaconesses in the manner outlined by Calvin.

All the other denominations listed above do not admit women to any of the ordained ministries.

1.2.6 Findings

This survey of church history yields the following findings.

- The first few centuries of church history do not permit any final conclusions about women in special ministries. They do show, however, that at times and in some churches women did render diaconal services.
- Women who served as deacons in the early centuries were not ordained by laying on of hands, hence were not part of the church council. The local churches did, however, recognise their special ministry.
- In regard to the Reformation, the consensus was that women should not be admitted to the teaching and ruling ministries.
- Calvin distinguished between two kinds of deacons and women were admitted to the second category (*hospitaliers*), whose ministry focused on care of the poor, the sick and the aged. These deaconesses were not formally ordained and deacons (including the first kind, the *Procureurs*) were not included in the church council.

- In the post-Reformation era there was a period when women served as deaconesses in some churches. However, this custom had lapsed by the time of the synod of Dordrecht in 1618-1619, until the 20th century when individual denominations started looking at the whole issue afresh.
- Among denominations with which the GKSA maintains links there is, with two exceptions, consensus that women should not be admitted to the teaching and ruling ministries (preacher and elder). In three of these denominations women serve as deacons and in a few others as deaconesses.

Chapter 2

SCRIPTURAL PREMISES

The Bible is God's eternal, always applicable word, which, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was recorded through human agency for people in a temporally oriented way.

This assumption comprises the following elements that are pertinent to this study, to be dealt with below:

- The Bible is the word of God
- The Bible is eternal and always applicable
- The Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit
- The Bible is temporally oriented but not time bound

2.1 The Bible is the word of God

Confessing that the Bible is the word of God implies that he is the subject of what is written in it. Hence he is not merely the object. But, since he is revealing himself in the Bible, he is its object as well. God revealed himself and his will to humans in written form, and in the process he availed himself of human beings and human activity. Hence his revelation in the Bible is couched in the language and context of those people. In this sense the Bible is God's word expressed in human words (cf eg Luke 1:1-4;²⁶ Rev 1:1-3²⁷). Essentially, then, it is both divine and human.

²⁶ Luke 1:1-4: "Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, ²just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴so you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed."

²⁷ Rev 1:1-3: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ²who testifies to everything he saw – that is the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. ³Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near."

The fact that God is the author of the Bible means, moreover, that the biblical books should be interpreted in their interrelationship in revelation history, not in isolation.

Calling the Bible God's word does not imply that the Bible encompasses the whole of his word.²⁸ But the Bible contains God's entire will for our salvation and our lives, as confessed in Article 2 of the Belgic Confession: everything we need to believe to be saved is adequately taught in Scripture. In addition to his revelation in the Bible God also reveals himself in creation. But human beings need the Bible almost like spectacles to be able to read the book of creation (cf Belgic Confession, Art 2).

The Bible is God's word in a manner that takes full account of all historical and human aspects.

2.2 The Bible is eternal and always applicable

2.2.1 God's authoritative revelation for all ages

Confessing that the Bible is eternal and always applicable implies, firstly, that God intended it to convey his revelation to people in every age, in all places and in all situations; it also acknowledges that the Bible is authoritative and reveals God's will. The confession further means that we take the Bible as the criterion of our view of God, our relationship with him, our personal lifestyle and our relations with other people and with creation.

2.2.2 Self-attestation

The Bible's eternal nature and applicability cannot be proved by means of external evidence. It is its actual contents that convince readers of its authority. This 'intrinsic credibility' emerges when the Holy Spirit communicates God's word to people by way of these texts. The Holy Spirit makes believers aware of the authority of the texts. Hence it is not a matter of the Spirit acting independently, outside Scripture. The Spirit's

²⁸ Consider eg the statement in John 20:30 that Jesus "did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book".

witness is intimately linked and interwoven with the contents of the Bible (John 14:26,²⁹ 16:12-15;³⁰ 1 Cor 2:10-14;³¹ 2 Cor 3:14-18³²).

2.2.3 Scope of revelation

Confessing that the Bible is eternal and always applicable does not mean that it offers a simplistic, one-to-one answer to every problem that we face. Fundamentally it offers God's revelation of himself (what he is and what he does: God, Lord, creator of everything, sustainer and ruler), the way he effects salvation (that in Christ he vanquished sin and thus restored his relationship with the bearer of his image to that of Father and child), and how he should be honoured and worshipped as Lord and God (how the redeemed should demonstrate in everything they do, say and think that they live in terms of a restored relationship with God).

2.2.4 Scope and societal conventions

Whilst the Bible is the eternal and always applicable word of God, we should take its temporally oriented character into account (cf 2.4 below). Because the Bible is God's eternal and always applicable word, chronologically speaking its focus (although not its scope) is the life world of its first readers, including the problems and historical issues they confronted.

²⁹ John 14:26: "²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

³⁰ John 16:12-15: "¹²I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it know to you. ¹⁵All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

³¹ 1 Cor 2:10-14: "¹⁰... but God has revealed it to us by the Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way o one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

³² 2 Cor 3:14-18: "¹⁴But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.. ¹⁵Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away." ¹⁷"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

In his authoritative word God clarified to those readers, via human authors, how they, as grateful redeemed humans, should organise their lives in the circumstances of their day, and what religious perspective they should have on contemporary problems. He also declared to them what conduct and attitudes he abhors and what accords with his will. The same applies to social conventions. In his word God indicates which conventions he sanctions and which he rejects. He does so directly (eg condemnation of human sacrifice and homosexuality) or indirectly (eg condemnation of unfair practices in slavery in antiquity), either with immediate effect (eg human sacrifice) or over time (eg polygamy), and sometimes by way of explicit correction of the conventions (eg marriage). Such revelations of what behaviour and perspectives accord with his will remain applicable forever irrespective of social convention.

The Bible is not primarily meant to recreate or restructure society or societal institutions, but to change people's hearts. By changing their hearts the word changes certain societal structures and reforms specific social practices (eg slavery). Hence God calls people with repentant hearts to reform society. Sometimes these social reforms occur in a relatively short space of time; others happen over many centuries.

2.2.5 Hermeneutic implications

When confessing the eternal nature and applicability of the Bible we have to make a clear distinction between what is actually written in the text and the reader's interpretation of it. The revelation recorded there is fixed, but the reader's interpretation needs to be tested against the text again and again. Hence readers have a responsibility to monitor their own interpretation to the best of their ability. Monitoring entails such things as the following:

- I shall not act as if I am the first person to have studied the Bible under the direction of the Holy Spirit. I shall consult gifted people who have done so before me. Not in order to put their books/viewpoints on a par with the Bible, but to measure my own interpretation against theirs, to determine with a truly open mind whether the input of fellow believers does not alter my ideas.
- I shall persevere in studying the Bible and find out if other biblical passages do not shed light on the part I am struggling with.
- A biblical scholar who wants to remain true to Scripture will at all times observe scriptural principles that are essential for accurate exegesis.

So to confess, theoretically and in practice, that the Bible is eternal and always applicable, biblical scholars and exegetes who want to remain true to Scripture should do the following:

- They must articulate their own presuppositions as clearly and logically as they can
- They must acknowledge that they belong to a particular theological tradition, which influences their exposition of the Bible
- They must pay serious attention to the fact that every part of the Bible was written in a particular era and couched in language that primarily addresses that historical situation
- They must consistently allow for the fact that their own age and its problems make them read the Bible in their own way. Hence they must do everything in their power to avoid reading and expounding the Bible through the spectacles of their own time. Nonetheless the Bible is also intended for our day and age and its conditions, so they must have the prophetic capacity to let the light of Scripture shine on the present situation by way of hermeneusis.

Thus expositors of the Bible should not be too hasty in ascribing biblical authority to their interpretation and hermeneusis. When it comes to thorny issues this always entails prayerful search for the right exposition to gain greater clarity, also about any remaining uncertainties. Yet their quest is not hopeless. The knowledge that in this life they will never perfectly grasp God's revelation in the Bible (also in regard to lifestyle issues)³³ does not detract from the fact that they are doing all they can to gain that insight Cf Fil 3:12-14)³⁴. They pursue it with the devotion of someone who believes it is possible in the end to achieve perfectly correct insight into (inter alia) lifestyle precepts in the Bible.

In this endeavour the believer maintains a firm grip on Christ's promise that the Holy Spirit guides the faithful into the whole truth (John 14:26;³⁵ 16:13³⁶). For that reason Christian exegetes do everything in their power to provide an acceptable, valid exposition and application of every part of Scripture, in the expectation that the Holy Spirit will ultimately provide clarity, just as the church has been granted clarity about many issues in the past.

³³ In regard to salvation and the way God effects it there is no question about how believers should understand the Bible. Such questions often arise, however, when it comes to scriptural passages in which God gives codes of conduct, especially when these codes are imbedded in certain facets of the culture in which that revelation is given.

³⁴ Fil 3:12-14 ¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

³⁵ John 14:26: ²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

³⁶ John 16:13: ¹³But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears and tell you what is yet to come."

2.3 The Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit

The Bible is God's Word, and it is apparent that he decided to have the things he wanted to reveal to humans recorded in human words and writings (cf eg 2 Tim 3:16-17;³⁷ 2 Pet 1:19-21³⁸). In the process God inspired the human authors' labours. The manner of that inspiration may be defined as *organic*. He inspired the authors in such a way that what they wrote conveys his revelation to human beings. Yet that inspiration did not rule out the authors' own personalities, backgrounds and other circumstances; all of them wrote in the context of their own historical situations.

Organic inspiration implies that it is false to claim that some parts of the Bible are human, from which readers should then select the divine elements. The entire Bible is both divine and human. More precisely, the Bible is completely God's word, written by human beings by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In this regard one should also note the distinction between God's word in a formal and in a material sense. Not all words in the Bible are God's own words. Thus when Satan is quoted the words are not God's in a material sense. Nonetheless, in a formal sense, every word written in the Bible is the word of God: it is what he wants to communicate to humankind (after all, he also communicates what Satan and the ungodly say and think and do).

2.4 The Bible came into existence in a temporally oriented way but is not time bound

Linked to the organic inspiration of the Bible is the fact that the books of the Bible came into existence in a temporally oriented way. The human authors used the language, idiom, literary genres and style of argumentation of their time when recording the inspired word. Thus, because of the organic nature of the inspiration, God, via the human authors, oriented his word to the situation and existential circumstances of the first readers. It is formulated in language and an idiom that those readers could understand and addressed them in their own historical and personal situation.

But that does not mean that the Bible is time bound in the sense that it is confined to a particular age. It is not restricted or shackled to the historical situation and circumstances of its first readers. God's word reaches through and beyond the times and circumstances of its first readers and *speaks* to people of all times. Just as the languages in which the Bible was written can be translated to reach subsequent readers in their own languages, so its historical orientation can be 'translated' to reach

³⁷ 2 Tim 3:16-17: "¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

³⁸ 2 Pet 1:19-21: "¹⁹And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

subsequent readers in their own times and circumstances. This second 'translation' process is what we call hermeneusis. Just as ordinary translation requires great circumspection to ensure that (as far as possible) the Bible says exactly the same in the target language as it did in the source languages, so the activity of hermeneusis should aim at bringing God's revelation unmodified to present-day people in their situation.

Chapter 3

HERMENEUTIC PREMISES

3.1 Introduction

First we note the relevant premises for exegesis, then those for hermeneusis.

3.2 Relevant premises for exegesis

3.2.1 Grammatico-historical approach to exegesis

Grammatico-historical exegesis, a hermeneutic model already current in the early church, was adopted and refined in reformed circles after the Reformation. The name 'grammatico-historical exegesis' (assigned retrospectively) is largely self-explanatory. In this hermeneutic model exegesis is based on what is written in the Bible. It includes a grammatical dimension, which comprehends language, style, idiom and literary genre. Ultimately the aim is to give an account of what is written in the Bible. But in view of its organic inspiration and consequent historical orientation exegetes seek to understand what is written there in the historical context to which it was directed (including the revelation-history context and the historical and socio-cultural situation of the author and first readers).

3.2.2 'Grammatical' in the grammatico-historical approach

3.2.2.1 Text-critical scrutiny

Wherever possible copying errors in manuscript copies of the Bible have been identified by textual critics and eliminated in present-day printed editions of the Bible. Since textual critics differ among themselves about copying errors, there are various printed editions of the Bible in its original languages, such as the Nestlé/Aland, the UBS, the Hodges/Farstad (Majority Text) and the Kilpatrick editions (BFBS²). By comparing the findings of such printed editions exegetes can make a considered choice of a reading on which to base their interpretation.

3.2.2.2 Textual context of a pericope and a book

Thorough examination of the textual context of both a pericope and the book in which it occurs is a vital precaution against expounding a scriptural passage out of context.

A pericope is a page layout mechanism to indicate that – in the compilers' view – it deals with a particular theme (or sub-theme). Division into pericopes is a fairly recent development in textual composition. Although current Bible versions and source text editions are divided into sections, the original texts did not even have spaces between words, let alone separate paragraphs. Hence exegetes have to assess the validity of the demarcation of pericopes in a particular book.³⁹

This demarcation is based mainly on the exegete's assessment of the thought structure of the book. The relevant pericope fulfils a specific function in the overall argument of the book, and interpretation of an intra-argument of a particular pericope must allow for the function of that subsection within the argument of the book as a whole.⁴⁰

Exegetes must also determine the position of a particular book in the overall collection of Bible books. First, very broadly, is the book part of the Old or the New Testament? Next, to which collection does it belong? For instance, is it one the historical books of the Old Testament, or a prophetic book, a Gospel or a letter? This appraisal has major implications for establishing the genre of the book, as well as for determining its extra-textual context (in regard to both revelation history and cultural history).

3.2.3 'Historical' in the grammatico-historical approach

3.2.3.1 Position in the Bible

3.2.3.1.1 Revelation-history premises in exegesis

The introduction to the study report of the GKSA's 1988 synod observes that there is no passage in the Bible that explicitly forbids women to hold any office in the church and that answers to this question must be inferred from Scripture. Since then this statement has frequently been used to argue that the whole issue of women in ordained ministries has no scriptural basis and should be decided on purely practical or contemporary social grounds. But that argument rests on two false premises: (1) the comment in the study report is taken out of context; and (2) Scripture is handled in almost biblicist fashion, according to the so-called regulatory principle.

³⁹ Demarcation is often guided by certain markers. In New Testament Greek markers of the start of a new pericope are specific relation words (eg οὖν [therefore] and γάρ [for], or vocative forms (eg ὁδῆλφοί μου [my brothers])). Markers cannot, however, serve as the sole criteria: the contents of the pericope must play a part in interpreting them. A clear transition to another theme (or sub-theme) indicates the start of a new pericope (or sub-pericope).

⁴⁰ Take, eg, the pericope Eph 5:21-33, where 5:21 reads: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ). Some versions treat this verse as the conclusion of the previous pericope (5:18-21), while others see it as the introduction to the first household code, so that 5:21-33 forms a unit. One's decision on this question will influence one's eventual interpretation of the pericope.

- (1) The observation that the Bible contains no passage referring directly to women in ordained ministries does not mean that the Bible has nothing to say on the subject. As often happens in reformed ethics, guidelines are provided (sometimes very clear guidelines!) by the revelation-history lines in Scripture.
- (2) According to the 'regulatory principle' something is not permissible unless the Bible explicitly commands it. The converse, which actually rests on the same premise, is that everything is permissible unless the Bible explicitly forbids it. Both approaches are looking, in biblicist fashion, for proof texts without considering what light is shed by the overall scriptural context.

One might add that 'inferences' from Scripture in this regard should not be arbitrary or subjective, but should be made by viewing the relevant passages in their overall scriptural context. This activity is what is known as the revelation-history facet of exegesis. Hence passages that shed light on gender in ordained ministries should not be studied purely individually but also in the context of their revelation-history framework.

3.2.3.1.2 Relevant scriptural passages

New Testament passages that are relevant to a study of the issue of women in ordained ministries generally are the following (listed according to the sequence of the Bible books):

Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 11:3-16; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 1 Timothy 3:1-16; 1 Timothy 5:9.

To obtain relevant guidelines (ie valid inferences) from these passages one must not stop short at the 'usual' aspects of exegetic analysis such as the following:

- grammatical analysis (eg stylistic, rhetorical, etc)
- specific canonical considerations (function in the book's argument, factors such as time, place, author, readers, cause, aim, etc) and
- the concomitant socio-historical factors (also called culture-historical).

In addition to (and in conjunction with) these aspects one has to establish how these passages fit into the revelation-history framework of Scripture as a whole..

3.2.3.1.3 Revelation-history lines

In 2.1 we said that Bible books should be read in the context of revelation history. This also applies to smaller components: each biblical passage is part of the overall written revelation of God's word and needs to be read in the broad revelation-history context of Scripture. That means the revelation-history lines that run throughout Scripture have to be described and the exegete should show how the passage under scrutiny fits into that context.

Naturally exegetes cannot trace the revelation-history lines in Scripture from scratch each time. Revelation-history studies like those of Ridderbos (1971), Coetzee (1995b) and Van der Walt (1997) have described several of these lines in Scripture, such as that of creation-sin-reconciliation, the covenant, the new life, the church and the kingdom of God. Since the church's confession condenses what God has revealed in Scripture, the reformed confessions in our tradition may be regarded as the most tried and tested overview of scriptural revelation. Hence the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Dordt Rules are valuable tools (a compass) for reformed exegetes to identify various revelation-history lines in Scripture.

Probably the most concise summary of scriptural revelation to be found in these confessions is Articles 2-7 of the Belgic Confession, which explicitly deal with God's revelation in Scripture.

The threefold scope discloses the three focal (at the same time very broad) revelation lines in Scripture: God's glory, his will and human salvation.⁴¹ Hence broadly speaking, in expounding Scripture exegetes should at least inquire into the relation between a scriptural passage and the overall revelation lines of God's glory, his will and our salvation.

The issue of gender in ordained ministries may be related to all three of these revelation lines (God's glory, his will and our salvation). It seems, however, to relate more particularly to the question of God's *will*: how does God want us to organise his church? Also with his *glory*: what kind of church organisation and regulations resound to his glory? Ultimately these questions relate directly to his *kingship*: how does he, the head,⁴² want the church, his body, to be organised? These questions are directly linked with the key element of Scripture: God's kingdom (cf Van der Walt 1997:8). Hence without excluding other revelation-history lines, a study of gender in ordained ministries should pay special attention to the line of God's kingdom.

- 1) This revelation-history line offers a useful *premise* to determine the interrelationship of the scriptural passages that are pertinent to this study: how do these passages relate to the relation between God's kingdom

⁴¹ The threefold scope can also be correlated on trinitarian lines with the Father (to whom above all glory is due), the Son (our saviour) and the Holy Spirit (who reveals God's will and instils obedience in human hearts).

⁴² Cf the study of κεφαλή in Grudem (2004:552-599).

and the church (cf eg the passages that link Christ's headship of the church with the husband-wife relationship).

- 2) The revelation-history framework also serves as a *nexus* for the exegesis. Ultimately it is not about the will of human beings (then or now) but about God's will. To redeemed people who rate God's will above all else there is no conflict between his will and their own.

Within these broad revelation-history lines the exegete must integrate the various scriptural passages that pertain to the issue at hand into a holistic description. For such an integration of relevant scriptural passages (comparing Scripture with Scripture) the scriptural premise of the clarity of Scripture has the following implications. In reformed hermeneutics the point of departure is always the *axiomatic* rather than the *problematic*. Thus a revelation-history study always proceeds from scriptural passages that pronounce (more) explicitly on the issue under investigation to ones that deal with it less explicitly, and not the other way round. In this way Scripture expounds itself.

In the case of gender in ordained ministries, however, exegetes face the problem, as noted already, that no scriptural passage deals directly with this issue.

3.2.3.1.4 God's kingdom, his justice and the deficiencies of human insight

From what we have said it follows that revelation-history research into gender and ordained ministries should be conducted in the context of the scriptural revelation of God's kingdom. The hallmark of the kingdom is that God's rule is just. His will for the church and the world does not allow anybody to suffer injustice but is righteous from beginning to end. People often experience God's will as unjust (cf resistance to the scriptural doctrine on election), but that is simply a result of lack of insight. The less we rely on our own insight and the more we let ourselves be guided by God's Word and his Spirit, the more clearly we perceive his justice.

Hence God's will in regard to the role of gender in the church, as it is revealed in Scripture, entails no injustice. He does not tolerate any injustice in his kingdom, including injustice on the grounds of gender (even though he sometimes allows people to perpetrate injustice counter to his will). The principle cited above (see section 2.2.4) that Scripture primarily changes human hearts, not social structures and conventions, should be taken into account when studying Scripture to determine the role of gender in ordained ministries.

- (1) It applies to the revelation of the dawn of the kingdom (the Gospels), where Jesus' conduct shows how he viewed the role of gender: his behaviour towards women indicates that he regarded them as equal to men in every respect – to the point of flouting the conventions of his time. Nonetheless he appointed only men as his disciples (cf 1988 Appendix). It should be determined whether the non-appointment of female disciples indicates (temporary) accommodation – as

some scholars maintain – of the patriarchal society of the time (hence would no longer be necessary in later times as repentant hearts reform social structures and conventions), or whether his non-appointment of female disciples is a royal sign that it does not entail any injustice in itself, not in the situation at that time, nor in the subsequent evolution of the church up to our own day.

- (2) It also applies to the revelation of the expansion of the kingdom (Acts), in which women like Lydia and Priscilla are assigned prominent roles, but in the appointment – under Spirit guidance – of a disciple to take Judas's place only male candidates are considered (Acts 1:20-26). In the appointment of proto-deacons, too, the candidates are all males (Acts 6:3). In view of the justice of God's kingdom one must assume that this entailed no injustice to any woman. We need to determine, however, what the principle that Scripture is not primarily directed to changing social structures and conventions but to changing human hearts implies for our hermeneusis of the fact that females were not considered in the appointment of a disciple to replace Judas or the appointment of proto-deacons.
- (3) In similar fashion God's justice is upheld in the evolving proclamation of his kingdom (the letters). God's injunctions via his apostles (mainly Paul) about women's behaviour in his church (eg the command to be silent) remain true to the justice of his kingdom. Hence claims that these instructions reflect Paul's personal male chauvinist bias in effect deny that his letters form part of the inspired canon. It should be determined whether the restrictive commands to women indicate (temporary) accommodation of the patriarchal society of the time (hence would no longer be necessary in later times as repentant hearts reformed social structures and conventions), or whether God the Holy Spirit shows, in these commandments, how he wants to rule his church, not just in the first century but throughout the ages.

3.2.3.2 Position in historical context

3.2.3.2.1 Introduction

The New Testament (and, of course, the Old Testament too) originated in, and in many respects is marked by, different cultural, social and religious circumstances from those prevailing in 21st century South Africa. Often one grasps the power of the biblical message better if one examines the way a book or a pericope was probably interpreted at its time of origin. Such passages require the exegete to construct the most scientifically verifiable socio-historical context of the author and first readers. To this end the socio-historical data in the Bible have to be augmented responsibly with information from other relevant ancient sources.

Data needed to construct the socio-historical context – especially for the New Testament – are readily available. But taking account of this construction in the exegetic process raises several theoretical and practical problems.

- One extreme is to treat such data merely as interesting background information, as though they do not really affect what is written in the Bible.
- But there is also a tendency to go to the other extreme. Elliott (1981:21), for instance, writes that every New Testament book, “like all documents of the early Christian movement, is a product of and a contribution toward a social world in the making”.
- Then there is a third problem. The way first century socio-historical data are treated in the exegetic process has crucial implications for the way *present-day* social and political data are accounted for in hermeneusis, that is the application of the message to our time.

In the reformed tradition the following aspects need to be considered when interpreting the socio-historical context.

3.2.3.2 Read the scriptural passage in its socio-historical context

- The exegete should keep in mind that the contents of every Bible book were created within the socio-political world of that age. The actors in the book were real people, part of a dynamic society with which they interacted.
- Hence the pericope/book should be interpreted *with due regard to relevant socio-historical information in the Bible, supplemented with pertinent data from other ancient sources*.

3.2.3.2.3 Historical approach, enriched by the social sciences

We opt for a balanced socio-historical (also called cultural-historical) approach. It is a historical approach (as opposed to a socio-scientific one),⁴³

⁴³ Both approaches draw on the same extra-textual data: the socio-political circumstances of the book's time of origin. The difference lies in the methods they use to incorporate those data in the construction of the extra-textual context of the relevant Bible book/pericope. From one perspective, a purely socio-scientific approach and a purely socio-historical approach are two poles of a continuum. Every researcher of the socio-historical context of a Bible book is situated somewhere on that continuum, inclining to either a purely socio-scientific or a purely socio-historical approach. The two poles can be defined as follows: (1) The premises of a socio-scientific approach are those of the social sciences, whereas the socio-historical approach is historical. (2) The socio-scientific approach is sociological, whereas the socio-historical approach is social.

augmented with the questions that social scientists ask and the results of the models they apply.⁴⁴ This makes it an emic⁴⁵ rather than an etic⁴⁶ approach. It enables exegetes to immerse themselves in the data and phenomena in the book they are researching without viewing them in light of some preconceived theory or model.⁴⁷

Although the socio-historical context of the book as a whole is important, the study cannot be confined to that alone. Aspects that are specifically pertinent to the pericope also need to be explored. In practice it amounts to the following:

- **Book:** Matters pertaining to the socio-historical context of the book as a whole includes things like where the first readers lived, the demographic composition of that city/region, the political situation in the city/region, current religion(s) and philosophical schools, et cetera.
- **Pericope:** To construct the socio-historical context of a pericope it has to be dissected to determine social, political and/or religious factors that may have been pertinent to the lives of the first readers. These then serve, in a manner of speaking, as search-words for collecting data to construct the socio-historical context of the specific pericope.

If the pericope deals, for example, with role expectations of husbands and wives in marriage, it stands to reason that an exegete will look for data on the following aspects:

This implies that in constructing the socio-historical context of a Bible book/pericope the socio-scientific approach concentrates on sociological theories based on research into present-day social phenomena, whereas the socio-historical approach focuses on first century social phenomena.

⁴⁴ The weaknesses of a 'purely' socio-historical or a 'purely' socio-scientific method are as follows: (1) A 'purely' socio-historical method is deficient in that the practitioner is oblivious of theory, dealing with social data in a naively intuitive way as if it were possible to operate a-theoretically. Instead of being a-theoretical they are working with an intuitive, naive theory, unspecified and untested, hence largely uncontrolled. (2) A 'purely' socio-scientific approach, on the other hand, is deficient in that practitioners focus primarily on contemporary theories and models, and data from the era of the relevant book are considered secondary.

⁴⁵ An emic approach puts the accent on the situation of those days. Data and phenomena are defined in terms of their functions in the society of that time. These data and phenomena dictate, so to speak, the research.

⁴⁶ An etic approach also seeks to study the situation of those days, but does so in terms of theories and models developed in the present time based on data and phenomena of present-day society. Here the research is dictated by the relevant theory/model.

⁴⁷ We are not arguing that an emic approach is not theory-driven. What we are saying is that an emic approach does not treat data relating to the extra-textual context of the book by way of (and in terms of) a sociological model. After all, no approach is a-theoretical, hence it is imperative that exegetes spell out their interpretive theory. That makes its effect on the exposition measurable and retraceable.

- Marriage legislation in that society
- The conventions governing conjugal relations prior to and outside of Christianity
- Conventions governing the roles and functioning of women and men in society at large

The search-words that the exegete uses when consulting sources in this case could be the following: marriage legislation, the role of women (in society, marriage, the family), the role of men (in society, marriage, the family).

3.2.4 Relation between the Old and the New Testament⁴⁸

3.2.4.1 Premise for the relation between the Old and the New Testament

The Old and New Testaments are equally Word of God and the two testaments constitute a whole. Yet there is a distinction between them and it is justified to look into their relation.

3.2.4.2 The relation only partly defined by various images

Various images can be used to describe the relation between the Old and the New Testament. Each image reflects one facet of that relationship, but no single image captures all the essential facets:

- One such image is that of prophecy (Old Testament) and fulfilment (New Testament). A flaw of this image is that it may create the untenable impression that Old Testament believers could not (eg) have an intimate, personal relationship with God.
- Another image is that of a bud (Old Testament) and the full-blown flower (New Testament). This image highlights the truth that everything that is revealed in the New Testament was already present in the Old Testament, albeit embryonically and as yet immature. Its weakness is that it is too exclusively evolutionary, as if there is merely a development from a more primitive to a more advanced phase.
- Yet another image is that of a promise (Old Testament) and its fulfilment (New Testament). Again it has the weakness that it does not adequately convey that the Old Testament, too, is fully God's word, not just a promise in the sense of a prophecy that will only be realised in the future.

⁴⁸ This section is an edited version of class notes made during a seminar by prof JL Helberg in 1978 on Old Testament hermeneutics. Cf Helberg (1978:1-6).

No single image does full justice to the relation between the Old and the New Testament.

3.2.4.3 Link up of parallel paradoxical lines in Christ's person

Christ stands between the Old and the New Testament, both separating and connecting them. The new dispensation of the New Testament does not come about through philosophical growth or the emergence of a notion of salvation; it is brought about by the coming of Christ. His coming is the *fulfilment* of events that prefigured it, not a *development* from them. Through the person of Christ God connects the parallel paradoxical lines, joins them and brings them to fruition in the perfection of the new eschatological dispensation.

The fact that the lines join in Christ means that the New Testament does not reveal a different truth than the Old Testament. It is the same truth, albeit revealed in a new historical situation. In many instances the altered historical situation brings greater clarity. In this sense revelation is marked by progression and growth. But that does not mean that revelation gradually acquires (eg) a more advanced or purer view of God or concept of salvation. There is no development *in the fact that* God saves us, only *in the way* he saves us, that is in and through the person of Jesus Christ.

The paradoxical lines⁴⁹ found in the Old Testament are resolved in Christ's person, especially in and through his death and resurrection. Thus he reconciles judgment and mercy, death and life. He ushers in a new dispensation, a new covenant, a new testament. It is still the same covenant, word, grace, rule; but the situation is new in that God has actively joined the paradoxical lines in history. God punished fully *and* fully showed mercy! He allowed death *and* generated new life! God worked a miracle by uniting these things in Christ. All the lines, the entire Old Testament, converge in Christ. None of them should be viewed in isolation: neither law, nor covenant; neither judgment, nor grace – not in the New Testament, but not in the Old Testament either. To those who are in Christ the law has been fulfilled, the judgment accomplished, salvation through grace realised, and life in the new dispensation is one of growing intimacy in their relationship with God.

The relation between the Old and the New Testament can only be properly understood in terms of this fulfilment in Christ.

⁴⁹ Examples of such paradoxical lines are that God, notwithstanding sin, still establishes an intimate personal relationship with believers; that, notwithstanding death as a result of the sin of the first human couple, he establishes the human race; that the 'day of the Lord' entails both judgment and salvation; etc.

3.2.4.4 Use⁵⁰ of the Old Testament in the New Testament⁵¹

Old Testament passages are quoted throughout the New Testament, especially in the first three Gospels, the Pauline letters, Hebrews and Revelation. Some passages can confidently be identified as quotations, others are merely references to passages in the Old Testament, yet others are allusions to Old Testament passages. Researchers believe that there are between 150 and 300 quotations, plus close on 1 000 allusions to the Old Testament. Most of the quotations appear to have been taken from the Greek version of the Old Testament, mainly from the Septuagint. That explains why quotations do not always correspond exactly with the Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament as rendered in present-day translations.

Reasons for the quotations and allusions

There are various reasons for the quotation of Old Testament passages in the New Testament. One is that the Holy Spirit guided the New Testament authors to show that Jesus Christ was the fulfilment of Old Testament promises about the coming of the Messiah. An example is the quotation from Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15: "And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'"

In other instances the author appears to quote the Old Testament in order to show that his own words are authoritative. An example of this may be found in 1 Peter 3:10. In verse 9 the author admonished his readers not to repay evil with evil or insult with insult. They should rather respond with a blessing so as to obtain God's blessing themselves. He proceeds to bolster the authority of these words by saying: "For 'He that would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech'." The author uses this quotation from Psalm 34 to stress that his own words are authoritative.

Manner of quoting the Old Testament in the New Testament

Inferences based on the New Testament's use of the Old Testament should be highly circumspect. This use entailed features such as the following:

- Quotations from Old Testament passages often combine different source passages. Thus Romans 11:8-10 cites from Isaiah 29:10, Deuteronomy 29:4 and Psalm 69:23-24.
- Often it seems as if quotations are combined simply on the basis of similar sounding words, for example the quotation from Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22

⁵⁰ The word 'use' does not imply that the New Testament simply treats the Old Testament as a commodity, ignoring the unity of the two testaments.

⁵¹ This section is adapted from a contribution written by Fika J van Rensburg for the 1983 *Vertaling Verwysingsbybel*, which was included in the *Woordelys as "Aanhaling van die Ou Testament in die Nuwe Testament"* (Quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament) (*Verwysingsbybel* 1998:1597-1598).

in 1 Peter 2:6-8. The common denominator in the two quotations is the mention of a (cap)stone or cornerstone.

- Most quotations do not cite the source accurately, if at all. Nor is there a clear distinction between direct and indirect quotations.
- The interpretation of textual context in those days was manifestly different from standard interpretations today. This is attested by the fact that New Testament authors often disregard the textual context of the Old Testament quotation, for example the quotation from Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15. In Hosea 11:1 the words "out of Egypt I called my son" refer to the exodus of the young nation of Israel from Egypt. Matthew – inspired by the Spirit – applies it to Jesus and his parents' return from Egypt.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the authors managed, by way of quotations and allusions, to convey the message they wished to communicate all the more effectively.

3.2.4.5 The Old Testament to be interpreted in its own right

The previous section makes it clear that the New Testament application of the relevant Old Testament passages cannot be regarded as the only inspired application of those passages. After all, the New Testament authors did not necessarily intend to use that Old Testament passage in its original context. They rather wanted to lend authority to their own arguments by invoking the Old Testament.

An Old Testament passage often acquires a function in the New Testament that it did not, at first glance, fulfil in the Old Testament. Hence it would be one-sided to expound Old Testament passages purely on the basis of the way they are used and applied in the New Testament. Often the purpose of the quotation was not to interpret the Old Testament, but to strengthen the case made in the New Testament context. In New Testament preaching (eg) the salvific events associated with Christ were proclaimed with reference to Old Testament data, and the relevant Old Testament passages were interpreted and applied from the angle of these events.

In interpreting scriptural passages pertaining to the role of gender in ordained ministries the implication of this premise of the relation between the Old and the New Testament is taken into account.

3.3 Premises relevant to hermeneusis

3.3.1 Reformed hermeneusis

Reformed hermeneusis is the process of communicating to present-day readers/hearers the result of the entire exegetical exercise (grammatico-historical analysis and synthesis), in which God's revelation in that particular scriptural passage was determined.

3.3.2 Consideration of the present context in hermeneusis

Pertinent facets of the contemporary context (social, economic, political, religious, etc) should be considered in hermeneusis in such a way that they provide a valid focus for the exegesis.

But the type of present-day social and political situations that are 'clarified' by a given pericope can only be determined accurately and precisely once the social and political situation of the relevant Bible book has been properly constructed. The pericope in effect serves as a powerful searchlight to highlight specific facets of the present-day context. Thus the pericope itself dictates what issues in the present context it clarifies.

3.3.3 Distinction between indicative (salvific fact) and imperative (command)

3.3.3.1 Not a mechanical grammatical distinction

Linguistic and revelational categories do not necessarily coincide: a verb in the grammatical imperative mood should not automatically be seen as a revelational imperative. In 1 Thessalonians 5:19 a divine commandment is revealed by means of a grammatical imperative (τὸ πνεῦμα μὴ σβέννυτε - "Do not put out the Spirit's fire"), whereas the grammatical imperative in John 2:19 ("Destroy this temple [λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον], and I will raise it again in three days") conveys a revelational indicative. Likewise the grammatical indicative (or its equivalent) often conveys a revelational indicative, as in Romans 8:34 ("Christ Jesus, who died [ὁ ἀποθάνων] ... is also interceding for us [ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν]"), but sometimes also a divine command, for example in 1 Thessalonians 4:7 ("For God did not call [ἐκάλεσεν] us to be impure, but to live a holy life").

Hence there is no way of distinguishing mechanically between a salvific indicative (fact) and a salvific imperative (command) in a scriptural passage. This is confirmed by the following phenomena in Scripture:

- Commandments given directly by God himself could on the whole be taken to be lasting *imperatives* (eg Ex 20:12). Yet there are several commands issued by God himself that are manifestly not intended as lasting injunctions to all believers, such as 1 Kings 19:11 ("Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord") and John 2:7 ("Fill the jars with water").
- Often God's lasting commandments (*imperatives*) are mediated by human agents, as in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 ("Pray constantly"), but Scripture also records many commands by apostles and prophets that are not intended as lasting imperatives, as in 2 Kings 5:10 ("Go wash yourselves seven times in the Jordan") and 2 Timothy 4:13 ("Bring the cloak that I left at Troas").

Because of this constant confusion about the grammatical distinction between *indicative* and *imperative*, it is desirable in this study to settle for the terms 'salvific fact(s)' (instead of *indicative*) and 'command(s)' (instead of *imperative*).

3.3.3.2 Syntactic and stylistic markers

The relation between salvific fact and command is such that the command always follows the fact as its conclusion. Hence it helps exegetes to watch out for syntactic and stylistic markers indicating a conclusion. The following markers are useful (cf Labuscagne 1981:29-31, and the table in De Klerk & Van Rensburg 2005:36):

- An indicative following the particle γάρ can substantiate a prior imperative (eg Phlp 2:12-13)⁵² and an imperative following the particle οὖν is based on a prior indicative (eg Rom 12:1).⁵³
- In Pauline passages a command as the touchstone of faith often follows in an apodosis to a conditional clause, which then has the force of an adverbial clause of reason/motivation (and may thus be rendered with 'since' rather than 'if') (eg Col 3:1-2).⁵⁴
- Sometimes the command is phrased as a rhetorical question. The salvific fact then takes the form of an adjectival clause, for example in Romans 6:2 ("We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" = in Christ we have died to sin, so we may no longer live in it).

However, this is not a rigid model. In fact, the New Testament contains numerous examples of γάρ and οὖν sentences, conditional clauses with an apodosis and rhetorical questions that do not indicate a salvific fact – command relationship (eg Phlp 1:8;⁵⁵ Eph 5:1⁵⁶ and 1 Cor 10:18⁵⁷). Hence additional exegetical tools are needed to distinguish between salvific facts and commands.

3.3.3.3 Context

Exegetes can often make valid inferences about what is intended to be salvific fact and command in a given pericope without any formal syntactic or stylistic markers, simply by looking at the context. Part of that context is the literary genre in which the passage occurs. Historical, poetic and prophetic texts and letters are not meant to be read in the

⁵² Phlp 2:12-13: "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."

⁵³ Rom 12:1: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."

⁵⁴ Col 3:1-2: "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your heart on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things."

⁵⁵ Phlp 1:8: "God can testify how I long for you with the affection of Christ Jesus."

⁵⁶ Eph 5:1: "Be imitators of God, as dearly loved children."

⁵⁷ 1 Cor 10:18: "Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?"

same way. The rhetorical context (thought structure), socio-historical context, revelation-history context and the context of Scripture as a whole should also be taken into account.

3.3.3.3.1 Rhetorical context

The rhetorical context of a scriptural passage can be described on the basis of an analysis of its thought structure (cf Coetzee 1988:23) and its thought structure at macro level (cf De Klerk & Van Rensburg 2005:37-49). A major part of analysing any thought structure is to trace the interrelationship between different structural components. If the thought structure shows that two or more concepts are finally or causally linked, the exegete might consider the possibility of a salvific fact – command.

An example is the thought structure analysis of James 4:6b-10 by Coetzee (1988:34). In this pericope the particle οὐν occurs only once (4:7). Nevertheless one can infer from the ensuing parallel arrangement of ideas that no fewer than ten commands derive from this one salvific fact. It also turns out that two of the imperatives are in fact paracletic, since in both cases the command is directly linked to a promise (Coetzee 1988:34).

3.3.3.3.2 Socio-historical context

Since Scripture is mostly temporally oriented (Coetzee 1995a:16), God's scriptural commands – even lasting ones – often have a temporal orientation. After all, God did not issue his commandments in an a-temporal vacuum but in a socio-historical situation. Thus 1 Timothy 2:1-2 commands the faithful to pray “for kings and all those in authority”. The historically oriented “for kings” does not prevent modern exegetes from applying this command with normative authority to, for example, a state president. Similarly, the historically oriented prohibition of coveting someone else's “ox, or his ass” (Ex 20:17) is equally applicable to present-day possessions like a car or a computer.

To distinguish between lasting and purely situational commands – that is, between commands with *normative authority* and those with *historical authority* – exegetes need to put the passage in its socio-historical context.⁵⁸

To determine whether or not a command is simply part of the socio-historical phraseology of the passage the decisive hermeneutic rule is that Scripture is its own expositor. That is to say, an exegete cannot decide, on the basis of extra-textual sources or purely subjective considerations, that a given scriptural command should be seen as socio-historical phraseology if Scripture itself does not point to that conclusion.

⁵⁸ Here one should guard against the notion that some commandments (those with normative authority) are temporally oriented, whereas others (those with purely historical authority) are also time bound. Commands with historical authority remain part of the temporally oriented phraseology of Scripture.

To sum up: exegetes must take particular note of the *basis* of every command in a scriptural passage. Those based on a revealed *salvific fact* may be seen as *lasting commands*; those based on socio-historical arguments may be treated as situational.

3.3.3.3 (Revelation) historical context

Historical material in particular often lacks a formal thought structure from which to infer the relation between salvific fact and commandment. In such cases the relation can sometimes be inferred from the historical situation.

An example is the history of the multiplication of the loaves (Matt 14:14-21). This pericope contains two instructions by Jesus, rendered as grammatical imperatives. When the disciples say that they have only five loaves and two fish, Jesus orders them (imperative): "Bring them here to me" (14:18); afterwards (14:19) he tells the crowds to sit down on the grass. Both these commands are directed to the historical situation. They are clearly not intended as lasting injunctions with normative authority for all ages. Yet they definitely have historical authority.

In the miracle of multiplying the loaves Jesus undeniably revealed an unwritten salvific fact that is in a revelation-historical way tacitly contained in the text, namely that he can do what is humanly impossible. He is the Messiah, the Son of God. And on that basis there is an unspoken command: believe in him!

3.3.3.4 Overall context of Scripture

(1) Revelation-history lines of the Bible book

When distinguishing between *salvific fact* and *command* the exegete has to allow for the revelation-history orientation of the Bible book under consideration. Again we take the example of the multiplication of the loaves (Matt 14:14-21). Above (3.3.3.3) we pointed out that the unwritten *command* in this pericope amounts to: believe that Jesus is Christ, the Son of God. This *command* is intimately connected with the revelation-history orientation of the Gospel according to Matthew, which is to make people believe that Jesus is the Messiah of God.

(2) Revelation-history lines of Scripture as a whole

The example from 1 Corinthians 11 (3.3.3.2 above) already indicates that exegesis should take into account the broad revelation-history lines in Scripture, for example God's work of creation. The exegete should put every command in the context of revelation history in order to assess, within that context, whether or not it is intended as a lasting command.

An example is the command in Acts 15:28-29: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: you are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality." But if one traces the line from Old to New Testament scriptural revelation, it is clear that the old ceremonial lines (including the prohibition of eating blood) were fulfilled in Christ and are therefore no longer binding.

Consequently reformed exegesis on the whole regards the prohibition of eating blood and strangled animals as directed to the situation at that time, not as a lasting commandment. The meaning of these Scriptures must however still be determined through exegesis and hermeneutic procedures.

(3) Comparing Scripture with Scripture

Directly linked with the broad revelation-history lines in Scripture is the exegetical process of comparing Scripture with Scripture (analogy of Scripture). When distinguishing between *salvific fact* and *command* in a given scriptural passage pronouncements elsewhere in Scripture can be directive. Once again the history of the multiplication of the loaves (Matt 14:14-21) offers an example. The conclusion that the unwritten *command* in the pericope boils down to 'Believe!' is expounded with reference to another scriptural dictum: Mark 6:52 attests that the miracle of the loaves was meant to make people believe.

3.3.4 Distinction between focal point and side issues

3.3.4.1 Syntactic and stylistic markers

By and large the principle is that the grammatical main clause states the *focal point* of a scriptural passage and subordinate clauses and participial phrases convey side issues. However, the New Testament contains numerous examples of main clauses conveying *side issues* and subordinate clauses giving the *focal point* of the text. Thus De Klerk (1988:44-46), in his analysis of Ephesians 3:14-21, shows that the *focal point* of the pericope is not found in the grammatical main clause (3:14-15) but in the ensuing three subordinate clauses, each introduced by *iva* (3:16-19).

3.3.4.2 Context

3.3.4.2.1 Rhetorical context

Analysis of thought structure is even more important for distinguishing between *focal point* and *side issues* in a pericope than it is for distinguishing between *salvific fact* and *command*.

An example may be found in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14). Analysis of the thought structure of the pericope reveals that the parable is structured as a circular composition (diamond structure). Luke puts the focal point at the start of the parable (18:9): Jesus told the parable for the benefit of those who think they are righteous (δίκαιοι) in themselves and despise others. The end of the pericope deals with what it means to be truly justified (δεδικαιωμένος). The focal point of the parable, therefore, does not lie in the behaviour of the Pharisee and the tax collector but in the fact that God justifies us in his sight.

3.3.4.3.2 Socio-historical context

Sometimes the socio-historical context sheds light on what should be seen as the focal point of a pericope. De Klerk and Van Rensburg (2005:52-63) offer the example of 1 Peter 2:11 - 4:19. Since the first readers of the Petrine letter had the socio-political status of foreigners

and tenants greatly abused by legal citizens, they tended to defend themselves by perpetrating injustice in return. Hence Peter wanted to persuade them to behave according to God's precepts even in the face of their alien status (De Klerk & Van Rensburg 2005:62). This general injunction appears in 1 Peter 2:11-12, which therefore serves as the *focal point* of the entire subsection of the letter (2:11 - 4:19).

3.3.4.3.3 (Revelation) historical context

As in the distinction between *salvific fact* and *command*, the historical context of a pericope gives a clear indication of where to look for its *focal point*. Take the example of the account of Jesus' burial (Matt 27:57-66). Historically the *focal point* of this pericope is 27:60: Jesus was buried. Other historical facts are given as *side issues*, strongly corroborating the historical fact of his burial: things like who buried him (27:57-59), eye-witnesses to his burial (27:61), and the Jews' securing of the sepulchre (27:62-66).

3.3.4.3.4 Overall context of Scripture

(1) Revelation-history lines of the particular Bible book

By way of illustration we take the pericope Luke 6:1-11 (the disciples picking heads of grain and Jesus healing the man with the withered hand on the sabbath). Within the context of Luke 4-6 it appears that the evangelist was describing a series of incidents, each demonstrating that Jesus was indeed the *kúpioç*: he is *kúpioç* over demons (4:31-37), *kúpioç* over disease (4:38-40), *kúpioç* of all creatures (5:1-11), *kúpioç* over infirmity (5:12-26). Here, in 6:1-11, the *focal point* is again Jesus' *kúpioç*-ship: he is *kúpioç* of the sabbath as well. This indicates that 6:5 forms the focal point of the pericope: Jesus is Lord (*kúpioç*) even of the sabbath.

(2) Revelation-history lines of Scripture as a whole and comparing Scripture with Scripture

In a sense every scriptural passage has a special place in the overall revelation of Scripture and should be interpreted in terms of the whole. Obviously this applies to the focal point of each passage as well.

An instance of a pericope that cannot really be understood other than in the broad revelation-history framework of Scripture is Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:1-17, which traces the line of the covenant from Abraham (1:1) to Christ. In terms of revelation history it is clear that Jesus' birth was in fact the fulfilment of the covenantal promises. Matthew 1:1 also states explicitly that Christ was "the son of David". Comparison of Scripture with Scripture moreover reveals the salvation-historical significance of David: he was the king from whose line the Messiah would be born. Both the covenantal line (Abraham) and the royal line (David) converge in 1:1, making it the *focal point* of Jesus' genealogy.

3.3.5 Theological synthesis as *donum interpretationis*

Having suggested a number of tools (syntactic, stylistic, socio-historical and revelation-history considerations), we need to emphasise again that scriptural exposition is not a mechanical process. The use of the aforementioned (and other) tools is extremely important, but it is simply part of a process of text *analysis*. Using the information obtained from the analytical phase of the exegesis, the exegete now has to proceed to the crucial part of the interpretation: the *synthesis*. Grosheide (1929:64) calls it *synthetic exegesis* or determining the *deep meaning* (note: not the 'deeper meaning' that allegorical interpreters look for!). Some authors call it *theological exegesis*, a third step following grammatical and historical exegesis (cf Berkhof 1971:133f).

The distinction between *salvific fact*, *command*, *focal point* and *side issues* likewise requires more than just analytical exegesis. The exegete needs powers of discrimination that only the Holy Spirit can impart. That is what is known as the *donum interpretationis* (gift of interpretation). However, the gift of interpretation given by the Spirit is not something like an extra-scriptural 'inner light'. Exegetes receive this light from their actual engagement with Scripture.

Meticulous grammatico-historical exegesis is the only way to determine the deep meaning of a scriptural passage (Grosheide 1929:65). This *deep* meaning does not in due course become a *different* meaning. But in the course of their engagement with a particular scriptural passage exegetes will spot other passages that the Spirit will use to guide them to understand how this particular passage should be interpreted, also for their own age and situation.

Theological synthesis, too, is subject to scientific control. The standard scientific route is that the synthesis should meticulously account for every component of the scriptural passage – both command and salvific fact, focal point and side issues. Synthesis must not shift the meaning of the passage to something other than what it says. It rather seeks to probe to the core of God's revelation in the passage and, in the hermeneusis, seeks to transpose that revelation to the present situation. Ultimately it boils down to the question: what is God revealing to us, to me in this passage? (Cf Grosheide 1929:66.)

3.3.6 Hermeneusis as the gift of prophecy

To be able to say what God is telling us here and now synthetic exegesis undertakes what is known as the process of hermeneusis. This is when the result of the entire exegetic labour (grammatico-historical analysis and synthesis), which established what God is revealing in the particular scriptural passage, is put across to present-day readers or hearers. There are no fixed rules for hermeneusis. Here the gift of

prophecy, which God gives through his Spirit, is indispensable (cf Rom 12:6-7;⁵⁹ 1 Cor 14:3⁶⁰).

The process of hermeneusis requires the exegete to analyse our own present-day social context as well. Naturally the hearers' social context must not determine what God says, nor can it veto the exegetic findings. Hence hermeneusis is subject to the same scientific control as theological synthesis: it should be based on the results of the exegesis and meticulously account for every component of the passage – command, salvific fact, focal point and side issues.

3.3.7 No mechanical rules

Since the entire exegetical process – both its grammatical and historical facets, but especially the processes of synthesis and hermeneusis – cannot really happen without the gift of interpretation bestowed by the Holy Spirit, it does not consist in mere mechanical application of hermeneutic rules. In determining what is truly God's lasting commandment to us in our day and what should be regarded as situational commands, in determining what is the focal point and what are side issues in a pericope, exegetes should pray to the Holy Spirit to grant them interpretive insight and the gift of discrimination.

⁵⁹ Rom 12:6-7: "We have different gifts according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach."

⁶⁰ 1 Cor 14:3: "But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort."

Chapter 4

EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUSIS

4.1 Intention of the exegesis and hermeneusis in this book

The intention of the exegetic and hermeneutic part of this book (chapters 5 - 15) is not to provide a complete, detailed exegesis, but in each instance to condense our exposition and application of the scriptural passage intelligibly in a nutshell, so that it can be monitored and any differences between two (or more) interpretations and applications will come to light.

Over the past few decades these scriptural passages have been expounded repeatedly in the GKSA. Hence this is not an attempt at a comprehensive account, but is more in the nature of one exegete engaging in dialogue with another, focusing on the component/phase/facet of the exegesis where she or he suspects opinions may differ.

4.2 Principles of evaluating exegesis and hermeneusis

When studying the issue of women in ordained ministries one proceeds, as in the case of other exegetical issues, from certain premises and assumptions. All exegesis and hermeneusis pertaining to the question of women in ordained ministries are evaluated in light of these assumptions and premises to determine whether the conclusions are *warranted or unwarranted*. Warranted exegesis and hermeneusis are then assessed in terms of the exegetic framework of the grammatico-historical model (cf 3.2.1 above) to decide whether it is *exegetically tenable or untenable*,⁶¹ also whether it is *exegetically persuasive*.

⁶¹ Initially we considered the terms 'scientifically valid' or 'invalid', but decided that it could result in a misconception. The relational notion of truth, after all, has meant that the distinction between valid and invalid is philosophically loaded with the view that there is more than one valid truth. This relational notion of truth offers scope for the linguistic and world view of, for example, Derrida with his deconstruction, which rejects the idea of any certain, firm truth. This study, on the other hand, rests on the belief that God's word in fact *contains his revelation of the unshakable, immutable truth about him, his will and our way to salvation*. So for this study we made a calculated choice of the terms 'exegetically tenable/untenable', implying that the exegesis must be tested according to the framework of the grammatico-historical model. Exegesis that meets the requirements of that framework is considered exegetically tenable.

Exegesis can be more or less persuasive.

Because of human limitations and sinfulness it may be that exegetes whose exegesis is warranted in terms of their premises and who produce an exegetically tenable, persuasive exposition nonetheless interpret a scriptural passage differently, even within the same church. In such cases we indicate the strengths and weaknesses of such exegesis and hermeneusis.

4.3 Biblical orientation to human hearts, not structures and conventions

In 3.2 above (The Bible is eternal and always applicable) we explained in what sense the Bible is eternally applicable. Of particular relevance to the exegetic chapters of this study is the confession that the Bible fundamentally concerns:

- God's communication to humans about himself and the way he effects salvation, thus restoring his relationship with the bearers of his image to that of (eg) parent and child
- how he wants the lives of the redeemed to demonstrate that they are living in terms of a restored relationship with God

Given the fact that the Bible is God's eternal and always applicable Word, we also have to consider its temporal orientation. Because of its eternal and always applicable nature the Bible is also – from a chronological point of view, primarily – directed to its first readers and their life world. Consequently every book of the Bible is couched in language and an idiom that those first readers could understand and focuses on the situation in which they lived their lives and the problems and historical realities they grappled with. In his authoritative Word God declared to the first readers, via human authors, how they should arrange their lives in the midst of their contemporary situation and what religious perspective they should adopt on the problems of their day. He also declared to them what conduct and attitudes he abhors and what accords with his will. The same applies to social conventions. In his Word God indicates which social conventions he approves and which he rejects. He does so directly (eg condemnation of human sacrifice and homosexuality) or indirectly (eg condemnation of unfair practices in slavery in antiquity), either with immediate effect (eg human sacrifice) or over time (eg polygamy), and sometimes by presenting an explicit corrective for reprehensible social conventions (eg marriage). These divine revelations about what conduct and attitudes accord with his will are always applicable, irrespective of social conventions.

The Bible clearly does not seek primarily to recreate or restructure (social) institutions, but to change human hearts. Such changed hearts are called to testify, which often leads to reform of certain social structures and conventions (eg slavery).

Hence to interpret these pericopes on the premise that, unless they contain pronouncements that define the existing system as unacceptable and instruct believers to act in diametrically opposite ways, the system as such is declared 'holy', would not be reformed exegesis.

Chapter 5

OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES: SUMMARY OF RELEVANT SCRIPTURAL DATA

5.1 Introduction: points to consider⁶²

Our summary of relevant Old Testament data first deals with facts pertaining to the creation stories: the fact that neither man nor woman is inferior (5.2), but that there is a distinction between the two (5.3). Section 5.4 looks at the implications of the fall, and 5.5 at the position of women in Old Testament society. The chapter concludes with a discussion of women in 'office' in the Old Testament (5.6).

5.2 Creation: neither gender is inferior

5.2.1 Man and woman both created in God's image

God created human beings, male and female he created them (Gen 1:27). He created both genders in his image (Gen 1:27). Hence neither gender is inferior. (Cf 1988 Appendix, 2.1, p.23.)

5.2.2 God created man and woman in a close relationship

When creating human beings God established a close relationship between males and females (Gen 2:21-22; cf 1988 Appendix, 2.2, p. 23). In marriage they are joined in a union (Gen 2:24). God did not first create an androgenous being (i.e. both male and female) and then had it differentiate into a male and a female (also cf Van Gie 1994:26). He introduced the male-female distinction in humankind at the outset.⁶³

5.2.3 Man and woman both given a mandate to rule

The mandate to exercise dominion had to be carried out by man and woman alike (Gen 1:28; cf 1988 Appendix, 2.3, p. 24). Genesis 1:26 explicitly uses the plural form of the verb, thus indicating male and female together. Genesis 2 presents a different sequence: first the man is created, then the woman. According to Genesis 2:15-17 it is specifically the man who is instructed to cultivate and guard over creation.

⁶² This chapter summarises and adapts reports submitted to GKSA synods. We thank Paul Krüger and Herrie van Rooy for their help in this regard.

⁶³ Van Gie (1994:26-27) argues that the notion of absolute equality between males and females relates to the view that they were created simultaneously. According to Van Gie (1994:27) inferences from Genesis that the first human being (*adam*) was originally created sexless, and attempts to harmonise Genesis 2 with the Greek myth of an androgenous human being, have been repudiated convincingly.

It is a moot point whether this permits the inference that a distinction is made between men and women in respect of the mandate to rule.

5.3 Creation: distinction between male and female

5.3.1 The woman is the man's fitting helpmeet

The woman is the man's helpmeet (*ezer*). The role of helpmeet does not imply inferiority. After all, God himself is referred to as "my help" (Ex 18:4; Deut 33:7,26,29; Psalm 20:3, 146:5; and elsewhere). The woman complements the man in the execution of the mandate given at creation (Gen 2:15) as someone who was given a similar mandate in her own right (Gen 1:28). In this sense there is equality, but at the same time a supportive element – hence 'inequality'. The woman is co-responsible for exercising the mandate to rule, but is not primarily responsible. The one whose helpmeet she is occupies a position of 'first among equals' (primacy at creation). Both male and female exercise dominion (together), but in different capacities (1988 Appendix, 2.4.1, p. 24-26). Whether this differentiation in the mandate to rule applies only to the marital relationship or to relations between all women and all men cannot be inferred from this scriptural passage. What may be inferred is that such differentiation applies at least to the relationship between husbands and wives in marriage: 'male headship'.

Woman is also man's *complement*. The word *kenegdo*, used in conjunction with *ezer*, may be rendered as 'like his counterpart', 'as someone who is fit for him'. Woman is man's 'other half', who complements him in corporeal, emotional, mental and other respects. The word *kenegdo* is reinforced by the word *ezer*, underscoring the paradox of 'unequal equality' between male and female.

The primacy of the male at creation and the concomitant created complementarity of the female are not spelled out in the Old Testament, but are explicitly mentioned in the New Testament (cf eg 1 Cor 11:8; 1 Tim 2:13).

5.3.2 Different names for man and woman

The man gives the woman the name of אִשָּׁה (*is/sjah*). The mere fact that Adam gives her a name points to his headship (also cf Van Gie 1994:31). The play on the words אִשָּׁה (*isj*) and אִשָּׁה (*is/sjah*) may be seen partly as indicative of the male's primacy (the woman was taken *from the man*), and partly as a reference to their union (1988 Appendix, 2.4.2, p. 26-27). Here we have an indication of male headship, but whether it applies only to the marital relationship or to relations between all females and all males cannot be inferred from this scriptural passage.

5.3.3 Male leadership is a service of love, not domination

The fact that the woman was taken from the man, and that the man leaves his father and mother to live with his wife (Gen 2:24) indicates the intimate union between husband and wife in marriage, but more especially the husband's primacy. By leaving

his parents he becomes the initiator of a new family, which will henceforth no longer fall under his father's headship but under his own. At the same time it attests self-denial (hence service of love) for the sake of the wife with whom he now lives.

5.3.4 Adam was created first

God's order of creation indicates that husband and wife are each assigned a place in marriage and that this order should not be ignored. Consider, for example, the position of the firstborn in the Old Testament. Yet this order of creation does not imply a rank order of importance or that wives are slavishly dependent on their husbands (1988 Appendix, 2.4.4, p. 28-29).

5.4 The fall

5.4.1 The woman wrongfully assumes leadership

From the story as recorded in Genesis 3 it would appear that the woman took the lead in the fall. This does not make her guiltier than Adam, but shows that here she usurped her husband's leadership role (cf 1 Tim 2) (1988 Appendix, 3.1, p. 29-30). Thus after the fall God does not address the woman first but goes to her husband (Gen 3:9). This confirms that the male was given primary responsibility by God and consequently he is called to account (also cf Rom 5:12ff).

5.4.2 Consequences of the fall

The created differentiation of male and female is also revealed in a gender-specific way in the consequences of the fall (1988 Appendix, 3.2, p. 30). The fall had grave consequences for the relationship between husband and wife.

The woman is told, "your desire shall be for your husband" (Gen 3:16). The word 'desire' (תַּשׁוּקָה) could indicate a desire to possess. Because of sin wives will try to take over the husband's dominant role, hence rebel against him.⁶⁴ This desire for her husband is not a command to women but forms part of God's curse.

The man's response will be to oppress his wife instead of providing responsible leadership – hence subject her to tyranny.⁶⁵ Thus as a result of sin the husband's original God-given leadership degenerates into domination. Here 'domination' is part of God's curse, not a command to males (1988 Appendix, 3.3.2, p. 30-31).

⁶⁴ In Song 7:10 the word תַּשׁוּקָה is used in a positive sense to describe sexual love. Hence several exegetes interpret the pronouncement in Gen 3:16 as saying that wives, despite the pain of childbirth, will still desire their husbands sexually, thus placing them in a position of power. But in Gen 4:7 the same word is used in a negative sense: sin wants to wield power over Cain, yet he must master it. Some scholars maintain that Gen 3:16 indicates that the woman will want to vie with her husband, but he will not permit it (will dominate her).

⁶⁵ The word used for 'have dominion' (rule) does not necessarily indicate abuse of power, but in this context it does point to domination. The mandate to exercise joint dominion given to humans (male and female) according to Gen 1:28 is here unilaterally turned against the woman by the man.

5.5 Position of women in Old Testament society

In Old Testament society the effect of the curse manifested itself in the phenomenon that the leadership males were to provide often degenerated into a lust for power.

5.5.1 Subordinate position of women

The Old Testament contains plenty of evidence that women usually occupied a subordinate position in society and were regarded as little more than chattels. Lamech's words to his wives (Gen 4:23), Lot's proposal (Gen 19:6-8), Absalom's rape of his half-sister (2 Sam 13) and the treatment of the Levite's concubine (Jdg 19) are telling examples. Among the gentiles jungle law prevailed, not only among males, but also in dealings with women. In times of war women were simply shared out as part of the loot. There are instances of women who despised their husbands (eg Michal, 2 Sam 6:16,20). Against the background of Genesis 1 and 2 this oppression clearly did not accord with God's intentions but were a consequence of sin.

Among the covenanted people, too, there are many examples of devout men abusing women (eg David, 2 Sam 11:2-5) and devout women humiliating or manipulating their husbands (Rebekah, Gen 27:5-13; Leah and Rachel, Gen 30:15-16). This too was not intended by God.

Yet not all examples of men exercising leadership in society, religious communities and the home, and wives willingly submitting to their husbands or playing a limited role in their religious community can be dismissed as outdated patriarchy or illustrations of women's servile position. Many things that happened among Old Testament believers do not merely reflect the patriarchal situation of that age, but serve as models for the New Testament church (cf 1 Cor 10:11). Thus Peter cites Sarah's respect for Abraham (1 Pet 3:5-6) to substantiate a precept.⁶⁶ Precepts and examples of a wholesome relationship between husband and wife among God's people are not among the ceremonies, prefigurations and pointers to Christ that were abolished in the New Testament church (Belgic Confession, art 25). But in interpreting these precepts and examples the exegete should take careful note of the various premises discussed in chapters 1 and 2.

5.5.2 Emancipation in the legal position of women in Israel

Old Testament laws for the religious community curb males' sinful lust for power. The same applies to women's 'desire for their husband': in the Old Testament (and the New Testament as well) restrictions are imposed on women, so they cannot arbitrarily arrogate their husbands' position.

⁶⁶ That Peter's intention in citing Sarah's example is not altogether clear from the Old Testament does not alter the fact that Sarah's behaviour towards her husband was held up as an example to New Testament believers (cf Van Rensburg 2004:249-260).

There are various examples in the Old Testament of how women's position in society at large was ameliorated. Thus in Numbers 27 it is decreed that the daughters of Zelophehad could inherit, against the prevailing rule in Israel. Women could also not be sold into slavery. Neither could a husband cast out his wife simply by issuing a letter of divorce. This offered married women some protection (1988 Appendix, 4.1.1, p. 31-32). Widows, too, were protected (1988 Appendix, 4.2).

Thus in the Old Testament the Lord already introduced a corrective to males' sinful lust for dominance; it did not happen only in the New Testament. There are indications, however, that prior to Jesus' coming the Jewish scribes imposed restrictions on women and looked down on them, and it was in reaction to this that Jesus emphasised women's special position among his followers.

5.5.3 Grace for women in Israel despite the fall

Although women usually play minor roles in the Old Testament, they were still influential in public life. The queen mothers of the kings of Judah and Israel are telling examples. Proverbs 31:10-31 depicts a blessed woman who takes part in public life and compels her husband and children's respect.

The Old Testament mentions individual women who played public roles:

- Deborah served a judge (Jdg 4:1 – 5:31), and the permanence of her position is evident in the fact that she “held court under the Palm of Deborah” and the Israelites “came to her to have their disputes decided” (Jdg 4:5). She is called *nebiah*, the feminine of *nabi*. “Hence she is the organ through which God reveals himself, she speaks God’s word and as such is able to judge complicated lawsuits” (Goslinga 1951:93; our translation). Although out of the ordinary, Deborah was fully engaged in the ministry of the word that she had to proclaim. Like Samuel, she combined two functions (‘prophesying’ and ‘judging’). In addition she also acted as a political leader. She summoned Barak and in the Lord’s name ordered him to lead the battle. Deborah was aware of the unconventionality of a woman like herself occupying the position of a judge, as is evident in 4:9 when she tells Barak: “‘Very well,’ Deborah said, ‘I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours, for the Lord will hand over Sisera to a woman.’” In a sense her entire career (cf her eulogy, especially Jdg 5:7) is actually an indictment of Israel: the people had sunk so low that no man rose against their oppressors, so the Lord got her, a woman, to act as judge.
- Athaliah occupied the throne of Judah (2 Kings 11), but she seized it in defiance of the Lord’s will by way of a coup. Everything points to the fact that her reign was illicit (she massacred the entire royal house to secure the throne). The Lord disposed that her surviving grandson, Joash, should be spared and he was

proclaimed the lawful king after seven years. Thus Athaliah, like Jezebel, may be seen as an example of the consequences of the curse following the fall: that of a woman 'desiring' her husband's position or the position due to him.

- Huldah was a prophetess (2 Kings 22:14).⁶⁷ However, the Old Testament contains no evidence to assess whether she (like Elijah and Elisha) was called by God to full-time prophethood or whether she merely prophesied occasionally. But her ministry is appraised positively and there is no indication that her conduct as a prophetess was considered a transgression.

Israelite family life suggests that as mothers wives were held in great esteem (Gen 16:4,24,31). Mothers were entitled to the same respect as fathers (Ex 20:12; 21:17. Also cf Prov 19:26; 20:20; 23:22; 30:17).

5.6 Women in 'office' in the Old Testament⁶⁸

5.6.1 Prophetic office

Instances of women who prophesied before Pentecost are Deborah (Jdg 4:4), Miriam (Ex 15:20), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14) and Anna (Luk 2:36) (cf 1988 Appendix, 4.5.4.1, p. 35-37). But there is no evidence that their ministry was full-time. The prophets of the Lord, moreover, did not hold an institutionalised office, in which succession and other issues were formally regulated. Nor is there evidence that all male prophets ministered full-time. It is not clear whether this state of affairs sheds any light on the question whether there was any gender differentiation in the prophetic ministry.

5.6.2 Priestly office

The Old Testament contains no evidence of women holding priestly office (1988 Appendix, 4.5.4.2, p. 37-38). This contrasts sharply with gentile practice, which included temple prostitutes, priestesses and, among the Romans, the so-called vestal virgins.

In itself the fact that women did not act as priests sheds little light on the question of gender in ordained ministries. Considering the heavy emphasis on the teaching aspect of the priestly office, the absence of women in this capacity could have some implications for the teaching ministry. (Also cf 1988 Appendix, p. 37-38).

⁶⁷ Huldah used the standard messenger formula, 'thus says the Lord' (2 Kings 22:15,16). The prophets used this expression to identify their proclamation as a message from God (cf 2 Kings 9:1-13).

⁶⁸ The notion of 'office' in the Old Testament should not be overblown. People often *acted* as prophets without necessarily having been appointed to the position. They were ad hoc prophets/prophetesses who were instructed by the Lord to declare his word in a specific situation. A typical instance was Amos, a shepherd, who on a specific occasion (see Amos 1:1) had a vision which he had to proclaim to the people. Such prophets did not hold any formal office, were not members of a prophetic school and, after conveying the message they had received from the Lord, resumed their ordinary vocations. In a sense they were simply 'charismatic' prophets. Also see 1988 Appendix, 4.5.2 for the use of the word 'office' in the Old Testament.

5.6.3 Monarchic office

The Old Testament mentions a few women who occupied leadership positions (eg Deborah), but none who legitimately held monarchic office in Israel (cf 5.5.3 above). The fact that women did not act as monarchs but did occasionally serve as legitimate leaders could have implications for gender in the ruling ministry.

5.7 Conclusion about gender in ordained ministries in the Old Testament

This overview of Old Testament data permits the conclusion that gender did play a role in the 'offices' of prophet, priest and king in the Old Testament.

- **Priest:** There is no evidence that women legally served as the Lord's priests. This in itself sheds little light on the problem of gender in ordained ministries. Considering the heavy emphasis on the teaching aspect of the priestly office, the absence of women in this capacity could have some implications for the teaching ministry (cf 1.1.6.7).
- **Prophet:** There is evidence that women acted as prophets. This could have implications for the question of gender in ordained ministries (cf 1.1.6.7), although it should be noted that there is no indication that women acted as full-time prophets; the same qualification applies to some male prophets. This fact, too, will be taken into account in the final conclusions about gender in ordained ministries.
- **King:** There is no evidence that women acted as lawful kings, only that some women held leadership positions. This may have implications for gender in the ruling ministry (cf 1.1.6.6).

To determine the implications of these conclusions for the role of gender in special ministries in the New Testament church the revelation-history connection between the Old and New Testaments must be studied in detail – especially as regards the view of ordained ministries⁶⁹ (cf 1.1.6.3).

⁶⁹ In 1.2 we showed that the Old Testament ministries of king, prophet and priest cannot be directly identified with or transposed to the New Testament ministries of, respectively, elders, ministers of the Word and deacons. After all, in Christ the ministries of king, prophet and priest were in a sense consummated. Hence there is no direct connection, but there is an indirect link in that the ordained ministries in the New Testament church contained certain elements of the Old Testament ministries of prophet, priest and king.

Chapter 6

WOMEN ACCORDING TO THE GOSPELS

6.1 Women as believers

It is noteworthy that women's faith and obedience are fully acknowledged in the Gospels and are recorded as examples to the church. Their religious experience and witness to their faith are given full credit throughout (Matt 9:22 + Mark 5:34 + Luke 8:48; Matt 15:28; Mark 12:42; 14:9; Luke 1:6,24-25,38,60; 2:19,22, 33,37,51; 7:50).

Women are admonished to be genuinely penitent and repentant (Luke 23:27-31) and are expected to have faith and spiritual insight (Luke 24:5-6). The Lord guides women to articulate their faith and confess it to others (John 4:28-29; 11:27).

6.2 Women as members of the extended circle of disciples

Women followed Jesus during his earthly ministry (Matt 27:55 + Mark 15:41 + Luke 23:49, 55) and travelled with him (Luke 8:1-3). They were also among the crowds whom Jesus taught and healed (Mark 6:34, read in conjunction with Matt 14:21; 15:30-31,38).

Jesus also extended the ministry of his word fully to individual women, as he did to men⁷⁰, as well as his healing ministry⁷¹. He even made it a priority for women to learn from him (Luke 10:41-42).

The Lord's mercy to women made the faithful rejoice (Luke 1:58).

Women had ready access to Jesus and confidently approached him with their requests (Matt 15:25; 20:20; John 11:3).

6.3 Women as prophetesses and witnesses

The Holy Spirit led women to make prophetic utterances. Initially these were confined to a small circle, but through their inclusion in the Bible they became prophecies to the church throughout the ages (Luke 1:41-44,46-56). Sometimes their prophetic ministry was public (Luke 2:36-38). Mary's and Anna's prophecies are mentioned in the same context as those of Zechariah and Simeon (Luke 1 and 2).

⁷⁰ Cf Matt 15:26; 20:20-23; John 4:7-26; 8:10-11; 11:20-27

⁷¹ Cf Matt 8:15 + Mark 1:31 + Luke 4:39; Matt 9:22 + Mark 5:34 + Luke 8:47; Matt 15:28 + Mark 7:29; Luke 8:2, 54; 13:10-17

Jesus admitted women as witnesses (John 4:28-29,39), and deliberately sent them out to witness to him (Matt 28:7-8,10 + Mark 16:7,9-10 + Luke 24:9-10 + John 20:17-18).

6.4 Women as mothers

At the birth of Jesus' forerunner (John the Baptist) Elizabeth features and participates no less than Zechariah (Luke 1:13). Likewise both the father and the mother are mentioned with reference to the raising of their dead daughter (Luke 8:51).

In Jesus' genealogy the names of several women receive special mention, thus indicating their role and place in the unfolding of God's salvific plan (Matt 1:3,5,6,16).

As a mother Mary shares her and Joseph's religious duties in respect of their son Jesus (Luke 2:22 [they]), and on one occasion takes the initiative in asking an admonitory question (Luke 2:48). She is also respected as a mother through Jesus' childhood obedience to her (Luke 2:51).

On the cross Jesus singled out women for special concern in their capacity as mothers (John 19:26-27).

6.5 Women as caregivers

Women waited on Jesus and his apostles (Matt 8:15 + Mark 1:31 + Luke 4:39; Matt 27:55 + Mark 15:40-41; John 12:2). Jesus indicates, however, that these menial duties should not be rendered at the expense of spiritual communion with him or religious growth (Luke 10:41-42). In addition women served the Lord with material contributions from their own means (Luke 8:1-3; Mark 12:42 + Luke 21:2).

Women also tended Jesus' body decorously, with special gratitude for his gracious forgiveness (Luke 7:37f) and remarkable intuition of his burial (Matt 26:12 + Mark 14:8 + John 12:7). Even after his death they wanted to anoint his body honourably (Mark 16:1 + Luke 23:56; 24:1).

6.6 Christ esteemed women's dignity

Jesus sharply condemned the Hellenistic world's perception of women as sex objects (Matt 5:28; 1988 Appendix, 5.1).

He used women to witness to the crucial event in his redemptive victory, his resurrection from death (Matt 28:10; John 20:17; 1988 Appendix, 5.2).

Jesus did not hesitate to flout certain conventions and customs of his day in his dealings with women (eg by speaking to a woman in public, John 4:27).

6.7 Jesus did not call any women to be apostles

Remarkably, in spite of the foregoing Jesus did not call any woman to his inner circle of twelve disciples.

6.8 Summary

1. In their religious life Jesus rated women on a par with men.
2. Women participated freely and equally in the extended circle of Jesus' followers.
3. The Lord also used women as prophets and witnesses.
4. Women played a special role in extending physical care and service to Jesus and the twelve.
5. Jesus esteemed women greatly, notwithstanding their social position in antiquity.
6. Jesus' treatment of women underscored the redemptive nature of his ministry. He elevated women to equality and equal stature with males before God.
7. Despite the foregoing Jesus did not call any woman to become one of his twelve disciples.

6.9 Conclusion

1. Following the example of Jesus' conduct towards women, they should not be seen or treated as inferior to men.
2. This equality in status does not necessarily mean that the Lord has given them the same calling and tasks.
3. Sections 6.1 to 6.6 do not conclusively answer the question whether contemporary women can be called to ordained ministries, since they do not deal with these ministries.
4. The fact that Jesus did not call any woman to be one of his twelve disciples (6.7) does not in itself clinch the question whether or not contemporary women can be called to ordained ministries.

Chapter 7

EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUSIS OF EPHESIANS 5:21-33

Greek UBS ⁴	NRSV	NIV
<p>²¹ Ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ, ²² αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ, ²³ ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἐστὶν κεφαλὴ τῆς ἑκκλησίας, αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος· ²⁴ ἀλλὰ ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ, οὕτως καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί. ²⁵ Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς, ²⁶ ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ καθαρίσας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι, ²⁷ ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἑνδοξὸν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ ἔχουσαν στίλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' ἵνα ᾖ ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος. ²⁸ οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν [καὶ] οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα. ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπᾷ. ²⁹ Οὐδεὶς γάρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, ³⁰ ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ. ³¹ ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείπει</p>	<p>²¹ Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²² Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰</p>	<p>²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— ³⁰ for we are members of his</p>

<p>ἄνθρωπος [τὸν] πατέρα καὶ [τὴν] μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. ³² τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν· ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. ³³ πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἓνα, ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῇται τὸν ἄνδρα.</p>	<p>because we are members of his body. ³¹ "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³² This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. ³³ Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.</p>	<p>body. ³¹ "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.</p>
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7.1 Argument of Ephesians

The basic theme of the letter is Christ's headship of the church, his body.⁷² This theme is developed in the four main sections of the letter: the salutation (1:1-2), part two dealing with God's salvific work, more particularly what Christ's headship of the church entails *in principle* (1:3 - 3:21), a third section giving instructions in terms of God's salvific work, more particularly how Christ's headship should be reflected in the believer's *day-to-day practice* (4:1 - 6:20), and the conclusion (6:21-24).

In the third main section (4:1-6:20) Paul calls on believers – since they, the church, are Christ's body – to live their lives in conformity with their God-given vocation (4:1). He gives practical guidelines for maintaining unity among believers (4:2-16). Then follows an injunction to put off their old, sinful human nature and to live holy lives according to God's will (4:17-5:5). Paul also enjoins them to live as children of light (5:6-20), and to do the same in the various relations of authority that prevailed in the home at that time (5:21 - 6:9). He issues several commands to stand their ground to the end (6:10-20).

7.2 Origin of Ephesians

There is no certainty about when Paul wrote this letter, nor about his whereabouts at the time of writing. We cannot even be sure that he wrote it specifically to the Ephesians.⁷³ One thing is clear: he was in prison (Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20).

⁷² Colossians in its turn avers that Christ, the head of the church, is also head of the cosmos.

⁷³ The reference to Ephesus in 1:1 does not appear in the earliest manuscripts, where the addressees in 1:1 are simply "saints who are also faithful" (footnote, NRSV). This would imply that the letter was not addressed to a specific church, but to all the faithful in those parts. From the contents of the letter it would seem to have been the case. The letter is impersonal: there are no references (as in Paul's other letters) to acquaintances and no greetings to particular individuals.

We know of three places where Paul was imprisoned: Ephesus, Caesarea and Rome. If we accept that the letter was in fact addressed to the Ephesians, it was probably not written from Ephesus, for why would he write to the Ephesians if that was where he was at the time? That leaves Caesarea and Rome. He was imprisoned in Caesarea round AD 57-60, and in Rome round 61-63 (possibly again in 66-67). A clear-cut choice between the two is difficult.

For the purposes of our argument below we assume that Paul was in Rome at the time of writing the letter to the Ephesians (hence AD 61-63). Many Christians from all over visited him in prison, including Tychicus of Ephesus, who carried the letter home with him (6:21).

7.3 First readers of the Letter to the Ephesians and their world

Ephesians 5:21-33 outlines the proper perspective on the relationship between husband and wife. This section could have been a corrective to the sinful state of marriage which was common at that time. The behavioural precept that husbands should rule over their wives and wives should be subject to their husbands was typical not only of Judaism. At least since Plato's day (c 380 BC), and especially at the time when Paul wrote his letters, there were various documents instructing wives to submit to their husbands.⁷⁴ Hence the idea that this relationship (like relations with the state and between slaves and their owners) was necessarily that of master and subject was axiomatic in that society.

7.4 Relevant exegesis of Ephesians 5:21-33

Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is telling believers how to arrange their day-to-day lives. In 5:21 he comes to guidelines for Christians' conduct in various relations with people in authority. First he states a general principle for all such relations (5:21),⁷⁵ then presents guidelines for three specific relationships:

Moreover, 1:15 shows that he had only recently heard about the readers' conversion, which does not really apply to the Ephesians; after all, he had laboured there for more than two years. Hence the letter to the Ephesians would appear to have been a circular letter that Paul dispatched via Tychicus to encourage and strengthen Christians in the whole of Asia Minor, and was not about problems encountered in any specific church. Possibly the church in Ephesus was Tychicus's first port of call on his travels through Asia Minor.

⁷⁴ Balch (1981:23-62) shows, with quotations and argumentation, that the classical *topoi* in question found in Plato and Aristotle's writings were known and discussed among groups that were active in the first century, namely middle-Platonists, Peripatetics, Stoics, Epicureans, Hellenistic Jews and neo-Pythagoreans.

⁷⁵ Verse 5:21 might have two other functions: (1) It can be read as the introductory verse only to the pericope on marital relations, so the instruction to submit to one another would apply only to that relationship (5:21-33). (2) It can be read as the conclusion to the preceding pericope (5:6-21), so the command regarding mutual submission would apply generally to all relationships, not specifically to marital relations or relations between masters and slaves or between parents and children.

- The marital relationship between husband and wife (5:22-33)
- The relationship between parents and children (6:1-4)
- Relations between masters and slaves (6:5-9)

7.4.1 General principle for all relations with authorities (5:21)

The umbrella principle for all relations with authority is: “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ)! The expression, “out of reverence for Christ” (ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ – ‘in fear of Christ’), means that Christ’s relationship with us and ours with him are decisive in our relations with authority. Both parties to such relationships – the one wielding authority and the one subject to that authority – are called to model their relationship on Christ in a manner expressive of his headship of the church. Hence not only Christ’s will but also his own conduct are held up as a model. Paul applies this principle to all three of the aforementioned authority relations; here, however, the only pertinent relationship is that between husband and wife (5:22-33).

7.4.2 Overall thought structure of the pericope

Paul first issues the command to wives (5:22-24), then the instruction to husbands (5:25-30), and then points out that marriage should reflect Christ’s relationship with the church (5:31-33a), followed by a recapitulatory injunction to husbands and wives (5:33b).

7.4.3 Injunction to wives not to be interpreted in isolation

Like all injunctions to two parties in a relationship (eg parents-children, masters-slaves), the injunction to wives (5:22-24) cannot be properly understood on its own but must be read in conjunction with the instruction to the other party, the husband: “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything” (5:24: ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ, οὕτως καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί). In itself this injunction would justify the view (and through the ages it has often been misused to this end!) that wives are subject to their husbands in an absolute sense. Only when read in conjunction with the command to husbands can the command to wives be interpreted correctly. The command to husbands reads: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (5:25: ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἡγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς). Hence it is not a matter of one party (the wife) being subject to the other (the husband), who rules over her. It is rather a matter of husband and wife – out of reverence for Christ – submitting to one another. This reciprocal submission is differentiated and specified in the ensuing verses.

7.4.4 Exclusive injunctions to husbands and wives?

At face value it seems as if wives should only submit and husbands should only love (5:22-25). But that is not so. In 5:21 it is already stated explicitly that the two parties should submit to one another. Elsewhere in the Bible there is another command

embracing both parties, namely that all believers should love one another (1 John 4:7⁷⁶). Thus *submitting* and *loving* apply to all Christians. When it comes to marriage the two injunctions are differentiated, and in the case of wives it entails submission. The faithful should all be subject to one another, but in marriage it is the wife's specific duty. In the case of husbands, on the other hand, the specification pertains to the commandment to love, in such a manner that the husband's headship mirrors that of Christ. All believers must love one another in a self-effacing way, but in marriage this is specified as the husband's duty. Thus all men and women should love one another and submit to one another, but in the marriage relationship wives should excel in submission to their husbands, and husbands in self-renouncing love for their wives.

7.4.5 No injunction that husbands should rule their wives

The husband's headship over his wife is God-given (cf Gen 1-2), making him the directive partner in marital relations. The fall, however, warped that relationship (cf Gen 3:16). As a result of this sinful state one finds that in many cultures men, including Christian men, believe they should rule their wives. But this pericope in Ephesians makes it perfectly clear that the Lord does not command men to *rule* their submissive wives, but that the husband's headship entails loving his wife like Christ, the head of the church, loves his body and guides it. Hence husbands should be prepared to give their all for their wives, as Christ let himself be crucified for the church. His wife's well-being should be a husband's first priority. He must care for her as he cares for his own body. If he behaves thus, his wife will have no difficulty submitting to him, for she will notice two things: that her husband, like her, recognises the Lord as the only master (κύριος), and that, in exercising his headship, he lovingly sacrifices himself for her sake.

7.4.6 The marital relationship as an image of our relationship with the Lord

Paul says that the marital relationship is a profound mystery, which he applies to the relationship between Christ and the church (Eph 5:32⁷⁷). His inversion of the roles is interesting. First Christ's relationship to the church serves as the model for marital relations between husband and wife: wives must submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ (Eph 5:24). By the same token the husband is head of the wife just as Christ is head of the church (Eph 5:23) and must love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it (Eph 5:25). But then he asserts that God used the relationship between husband and wife to reveal something of the mystery of Christ's intimate union with the church (Eph 5:31-32).

This puts a heavy onus on all married couples. All husbands are called to manifest Christ's loving, self-effacing headship of his church by acting as a loving, self-effacing

⁷⁶ 1 John 4:7: "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God."

⁷⁷ Eph 5:32: "This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church " (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν· ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν).

head towards his wife. And all wives are called to exemplify the church's loving service and obedience to its head, Christ, by mirroring it in their own conduct. This interpretation accords with the overall theme of the letter to the Ephesians: *the church as the body of Christ, the head*.

The couple must realise that God uses marriage to make humankind (including the couple themselves!) grasp something of the wonder of the relationship between us, the bride, and our bridegroom, Jesus Christ!

7.5 Conclusion

Ephesians 5:21-33 provides guidelines for marriage partners' relations with one another. Read superficially, it seems as if Paul's enjoinder to wives to be submissive concurs with the customary behaviour expected of wives in relation to their husbands at that time. But it turns out that Paul's instruction to be submissive is the practical corollary of the fact that the church is the body of Christ, its head (Eph 1:22; 5:23). To the first readers this command could also have served as a corrective to the customary social codes (Eph 2:2-3). Paul does it by systematically pointing out the implications of Christ's headship:

- The basic injunction to marriage partners ("Submit to one another", Eph 5:21) applies that rule to *both* partners. Moreover, Christ is proclaimed the sole *Kurios* in the relationship, in that they have to submit to one another "out of reverence for Christ" (Eph 5:21).
- The wife's submission to her husband is qualified in two ways: (1) it should be modelled on the church's submission to Christ, and (2) it must be understood in terms (and as the counterpart) of the injunction to husbands to love their wives as Christ loves his bride, the church (cf 7.4.5 above).
- In contrast to the prevailing code of conduct, husbands are not commanded to ensure that their wives are submissive. On the contrary: their headship over their wives should mirror Christ's headship of the church by allowing themselves to be 'crucified' for their wives and by nourishing and caring for them (ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει, 5:29). Hence the response to the wife's submission should not be 'wise rule', but rather an even greater submission: by loving her the way Christ loves the church.
- Ephesians' corrective to the social distortion of marital relations does not mean that it puts an end to the husband's headship. It is more a matter of adjusting it to Christ's headship. In practice it means that husbands should provide wise, loving leadership in marriage. If wives are more gifted than their husbands in certain areas, they should be able to apply those gifts fully in a manner that acknowledges the husband's headship.

Thus Paul was not merely giving marriage partners guidelines for embodying their Christianity in their marriage in a sinful society, but also –

- pointing out that marriage is a palpable illustration of Christ's headship of his church (Eph 5:32)
- through his commands to husband and wife, triggering a process that would culminate in the implosion of a social order that looked down on women.

7.6 Application to gender in ordained ministries

Ephesians 5:21-33 does not permit any direct inference about women's admissibility to ordained ministries. It does, however, afford valuable insight into how Christ's headship of the church determines wives and husbands' conduct towards each other (cf 1.1.6.10). Secondly, it is clear that wives' and husbands' roles in marriage are not interchangeable, but that there is a restriction on the wife: she may not become her husband's head.

The implications are as follows:

- The different injunctions to husbands and wives cannot be transposed directly to their functions in the church. Still, within the overall framework of revelation history as regards women's ecclesiastic functioning, it provides significant supplementary evidence. In this regard it should be noted that Ephesians 5:21-33 explicitly puts the wife's relationship to her head (and the head of the church) *in the framework of God's kingdom* (the headship of Christ). This affords insight into other, related scriptural data.
- The fact that the husband's headship and the wife's submission should be modelled on the relation between Christ as head of his body, the church, implies the following:
 - Husbands' leadership of their wives in marriage should be as loving, caring and self-effacing as Christ's leadership of the church. Hence the requirement of loving conduct in imitation of Christ restricts the husband's leadership, a restriction that he must accept in loving submission.
 - The wife's submission is not slavish subjection. She must have scope to exercise her gifts to the full. Yet just as the church in its loving submission to Christ is fully prepared not to put itself in Christ's position, so the wife must conduct herself in marriage. She will exercise her gifts in a manner that shows that she acknowledges and respects her husband's headship. Hence there are restrictions on wives' exercise of their gifts, which they must accept

in loving submission. Ephesians 5 does not tell us what these restrictions are, but they are dealt with elsewhere in Scripture.

Chapter 8

EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUSIS OF 1 PETER 3:1-7

Greek UBS ⁴	NRSV	NIV
<p>Ὁμοίως [αἱ] γυναῖκες, ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ἵνα καὶ εἴ τινας ἀπειθοῦσιν τῷ λόγῳ, διὰ τῆς τῶν γυναικῶν ἀναστροφῆς ἄνευ λόγου κερδηθήσονται, ² ἐποπτεύσαντες τὴν ἐν φόβῳ ἀγνὴν ἀναστροφήν ὑμῶν. ³ ὣν ἔστω οὐχ ὁ ἐξωθεν ἐμπλοκῆς τριχῶν καὶ περιθέσεως χρυσίων ἢ ἐνδύσεως ἱματίων κόσμος ⁴ ἀλλ' ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ ἀφάρτῳ τοῦ πραέως καὶ ἡσυχίου πνεύματος, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πολυτελής. ⁵ οὕτως γάρ ποτε καὶ αἱ ἅγαι γυναῖκες αἱ ἐλπίζουσαι εἰς θεὸν ἐκόσμουσαν ἑαυτάς ὑποτασσόμεναι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν, ⁶ ὥς Σάρρα ὑπήκουσεν τῷ Ἀβραάμ κύριον αὐτὸν καλοῦσα, ἥς ἐγενήθητε τέκνα ἀγαθοποιούσαι καὶ μὴ φοβούμεναι μηδεμίαν πτόησιν. ⁷ Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως, συνοικοῦντες κατὰ γνῶσιν ὡς ἁσθενεστέρῳ σκευεῖ τῷ γυναικείῳ, ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.</p>	<p>3 Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct, ² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ³ Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; ⁴ rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God's sight. ⁵ It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands. ⁶ Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you. ⁷ Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together, paying honor to the woman as the weaker sex, since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life so that nothing may hinder your prayers.</p>	<p>3 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, ² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ³ Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. ⁴ Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. ⁵ For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, ⁶ like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear. ⁷ Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.</p>

8.1 Argument of 1 Peter

The first Petrine letter is a typical first century epistle with a salutation, body (1:3-5:11) and conclusion (5:12-14). The body of the letter (1:3 - 5:11) comprises an introductory section (1:3-12), offering praises to God for giving the faithful new birth (1:3 ἀναγεννήσας ἡμᾶς). For the rest the body consists of four major commandments, all based on the salvific fact of their rebirth through God's act of begetting:

- The first commandment (1:13-25) calls the faithful to set their hope on God's grace and take care to live holy lives.
- The second commandment (2:1-10) spells out the duty of the reborn in regard to personal growth and growing together with fellow Christians.
- The third commandment (2:11-4:19) lays down behavioural rules for *aliens and exiles*. First the basic principle is posited: believers must always behave decorously (2:11-12). Then that principle is applied to various relationships, including relations with a marriage partner (3:1-7).⁷⁸
- The fourth commandment (5:1-11) provides guidelines for Christians' behaviour within the church.

8.2 Origin of the letter

It is generally assumed that the apostle Peter wrote the letter round AD 65, probably from Rome, referred to in the letter as 'Babylon' (5:13). Nothing is known about Peter's possible earlier relations with Christians in the regions to which the letter was sent (the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia). Neither do we know under whose ministry these churches were established. From the actual letter it is evident that he seeks to hearten and comfort these Christians, who suffered greatly under heavy injustice, and gives them guidelines on how they as aliens should respond to injustice, also in marriage.

8.3 First readers of 1 Peter and their world

Many of the first readers had probably espoused the Jewish faith until they were converted. Others belonged to one or another of the indigenous religions. The author calls the addressees "exiles of the Dispersion" (NRVS) (δῆμοις διασπορᾶς 1:1). This alien status could point to two things. The first is their political status as aliens without civil rights in their region of domicile. Hence they are exiles, foreigners who may have rights of domicile but nothing beyond that – with concomitant negative economic implications. Secondly, it could refer to their spiritual alienage, in the sense that after their conversion they became citizens of heaven. They are not just aliens, however, but people "dispersed" (διασπορᾶς) over a vast area. The reason for their dispersion is not

⁷⁸ The other relationships to which the principle is applied are relations with the government (2:13-17), with employers (2:18-25), with their neighbours generally (3:8-12), and their attitude towards and response to injustice (3:13-4:19).

stated in the letter. It might have been part of the dispersion of the Jews – the category referred to in Acts 2:9-10⁷⁹ (see also Acts 6:9; 8:4). But now they have a new status: the author calls them the “chosen” (ἐκλεκτοὶς 1:1).

For most of the first century Christians were not physically persecuted, and this probably applies to the recipients of Peter's letter as well. But they were subjected to all manner of social discrimination and injustice. This came from three quarters: the Roman authorities, some Jews⁸⁰ and unconverted members of their own households. In virtually all Roman cities Judaism was a sanctioned religion¹. When the authorities still regarded Christians as a Jewish schismatic group they enjoyed a lot of leeway. The only condition was that they should not take part in activities that could be considered politically or socially subversive. It was only some time after this letter was written that there was any organised, official persecution of Christians. At this stage it probably amounted to no more than social stigmatisation and discrimination.

Hence most of the injustice took place in the confined circle of the household. In every home the head of the house held virtually total sway over his wife, children, servants and slaves. As a result the subordinates, including wives, sometimes suffered great hardship if the master of the house did not convert to Christianity as well.

8.4 Relevant exegesis of the pericope 3:1-7

The main issue in 3:1-7 is that God's commandment to marriage partners still applies, even in a society where it was fashionable and acceptable to discriminate against wives.

First Peter speaks at some length to wives (3:1-6), then in a circumspect, highly diplomatic way he briefly addresses husbands (3:7).

8.4.1 Wives' response to injustice in marriage

The pericope 1 Peter 3:1-7 does not primarily give general guidelines for marriage (as one finds in Eph 5:21-32 and Col 3:18-19). The author deals specifically with Christian wives' duty if their husbands are unfair or unbelievers, and with a Christian husband's duty to his wife – all this in a society in which discrimination against women was

⁷⁹ Acts 2:9-10: “⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ...”

⁸⁰ Some Jews' animosity to Christians emerges clearly in the book of Acts. There are numerous descriptions of how they maltreated Christians, hounded them out of villages and incited the Roman authorities against them.

acceptable and common practice, and in which wives were expected to conform to their husbands' religious preference.⁸¹

8.4.2 Social position of women

Outside the church husbands did not regard or treat their wives as equals. Within the church, however, women retrieved their human dignity and were treated as persons in their own right. This probably caused friction in many marriages, especially if the husband remained unconverted. Besides, the authorities were resolute that new religious movements should not disrupt the orderly functioning of households, and therefore of the state, by giving women more self-determination than they had traditionally enjoyed. It put Christian wives in a quandary, hence this guideline for their conduct towards their husbands, more particularly because (unconverted) husbands probably felt threatened by their wives' new freedom.

8.4.3 Unilateral submission?

By contrast with Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 3:1 confines the instruction to submit to the spouse to wives. At the very end of the pericope, in 3:7, however, the author balances it by commanding husbands to treat their wives respectfully, since they are co-heirs to the gracious gift of life. Hence husbands should not, in the terminology of Ephesians 5, abuse their headship by dominating their wives. By implication, then, 1 Peter also enjoins husbands to be submissive. However, their submission differs from their wives', in that they are explicitly told to show respect for their wives.

8.4.4 Co-heirs to life

Peter reminds husbands that their wives are "heirs with you of the gracious gift of life" (ὥς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς – 3:7). This clinches the matter. A husband who dominates his wife jeopardises his own stake in "the gracious gift of life". The full impact of this decisive pronouncement would probably only emerge later. Before God husband and wife are equally heirs to life, and the implication that would in due course take full effect is that marriage partners should treat one another as outlined in Ephesians 5: their relationship should be modelled on that between Christ, the head, and his body, the church.

8.4.5 Place of outward adornment

The apparent prohibition in 3:3-4 does not mean that outward adornment is ruled out of order or proscribed. It is merely put in perspective. A woman should not think that outward ornament will change an unreasonable spouse's behaviour or make him more

⁸¹ An example of this convention appears in Plutarch's letter to Polyanus and Eurydice, in which he provides guidelines for marriage: "It is therefore proper for a wife to worship and know only the gods in whom her husband believes; and that she securely locks the front door for all strange rituals and outlandish superstitious beliefs. For not for a single one of the gods is it meritorious that a wife performs rituals stealthily and secretly." (διὸ καὶ θεοῦς οὓς ὁ ἀνὴρ νομίζει σέβασθαι τῇ γαμετῇ καὶ γίγνωσκέϊν μόνους προσήκει, περιέρχοις δὲ θρησκείαις καὶ ξέναις δεισιδαιμονίαις ἀποκεκλείσθαι τὴν αὔλειον. Οὐδενὶ γὰρ θεῶν ἱερὰ κλεπτόμενα καὶ λανθάνοντα δρᾶται κεξαρισμένως ὑπὸ γυναικός.)

affectionate. Lasting change can only come about if her partner observes that she has inner nobility. Such 'nobility' should emanate sincerely from the heart, without role play or masks.

8.4.6 Example of Sarah's relationship with Abraham

Peter cites one example from 'the old days' – Sarah (3:5-6). One gathers that he knew his readers held her in high esteem and would like to identify with her. He argues that a woman should acknowledge her husband's headship by addressing him in the traditional way as her 'lord'. Peter holds this up as an example to be emulated, even when the husband acted unreasonably.

8.4.7 Marital problems cuts off religious life

If married couples do not heed the commandment in 1 Peter 3:1-7, it will cut off their religious life. This is actually a general truth: if believers do something that they know God frowns upon, it affects their relationship with God and they are unable to pray (3:7).

8.5 Conclusion

The general injunctions in Ephesians and Colossians are presupposed in 1 Peter 3:1-7 and form the point of departure. The pericope 1 Peter 3:1-7 applies these general injunctions to a very specific situation:

- A wife's duty if her husband is unreasonable (and/or unconverted): preach to him without words, simply by your conduct!
- Husbands' duty towards their wives in a society where discrimination against women is acceptable and common practice: don't look down on her, pay her respect, because you know that before God you are co-heirs to life.

The principle is clear: (1) If God gives an instruction about your relationship with your marriage partner, observance of that instruction should not depend on the partner's behaviour towards you. (2) Any societal licence to treat your partner unjustly does not authorise you to do so anyway. God requires you to demonstrate your co-heirship before him by paying due respect to your (weaker) partner.

It is evident that God's Holy Spirit guided the author of 1 Peter not only to issue instructions for marriage partners' relationship in and despite their sinful society, but also to lay down principles that will ultimately cause spouses not to see each other as inferior in any respect.

8.6 Application to gender in ordained ministries

From 1 Peter 3:1-7 we cannot infer directly whether or not women may be admitted to ordained ministries. It sheds light on the way wives should behave towards their husbands, and vice versa.

The implications of the foregoing considerations are as follows:

- The fact that husbands and wives are given different instructions for marital life cannot be transposed directly to women's ecclesiastic functioning.
- The commandment to wives to be submissive is upheld, even if their husbands are unbelievers.
- The commandment to husbands to behave considerately in their conjugal life affirms the instruction in Ephesians 5:25 that in marriage they should offer their wives loving, caring, self-effacing leadership. Indeed, 1 Peter 3:7 reinforces this commandment: in their leadership they should treat their wives respectfully.
- The emphasis on Christian husbands' and wives' co-heirship to life concurs with the evidence in Galatians 3:28 that men and women alike are one in Christ and share equally in God's gracious covenant. On the subject of wives exercising their gifts 1 Peter 3:1-7 is silent. For that one has to consult other scriptural passages.

Chapter 9

EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUSIS OF GALATIANS 3:26-29

Greek UBS ⁴	NRSV	NIV
<p>²⁶ Πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ²⁷ ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε. ²⁸ οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ²⁹ εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἄρα τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ σπέρμα ἐστέ, κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι.</p>	<p>²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.</p>	<p>²⁶ You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.</p>

9.1 Aim of Galatians

From the letter it is clear that Paul meant it to counteract false teachers who were spreading confusion among the Galatians (1:8). Passages like 2:3-5, 11-14; 3:3-5; 4:8-11, 21-31; 5:1-4 and 6:12-13 indicate that these false teachers, while not rejecting Christ as saviour, nonetheless insisted on strict observance of Mosaic law. Circumcision was clearly required (cf 6:13).

It would also seem that these teachers questioned Paul's authority and that in this letter Paul was defending his apostolic mandate (cf 1:1, 12, 15-17; 2:2, 7-9).

In refuting the teachings of these people Paul accentuates two key issues:

1. Justification before God is not earned by observing the law but by faith in Jesus Christ (2:16; 3:5, 11, 21).
2. The true freedom that the faithful have in Christ. On the one hand he stresses that the faithful are freed from the bondage of the law and sin (cf especially Gal 3 and 4), and on the other that under the guidance of the Spirit

this freedom should be actualised – that is by living in holiness before God (cf especially Gal 5 and 6).

The aim of the letter can be summarised as follows:

As an apostle Paul writes this letter to convince the faithful in Galatia that they can be justified only by faith in Jesus Christ without the works of the law, and that they should not abuse their freedom in Christ but should actualise it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The aim of the letter clarifies Paul's words in 3:28 as follows:

1. If Paul's words "neither Jew nor Greek" in fact refer to circumcised and uncircumcised, it accords with the purpose the letter. After all, he is refuting the false teachers who insisted that the faithful should have themselves circumcised. In that case Paul, in keeping with his aim, would stress that circumcision is not pertinent to human salvation, since they can be justified only by faith in Jesus Christ.
2. It is unclear how Paul's reference to "neither slave nor free" and "neither male nor female" in 3:28 fits into the aim of the letter. The letter does not suggest that the false teachers were in any way proclaiming things affecting relations between slaves and free people or males and females.

9.2 Argument of Galatians

The main theme of the letter appears in 2:15-21: believers are justified by faith, not by observing the law. Paul starts his letter with the usual salutation (1:1-5), then explicitly states that there is no gospel other than the one he proclaims (1:6-10), and that Jesus Christ gave it to him by revelation (1:11-12). From the history of his career Paul proves that his gospel was not invented by humans nor was it recounted to him, but is indeed the true gospel (1:13-21). In Galatians, counter to the heresy of justification by law observance, Paul propounds the true gospel of justification by faith. In 3:1-5, and again in 4:8-20, he admonishes the Galatians because they want to revert to the doctrine of law observance. By way of explanation Paul cites three examples:

- The first is Abraham: just as Abraham was justified by faith, not by observing the law, so are they (the Galatians), and they are so in Christ (3:6-19). Like Abraham, they receive their justification by promise (through Christ), not by merit.
- The second refers to the new relationship in which Christ puts us. In 3:19-25 he points out the new way of relating to the law. The law is no longer a basis for justification but points the way to faith. In 3:26 - 4:7 he outlines the new relationship with God. In Christ we are God's adoptive children, hence heirs to his promise.

- The third example is that of Sarah and Hagar. In effect Paul is asking: do you, like the children of a slave (a la Hagar), work for your own justification? Or do you as children of a free woman (a la Sarah) inherit justification by promise?

The UBS text (4th revised edition) treats Galatians 3:21-29 as a separate pericope under the heading *Slaves and sons*; in fact 3:26 - 4:7 may be regarded as a larger pericope on humans as God's children in Christ. Within this framework Galatians 3:26-29 constitutes a sub-pericope.⁸²

As indicated in 9.1 above, Paul argues that being either a Jew (which implies law observance) or a non-Jew (implying non-observance of the law) may not serve as a basis for distinguishing between two categories of human beings when it comes to salvation. In Galatians 2:16 he avers that "we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law". In Galatians 3:14 the theme is taken up explicitly: "in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

In a sense Galatians 3:15-25 interrupts the argument in order to explain, in terms of the metaphor of *the inheritance*, the relation between law and promise. Galatians 3:23-25 clarifies the provisional function of the law, which ceased when the age of faith dawned. Because of the fall the law became not the justification of humankind but a curse on all humans. Through faith, however, this changed: through faith the law brings people to Christ, so that through faith not only Jews but everyone who believes in Christ shares in the blessing that God promised Abraham. Hence faith has become a channel for non-Jews to share in that blessing (Gal 3:14).

The sub-pericope Galatians 3:26-28 starts with the relation word *γάρ* (3:26), indicating that this passage substantiates a prior statement, namely that faith changes the situation regarding the exclusion of non-Jews. *Everyone* (ie Jews and gentiles alike) are children of God.

9.3 Origin of Galatians

On their first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas visited at least three cities in the Roman province of Galatia: Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 13:2-14:28). After the apostles' council (Acts 15) at least two other visits are mentioned in Acts (Acts 16:6; 18:23). Later in the letter Paul refers to the time when he "first" preached the gospel to them (Gal 4:13).

There is no certainty about when Paul wrote the letter. A possible date is round AD 50-52, writing from Corinth at the end of his second missionary journey (Acts 18); another

⁸² The NIV follows the UBS.

is round AD 55 (shortly before his letter to the Romans), again from Corinth (Acts 20:3). A third possibility is round AD 49, from Antioch, immediately before the apostles' council (Acts 15).

At an early stage of his ministry Paul had already been accused of adapting the gospel to make it more acceptable to gentile believers. The apostles' council (Acts 15) decreed that the gospel as preached by Paul was the true gospel (possibly Gal 2:6). The Judaisers, however, continued to cast aspersions on Paul and proclaimed far and wide that Christians cannot be saved merely by believing in Jesus Christ, but also had to observe the duties imposed by the law and Jewish traditions. In practice this meant that gentiles first had to become Jews before they could become Christians.

Paul wrote his letter to persuade believers in Galatia that the Judaisers were preaching a false gospel. He explained that God absolved them through faith, not through law observance, and he spelled out the implications of a new life in the Spirit.

9.4 First readers of the Letter to the Galatians and their world

Most of the first readers/hearers of Galatians had probably been gentiles before converting to Christianity. Paul describes their lives before their conversion as a time when they were still "spiritually immature" (4:3), "slaves to legalistic religious rules" (4:3), and "worshippers of worthless idols" (4:8).

9.4.1 Social role expectations of women

According to Greek and Roman tradition upper-class women had to conduct themselves modestly and unobtrusively. The new religions, however, granted them more freedom and greater equality in status with males than the traditional official religions permitted. Adherents of traditional religions experienced this new freedom to women as a threat to household harmony and the well-being of society. For this reason foreign religions were often regarded as social and political threats.

9.4.2 Why the specific contrasts of Jew/Greek, slave/free person and man/woman?

In each of the three categories – Jew/Greek, slave/free person and man/woman – Paul is clearly juxtaposing groups which, while related in some ways, still were opposites. It is also clear that in referring to the Jew/Greek, slave/free person and man/woman antitheses he was highlighting existing (role and status) distinctions and barriers that his readers would recognise.

In 3:28 Paul contrasts these familiar distinctions with their oneness in Christ. In contrast to Jews, who are included in the covenant God made with Abraham, he posits the Greeks who, as gentiles, were excluded from that covenant (religious/ethnic distinction). In contrast with free people who enjoyed social liberty he posits slaves, who actually forfeited their liberty altogether (socio-economic distinction). And in

contrast to males, who were socially privileged, he posits females, who were socially disadvantaged (gender distinction).

9.5 Relevant exegesis of Galatians 3:26-29

9.5.1 Hermeneutic options for interpreting the three distinctions

9.5.1.1 Paul refutes the superiority of Jewish prayers?

One possibility is that in referring to Jew/Greek, slave/free person and man/woman Paul was consciously refuting an idea emanating from a thanksgiving in the Jewish morning prayer (Longenecker 1990:157). In this prayer men thank God for not making them gentiles, slaves or women.

The fact that these opposites were familiar distinctions in the life world of the first readers casts doubt on the assumption that in 3:28 Paul really had that specific Jewish prayer in mind. Hence we cannot definitely say that the verse refers to the Jewish morning prayer.

9.5.1.2 Use of a fixed baptismal formula?

A second possibility is that 3:28 is a quotation from an existing baptismal formula (cf eg Becker 1976:45-46; MacDonald 1987:5-14). It is remarkable that whenever Paul uses three binary pairs of this kind, baptism is always mentioned (cf Eph 6:8; 1 Cor 12:13). This makes the theory that the early church had a fixed baptismal formula that stresses oneness in Christ very tempting. There are, however, major differences between these passages, possibly because the formula was adapted to the readers' specific circumstances. This raises the question of what that fixed formula actually was. Hence it cannot be taken for granted that in Galatians 3:28 Paul was citing a fixed baptismal formula.

9.5.1.3 Distinctions in the covenant with Abraham?

A third possibility is that Paul is invoking the covenant with Abraham, which not only distinguishes between Jews and the uncircumcised (eg Greeks), but also between slaves and free people and between male and female (Martin 2003:117-125). Since Paul refers to baptism in the preceding verse (3:27), it could be that his reference to man and woman is highlighting the fact that the new covenant makes no distinction between males and females (Martin 2003:118).

Logically, however, Martin's theory does not hold water. In the case of the Jew/Greek and man/woman distinctions the excluded groups are Greeks and women. Logically these two examples would support Paul's argument that in Christ those who were once excluded are now included. But in the case of the slave/free person antithesis readers would have found it hard to understand why Paul should present slaves as 'privileged'. The fact that freemen were not forbidden to have themselves circumcised and were therefore no longer excluded makes Martin's theory even more unlikely.

9.5.2 The accent on “all”

In 3:26 we are struck by Paul’s statement that the faithful are “all” (πάντες) children of God. By positioning the word ‘all’ at the start of the sentence he is explicitly emphasising that the ‘you’ (ie the readers) referred to in that verse include everybody (Arichea & Nida 1975:83; Ridderbos 1976:147). This inclusion of everyone is further underscored in the next verse, when he says that “all of you (ὅσοι) who were baptized in Christ” have clothed themselves with Christ. Hence none of those baptised in Christ is left out – they are all clothed with Christ. And in 3:28 Paul reiterates that all (πάντες) are one in Christ.

The question is why in 3:26, after dwelling on justification by faith alone in 3:1 - 5:1, Paul should suddenly put such emphasis on the inclusion of *all*. But if one considers the false doctrine that Paul is refuting, the reason is clear. With their insistence that the readers had to be circumcised and observe Jewish laws the false teachers were actually implying that the readers were not truly part of Abraham’s line. To become truly one with Jewish Christians they had to be circumcised. When the passage 3:1 - 5:1 is read in this light one realises that Paul was not simply explaining dogmatically that people may be justified by faith alone. To him it was of greater concern that his readers were not excluded from that justification.

They are not excluded because –

- those who believe as Abraham did are (all) his children (cf 3:6-9);
- because of Jesus Christ’s redemption faith lets them (all) share in that which was promised to Abraham (cf 3:10-14);
- the law cannot amend the promise God made to Abraham and cannot exclude (any of) those who have not been circumcised (cf 3:15-18);
- the law does have a purpose, but that purpose makes it clear that it does not exclude (any of) those who believe in Christ (cf 3:19-25);
- in terms of the promise to Abraham everyone who believes is an heir (cf. 3:26-29);
- (all) those who have been ransomed are no longer slaves but children of God (cf 4:1-7);
- the faithful in Galatia are (all) part of the heavenly Jerusalem, not the earthly Jerusalem;
- they must (all) stand firm in their freedom (cf 4:21 - 5:1).

The fact that in 3:1 - 5:1 Paul does not confine himself to justification by faith but wants to underscore that his readers are not excluded from that justification helps to explain the words, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.” Paul clearly found it important to stress that the readers were not excluded from the promises God made to Abraham. The first example he cites – that there is neither Jew nor Greek – applies specifically to the false teachers’ insistence that the readers had to

be circumcised. The second example – that there is neither slave nor free – and the third – there is neither male nor female – underscore his point that *all* who believe in Jesus Christ share in the promise to Abraham. Not even those who are excluded from social privileges, that is slaves and women, are excluded from God's promises. Like free persons and men, slaves and women are fully included in those promises.

The fact that Paul's mention of these three binary pairs is meant to highlight the inclusion of *all* is also affirmed by the climactic pattern of the three pairs. The first distinction (Jew/Gentile) applies specifically to the Jewish faith. The second distinction (slave/free person) was universal in society at that time. The third distinction (male/female) has applied to all humans since creation.

9.6 Conclusion

The three paired distinctions in Galatians 3:28 (Jew/Greek, slave/free person, male/female) indicate that everyone who believes in Christ shares in God's promise to Abraham. Paul's first group, Jew/Greek, relates specifically to the teachers' requirement that the readers had to be circumcised: it implies that the readers, unlike Jews, did not have to be circumcised. The other two groups – slave/free person and male/female – do not relate to that distinction; that, however, underscores the point that *all* who believe in Jesus Christ share in the promise to Abraham. The readers may be sure that when judging whether a person is descended from Abraham, even explicit distinctions like slave/free person and male/female are irrelevant. All that matters is whether you have been baptised in Christ and are clothed in him.

From the foregoing it is clear that Galatians 3:28 has specific implications for our understanding of scriptural passages pertaining to relations between husband and wife. Passages stating that (i) the husband is the wife's head (cf eg Eph 5; 1 Cor 11); (ii) the wife has to be submissive to her husband (cf eg 1 Cor 14; Eph 5; Col 3:18) and (iii) wives have to observe silence (cf eg 1 Cor 14 and 1 Tim 2) would conflict with Galatians 3:28 if one assumes that they do not indicate that wives, like their husbands, share in Christ's salvation. Everyone who believes in Christ, including women, shares in the promise to Abraham.

9.7 Application to gender in ordained ministries

We see, then, that Galatians 3:26-29 does not deal with the issue of women's admissibility to ordained ministries. It does, however, clarify that in Christ all believers, including women, share in the covenant promises to Abraham. In view of this overarching truth the question is whether one can legitimately distinguish between males and females in any other area, also as regards ordained ministries in the church.

Galatians 3:26-29 does not answer this question.

Chapter 10

EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUSIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

Greek UBS ⁴	NRSV	NIV
<p>² Ἐπαινώ δὲ ὑμᾶς ὅτι πάντα μου μέμνησθε καί, καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε. ³ Θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστίν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός. ⁴ πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνην τῇ κεφαλῇ αὐτοῦ. ⁵ πᾶσα δὲ γυνὴ προσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα ἀκατακαλύπτῳ τῇ κεφαλῇ καταισχύνην τὴν κεφαλῇ αὐτῆς· ἐν γάρ ἐστιν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῇ ἐξυρρημένῃ. ⁶ εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνή, καὶ κειράσθω· εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω. ⁷ Ἄνθρωπος μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων· ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρὸς ἐστίν. ⁸ οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός. ⁹ καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα. ¹⁰ διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους.</p>	<p>² I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you. ³ But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ. ⁴ Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, ⁵ but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head—it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. ⁶ For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil. ⁷ For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. ⁸ Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. ⁹ Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. ¹⁰ For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.</p>	<p>² I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings, just as I passed them on to you. ³ Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴ Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. ⁵ And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved. ⁶ If a woman does not cover her head, she should have her hair cut off; and if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, she should cover her head. ⁷ A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; ⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. ¹⁰ For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.</p> <p>¹¹ In the Lord, however, woman is not independent</p>

<p>¹¹ πλὴν οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς ἐν κυρίῳ· ¹² ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός, οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικὸς· τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. ¹³ Ἐν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς κρίνατε· πρέπον ἐστὶν γυναῖκα ἀκατακάλυπτον τῷ θεῷ προσεύχεσθαι; ¹⁴ οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτῇ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐὰν κομᾷ ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστίν, ¹⁵ γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾷ δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστίν; ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται [αὐτῇ]. ¹⁶ Εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνηκος εἶναι, ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν οὐδὲ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ.</p>	<p>¹¹ Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. ¹² For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God. ¹³ Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled? ¹⁴ Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, ¹⁵ but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. ¹⁶ But if anyone is disposed to be contentious—we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.</p>	<p>of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. ¹³ Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, ¹⁵ but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. ¹⁶ If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.</p>
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10.1 Argument of 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 1:1-9 contains the salutation, greetings and thanksgiving. Paul gives his reason for writing in 1:10-17. That is followed by the body of the letter (1:18 - 16:12) and the conclusion (16:13-24). The body of the letter comprises two main parts: 1 Corinthians 1-6, in which Paul responds to reports brought to his notice by Chloe's household, and 7-15, in which he answers questions that the Corinthians had put to him in a letter. These concern asceticism and sex (7:1-40), eating meat that had been offered to idols (8:1 - 11:1), proper order in the church (11:2 - 14:40), and the resurrection (15:1-58).

The pericope 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, which deals with women's conduct in church, is part of the section that deals with proper order in the church (11:2 - 14:40). It may be subdivided as follows:

- 11:2-16: Women's behaviour in church
- 11:17-34: Malpractices at the celebration of the Lord's supper
- 12:1 - 14:25: Responsible use of gifts of the Spirit
- 14:26-40: Synopsis of proper order in the church

10.2 Origin of 1 Corinthians

Paul brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to Corinth on his second missionary journey. After achieving little success in Athens, he proceeded to Corinth. The establishment of the Corinthian church during Paul's ministry there is described in Acts 18:1-17. There

we read that Paul stayed with Aquila and Priscilla, a Jewish man and his wife, who had been banished from Rome and, like Paul, were tentmakers. On Saturdays he preached in the synagogue to a Jewish and Greek audience. The head of the synagogue, Crispus, and his entire household were converted.

Meanwhile Silas and Timothy had arrived from Macedonia and the Jews were increasingly protesting against Paul's message that Jesus was the Christ. Consequently Paul moved his headquarters to the house of a proselyte, Titius Justus, right next door to the synagogue. Silas and Timothy had brought money from the Christians in Philippi (2 Cor 11:9; Phl 4:14-15) and Paul was able to preach full-time. According to Acts 18:5 he now "devoted himself exclusively" to preaching.

During the eighteen months that Paul laboured in Corinth the church grew. It comprised gentiles who had converted to Christianity (1 Cor 12:2), mainly from the lower social classes (1 Cor 1:26). In addition there was a Jewish component (1 Cor 7:18; Acts 18:4), while members of the upper social echelons were also represented (1 Cor 11:21). After Paul, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, had left for Ephesus, Apollos, a theologian of Jewish descent, laboured in Corinth. He had previously received theological instruction from Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-26).

But this was not the end of Paul's involvement with the church in Corinth. According to 1 Corinthians 5:9 he wrote a letter to them (it has not been preserved), in which he warned them against consorting with people who lived immoral lives. This admonition was misinterpreted as 'immoral people outside the church'. All sorts of stories about the church reached Paul while he was in Ephesus. According to 1 Corinthians 1:11 "some people of Chloe's household" told him about quarrels. The church was divided into factions and the gospel as Paul had taught it was suffering. Paul probably received other negative reports as well. The picture he was given was alarming: where sex was concerned the church tolerated sins that even non-Christians considered shameful; one faction in the church reacted to this with ascetic doctrines, and there were lawsuits between Christians.

Some time later Paul received a letter that the church wrote to him (1 Cor 7:1), which contained various questions. It raised the issue of eating meat that had been offered to idols; proper order in the church; and the question of the resurrection. In response to these queries he wrote 1 Corinthians.

The exact identity of Paul's opponents in the church and their teachings are unclear. They might have been a group of wealthy Corinthians who regarded the orator Apollos

as their leader. In his letter Paul uses many words that were current in (proto-) Gnosticism⁸³ and the mystery cults.⁸⁴

He wrote the letter from Ephesus, probably in the spring (1 Cor 16:8) of AD 54/55.

10.3 First readers of 1 Corinthians and their world

Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaëa. Geographically Greece was divided into two parts. The southern peninsula, the Peloponnesus, was connected to the northern mainland by a narrow strip of land (isthmus) about six kilometres wide. Corinth was located at the southwestern end of this isthmus. Anyone travelling north or south overland (eg to and from Athens) had to go via Corinth.

Because Corinth was girded by ocean on the east and the west it had harbours on both sides of the isthmus, Cenchrea and Lechaeum. Thus it was strategically situated for trade, not only between north and south but also between east and west, which made it a wealthy, prosperous, cosmopolitan merchant city. Its population included Italians, Egyptians, Syrians, Jews and Orientals.

The cosmopolitan character of the city was reflected in its religious life. A medley of religions, all influencing each other, led to syncretism. It had a temple of Apollo, the Greek god renowned for his oracles. The god of healing, Aesculapius, was also worshipped there. Aphrodite, goddess of erotic love, had a temple on the Acropolis, which housed a thousand prostitute priestesses. Demeter and Persephone, goddesses of agriculture and fertility, were also worshipped. The phenomenal wealth and luxury of the city led to legendary moral decadence. The Greek verb *korinthiazesthai* ('to live like a Corinthian') indicated a life of drunken orgies. Aelianus, a late Greek writer, mentioned, for example, that when a Corinthian was portrayed on stage he was always inebriated.

To this morass of moral decadence Paul brought the gospel of Jesus Christ and there the first Corinthian church had to live its faith.

The church in Corinth consisted mainly of converted gentiles. Although it included some Jews who embraced the faith (Acts 18:8) and gentiles who had previously turned to Judaism (Acts 18:7), its core comprised converted gentiles. Prior to their conversion many members had been actively involved in pagan religions and were "led astray to

⁸³ Gnosticism was a religious school that believed, inter alia, that salvation came through acquiring esoteric knowledge about God and human beings. The movement did not really flourish until the 2nd century.

⁸⁴ The mystery cults claimed that their members could attain immortality through secret initiation rites.

mute idols" (1 Cor 12:2). They engaged in practices like homosexuality, immorality, adultery, theft, fraud, drunkenness and slander (1 Cor 6:9-10).

God himself declared to Paul that he had many people in Corinth (Acts 18:10). From Paul's letters it would appear that the converts were mainly from the lower social strata. In 1 Corinthians 1:26 he writes: "Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were influential; not many were of noble birth." Thus the church in Corinth consisted of people who had little education or training. One can assume that their lifestyle was strongly influenced by the way they had been accustomed to live before their conversion, and that their conduct during church services would have been influenced by the customs observed in the pagan rituals they used to participate in. This led to frequent disputes about which practices were permissible in the church and which were not. The quarrels culminated in their letter to Paul to seek his counsel (1 Cor 7:1; cf 10.1 above). Conceivably that counsel (which included the commandment that women should be silent in church, 1 Cor 14:34) contained correctives to pagan practices in the Corinthians' church services.

10.4 Relevant exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

10.4.1 Basic principles and practical application

The scope of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is commonly considered to be the veiling of women. Yet within the scope of this pericope it is actually a secondary issue. In fact two issues are intertwined in the pericope, one a matter of principle, the other practical. The principle is posited in 11:3,8-9,11-12, the practical issue in 11:4-7,10,13-15. The practical part applies the principle to the question about which the Corinthians probably consulted Paul, being the wearing of veils in church gatherings.⁸⁵ This is affirmed by the *inclusio* pattern of the pericope: it starts in 11:2: "I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the teachings just as I passed them on to you." In 11:16 we find the conclusion to the *inclusio*: "If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice – nor do the churches of God."

In the practical application Paul makes it clear that he is transposing the principle to a culturally determined situation. He does so by maintaining, in 11:6, that it is disgraceful (αἰσχρόν) for a woman to have her hair cut off or shaven. This probably accords with contemporary views on hairstyles.⁸⁶ It was fashionable at that time for men to have less

⁸⁵ That 1 Cor 11 concerns church assemblies is borne out by the fact that 11:4-5 refers specifically to men and women who pray and prophesy (προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων and προσευχόμενη ἢ προφητεύουσα).

⁸⁶ In 1 Cor 14:35 the word αἰσχρόν is also used, but in a different context; cf 6.6.4.1.

hair than women – Paul says it was “generally held” (ἡ φύσις⁸⁷ αὐτὴ διδάσκει-11:14-15). From this one infers that it was believed that women were meant to have long hair (plus some additional covering like a veil) and men to have short hair (no additional head covering being permitted). Hellenistic busts show that in Paul’s time men were portrayed with short hair and women with long tresses. Hence Paul could invite his readers: “Judge for yourselves ...” (Ὑμεῖν αὐτοῖς κρίνατε-11:13).

10.4.2 Headship in 1 Corinthians 11

10.4.2.1 Use of κεφαλή in Paul’s letters⁸⁸

Paul uses the word κεφαλή fifteen times, five of which are literal references to the human head. In ten instances (eight scriptural passages) it is used metaphorically, mostly as an element of the body metaphor:

- **1 Corinthians 11:3:**⁸⁹ Here the body metaphor does not feature explicitly. Yet κεφαλή is manifestly used metaphorically with reference to ‘a person with authority over’, especially in view of 11:4-5 where it is clearly specified that the head can be disgraced. On the basis of the mention in 11:8,12 that the woman came from the man and the subsequent reference to creation (11:9) some exegetes⁹⁰ maintain that κεφαλή here connotes ‘source’. However, such a connotation of κεφαλή in 11:3 is highly questionable, as evidenced by the debate between Kroeger (1993) and Grudem (2004).⁹¹

⁸⁷ The word ‘nature’ (ἡ φύσις), being the way people cohabit naturally, makes hair length an indicator of gender differences.

⁸⁸ The original version of this section was compiled by Kobus van der Walt, with reference to Grudem (2004). In an extensive, in-depth study Grudem tried to determine the meaning of κεφαλή in ancient Greek and patristic literature. He refers to the so-called egalitarians in the 1990s, who reinterpreted Ephesians 5:23 to say that, in their view, the man as the woman’s head does not mean that he had authority over her. According to them ‘head’ in Ephesians 5:23 connotes ‘source’, which accords with its meaning in ancient Greek literature. Grudem’s comprehensive study (2004:202) of the metaphoric usage of κεφαλή in ancient Greek literature, however, shows that κεφαλή was never used to connote ‘source’. His study is so convincing that the compilers of Liddell & Scott’s *Greek-English lexicon* undertook to omit the optional meaning of ‘source’ from the entry for κεφαλή in the next edition of that dictionary (Grudem 2004:587-588).

⁸⁹ 1 Cor 11:3: “Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God” [Θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλή ὁ Χριστὸς ἐστίν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ θεός].

⁹⁰ Cf Fee (*First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1987), reference in Grudem (2004:201, n 36).

⁹¹ Catherine Kroeger (1993:52-59) maintains that the church father Chrysostom (inter alia in his interpretation of 1 Cor 11:3) used κεφαλή primarily in the sense of ‘source’ rather than ‘authority over others’. Grudem (2004:561) in his turn points out that Kroeger quotes Chrysostom selectively and that he used κεφαλή primarily to connote ‘authority over’. Grudem (2004:561) acknowledges that “fourth-century usage of a word by Chrysostom does not prove that word had the same sense in the first century; so this is not conclusive evidence for New Testament meanings.”

- **1 Corinthians 12:21:**⁹² Here κεφαλή is not used in the context of the body metaphor but as a simile to indicate the importance of every church member. In this instance κεφαλή indicates 'head in an equal relationship'. The main idea in Paul's application of the body metaphor is that every member of the body needs every other member. None is more important than any other; in 12:25 Paul emphasises their equal care for one another.
- **Ephesians 1:10:**⁹³ This passage does not apply the body metaphor directly. The verb is ἀνακεφαλαιώω ('gather under one head'), hence etymologically related to κεφαλή. The text gives no indication of what is meant by 'gathering under one head', but at the end of the pericope (in Eph 1:21) it is spelled out: "[He raised him] far above all rule and authority, power and dominion." Thus in 1:10 Christ's headship indicates his authority over all that exists.
- **Ephesians 4:15:**⁹⁴ Here κεφαλή is explicitly used in the body metaphor, partly to connote authority (cf 4:14-15: "...will no longer be infants ... but... will grow up ... into him who is the Head, that is Christ") and partly, so it would seem, to indicate 'source' (cf 4:16: "from him the whole body ..."), but still a source that remains in control of the body (cf also Col 2:19).
- **Ephesians 5:23:**⁹⁵ Again we have the body metaphor. Here κεφαλή is used in the sense of 'authority'; yet it is not imbedded in the terminology of power but in that of care, love and service. Hence it is a ministering authority.

He shows, however, that the ten instances in the New Testament where κεφαλή is used metaphorically are not exceptions. In each instance it is used to connote 'authority over'.

⁹² 1 Cor 12:21: "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you.' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you'." [οὐ δύναται δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς εἰπεῖν τῇ χειρὶ· χρεῖαν σου οὐκ ἔχω, ἢ πάλιν ἡ κεφαλή τοῖς ποσίν· χρεῖαν ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχω].

⁹³ Eph 1:10: "... to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" [εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν αὐτῷ].

⁹⁴ Eph 4:15: "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ." ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" [ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ αὐξήσωμεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα, ὃς ἐστὶν ἡ κεφαλή, Χριστός, ¹⁶ ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβασόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας κατ' ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους τὴν αὐξησιν τοῦ σώματος ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ].

⁹⁵ Eph 5:23: "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior" [ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἐστὶν κεφαλή τῆς γυναίκος ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς κεφαλή τῆς ἐκκλησίας, αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος].

- **Colossians 1:18:**⁹⁶ The body metaphor is used, with κεφαλή predominantly meaning 'source' (1:17: Jesus is before all things; 1:18: he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy). Nevertheless the notion of Christ as head of the body, the "firstborn from among the dead" and supreme in everything, has an element of leadership. After all, through his crucifixion and resurrection he has "rescued [the body] ... and brought us into the kingdom" (1:13).
- **Colossians 2:10:**⁹⁷ Here the context is not that of the body metaphor. Instead κεφαλή is used metaphorically to connote Christ's authority over all powers (2:10: he "who is the head over every power and authority").
- **Colossians 2:19:**⁹⁸ Once again Paul uses κεφαλή in the body metaphor. As in the parallel text in Ephesians 4:15-16, the connotation of 'source' features prominently. Christ is the head, from whom the entire body grows. Yet the next verse (Col 2:20) indicates that he is more than just the source from which the body grows. He is the one with whom we died "to the basic principles of this world". As the head Christ is also leader of the faithful, redeeming them from all sin through his death. Hence here, too, we could call it a ministering authority.

Synoptic conclusion

1. Paul uses the word κεφαλή in eight scriptural passages; in five of these it is used as part of the body metaphor. The connotation of κεφαλή in these eight passages is as follows:

Metaphoric

1 Cor 11:3: Authority
 Eph 1:10: Authority
 Eph 4:15: Authority and source
 Eph 5:23: Authority (ministering)
 Col 1:18: Authority and source
 Col 2:10: Authority
 Col 2:19: Source and authority (ministering)

Non-metaphoric

1 Cor 12:21 Equal partnership

⁹⁶ Col 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy" [καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας-ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτός πρωτεύων].

⁹⁷ Col 2:10: "... and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority" [καὶ ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας].

⁹⁸ Col 2:19: "He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow" [καὶ οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλὴν, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἀφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον αὖξει τὴν αὐξησιν τοῦ θεοῦ].

2. When Paul uses κεφαλή metaphorically it is mainly in the sense of 'authority over'. Usually he is speaking of Christ's authority. His headship on the whole entails sovereignty (head of all things), but is sometimes ministering (the head who redeems). In all instances the context is decisive.
3. In three instances Paul uses κεφαλή metaphorically to connote not merely 'authority over' but also 'source'. Christ the head is the one from whom the church receives his blessings (source). At the same time we can only share in these blessings because he, the head, has redeemed the church (authority).
4. Hence we cannot endorse the view that when used metaphorically κεφαλή in the New Testament refers *exclusively* to authority (Grudem 2004). Sometimes Paul uses the word to indicate both authority and source. But neither can we accept the view that in the New Testament κεφαλή sometimes means only 'source' (Kroeger 1993). Whenever Paul uses κεφαλή to indicate 'source' it always has the concomitant meaning of 'authority'.
5. This conclusion about Paul's use of κεφαλή is corroborated by the use of 'head' in the body metaphor in the Heidelberg Catechism: the metaphor is used eight times, and each time 'head' connotes both 'authority' and 'source'.⁹⁹

10.4.2.2 Basic principles featuring in the pericope

The principles featuring in the pericope relate directly to the overall scope of the letter to the Corinthians: Christ's rule over every aspect of the believer's life (Coetzee 1975). This locates the pericope 11:2-16 in the broader framework of Christ's rule. In 11:47 it is phrased in much the same terms as in Ephesians 5:21-33, namely that the husband's headship over his wife epitomises (should epitomise) that of Christ. Yet there are some marked differences in emphasis between the headship proclaimed in 1 Corinthians 11 and in Ephesians 5:

1. Ephesians 5 deals with Christ's headship of *the church*; 1 Corinthians 11 concerns Christ's headship over *every man*. Unlike Ephesians 5, therefore, 1 Corinthians 11 is not primarily about an organic *unity in love* (ministering authority, cf 10.4.2.1 above) of head and body, but concerns the *authority* that the head exercises, his *mandate to rule*.

⁹⁹ In the Heidelberg Catechism the following questions and answers invoke the body metaphor: 32, 49, 50, 51, 55, 57, 70 and 76. Four of the questions (49, 50, 51 and 57) explicitly refer to Christ as the head. He is the head who preceded us to the Father (leader: 49, 57), from where he rules over everything (authority: 49, 50, 51) and allows us to share in his gifts (source, 51). Questions 32, 55, 70 and 76 do not actually use the word 'head', but imply it by calling believers 'members'. The response to these questions confesses that as members of Christ (his body) we share in his gifts (source: 32, 55, 70) and his rule (authority: 32, 76).

2. 1 Corinthians 11 introduces a third relationship: *God as Christ's head*.¹⁰⁰ John 14 clarifies God's headship over Christ: the Father sent the Son (John 14:24), so that everything the Son does and says accords perfectly with the authority granted to him by the Father (14:10), because the Father is greater than he (14:28). Hence in his mission as mediator and saviour who had to bring about the dawn of God's kingdom (also cf 1 Cor 15:24-28) Christ willingly submits to God's headship. Yet we cannot say that Christ's divinity is subordinate to the Father's (John 14:9; Col 1:15-16; also cf Art 8 of the Belgic Confession on the three persons of the trinity: "All three are equally eternal in one Person. There is no first and no last, for all three are one in truth, power, goodness and mercy" [our translation]). According to 1 Corinthians 11:3-7 this authority relationship between God and Christ, the mediator and head of the new human race, should be reflected in the relationship between husband and wife.

10.4.3 Interpretation of every man and every woman in 11:3-5

On the question whether the 'every man' and 'every woman' (πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἐν πᾶσιν γυνή) in 11:3-5 refer to relations between all men and all women or only to those between husband and wife, reformed exegesis advances strong arguments both ways.

Those who argue that πᾶς ἄνθρωπος and πᾶσιν γυνή in 11:4-5 could refer to every man and every woman cite the following reasons:

1. In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul refers explicitly to *every man and every woman* (πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἐν πᾶσιν γυνή), unlike Ephesians 5 where the reference is to the women's *husbands* (τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν) and the men's *wives* (τὰς ἑαυτῶν γυναῖκας).
2. 1 Corinthians 11:3 says that Christ is the head of every man, which surely includes single men as well.
3. 1 Corinthians 11 locates its Old Testament grounds for the husband-wife relationship in the order of creation (11:8-12), whereas Ephesians 5 traces it to the union of husband and wife in the Old Testament.
4. In 1 Corinthians 11 Paul argues that men and women cannot exist without each other, since just as the woman was taken from the man, so men are brought into the world by women. He is manifestly referring to the mother-child relationship rather than to husband and wife who are joined in wedlock.

¹⁰⁰ Christ is the official title referring to the Son's mediatorship, in which he acts as head of all that exists (Grosheide 1957:289). This means inter alia that Christ, the second Adam, also heads the new human race, which he epitomises (Jonker 1983:51, 52). Thus his life is not just about his relationship with the Father, but about the fact that as the Father's official representative he represents his body in everything – including observance of God's law. Hence it is important to define God's headship of Christ specifically as headship over Christ the mediator. In this context Grosheide (1957:290) comments: "The Mediator, whom creation acquired for itself, is its head under God" [our translation].

What 1 Corinthians 11 says about the husband-wife relationship certainly applies to every man and the wife he has married, but marriage falls outside the scope of the pericope.

The opposing argument is that *πᾶς ἄνθρωπος* and *πᾶσα γυνή* in 11:4-5 refer to wives' and husbands' conduct during church services, and the implications this has for their relationship with God and each other because of their marriage. The substantiation of this argument is as follows:

1. 11:5 reads: "And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head (*τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς*)." Hence wives are enjoined to conduct themselves in church services in a way that does not dishonour their husbands.
2. Scripture nowhere proclaims universal subjection of females to males in the sense that women have to recognise all men's headship over them.

There is consensus, however, that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16:

- is not directed to marriage, nor to husbands' and wives' marital conduct;
- gives great prominence to male headship;
- does not give a final answer to the question whether this headship is confined to husbands' headship over their wives or applies to all males' relations with all women.

One implication of this view is that wives have a responsibility not to cast doubt on their recognition of their husbands' headship. Provided they fulfil this responsibility, 1 Corinthians 11 in itself presents no impediment to women's admission to ordained ministries. At the same time 1 Corinthians 11 in itself does not indicate that women ought to be admitted to ordained ministries. Hence this scriptural passage must not be stretched too far in either direction.

10.4.4 Examples of ἐξουσία

It seems, then, that in 1 Corinthians 11 God is revealing, through his apostle, his will that the respective conduct of men and women in church services should be such that it attests his authority and sovereignty. Men's conduct should exemplify God's glory/headship (11:7: *εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ*), women's should exemplify her husband's (or: men's in general) glory/headship (11:7) and the authority God assigns her (11:10). That this authority should be signified by wearing a veil, as indicated in 10.4.1 above, is secondary and is determined purely by the particular culture (cf 11:13-15).

1 Corinthians 11:10 says that a woman “ought to have a sign of ἐξουσία on her head” (ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς).¹⁰¹ The meaning is hard to fathom. Various explanations have been offered:

- The reference to veiling as ἐξουσία in 11:10 is still in the context of 11:5. Hence ἐξουσία in 11:10 should also be read as indicating the man’s authority over her (Lenski 1963:445; Fisher 1975:177).
- In this context ἐξουσία acquires the connotation of mandate. Women cover their heads to show that, in the midst of male headship, God has granted them power to pray and prophesy (Grosheide 1957:295-297; Black 1968:254-255).
- ἐξουσία here does not signify male headship but indicates the woman’s ἐξουσία. Her ἐξουσία consists in occupying a *place of honour*: she is the man’s glory (δόξα, cf 11:7). Her place of honour as the man’s glory implies that, like the man, she falls under God’s authority when she prays and prophesies. She should not give up this ἐξουσία through her conduct in church services. Hence as proof of her ἐξουσία she has to cover her head when praying or prophesying (Morris 1989:152-153).

In view of the overall context of 11:3-16 the second interpretation seems to be the most plausible of the three. But the exposition of this verse is not decisive for the interpretation of male-female relations in the pericope.

10.4.5 “Because of the angels”

The ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν is also “... because of the angels” (11:10). The meaning of these words, too, is hard to fathom. Several explanations have been offered:

- The History of Religions School maintains that Paul meant that women should cover their heads so that the angels would not see them from above and seduce them (eg W Foerster, referred to in Grosheide [1957:297, n 27]; also cf Fisher 1975:177).
- A second interpretation regards the angels as instances of the fallen angels referred to in 2 Peter and Jude, who “did not keep their positions of authority (ἀρχήν) but abandoned their own home” (Jude 6). Women’s recognition during church services of their husbands’ (or: of all men’s) headship testifies to those angels, who do not acknowledge God’s authority, that his headship must be recognised (cf Fisher 1975:177).

¹⁰¹ The NRSV obviates the problem. It renders 11:10 with: “a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head”. The Greek has: ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς, that is: “a woman ought to have authority on her head”.

- The most common interpretation in reformed circles is that these are angels who rejoice with God because church services are conducted in proper, orderly fashion (eg Grosheide 1957:297; Barrett 1968:254; Fisher 1975:177).

The last interpretation accords best with the context. Again, however, the exposition of this verse is not crucial for the interpretation of male-female relations in 11:3-16.

10.4.6 Women prophesying

It appears that during church services women prayed and prophesied (προφητεύουσα, 11:5). The gift of prophecy is among the charisms that the Holy Spirit bestows on church members (Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:27-31). Prophecy in church serves to admonish, encourage and teach (Acts 15:32; 1 Cor 14:3, 24, 31). Women share all the gifts of the Spirit, whenever the Spirit grants them. 1 Corinthians 11:5 shows that women also received the gift of prophecy and exercised it in church services.

Prophecy, however, is distinct from teaching. Romans 12:6-7,¹⁰² 1 Corinthians 12:28-29¹⁰³ and Ephesians 4:11¹⁰⁴ explicitly distinguish between the gift of prophecy, the gift of teaching and teaching as an ordained ministry. The rest of the New Testament suggests the following basic distinction between prophecy and teaching:

- Prophecy (προφητεία) reports a revelation made to that particular person (1 Cor 14:25,30-31).¹⁰⁵
- Teaching (διδασκαλία, διδασχί), on the other hand, is never based on a revelation given to the teacher. Every description of teaching in the New Testament indicates that teaching and preaching are based on God's word.¹⁰⁶

In various places in the New Testament overseers and teachers are told to teach and proclaim the word,¹⁰⁷ but never to prophesy. It would seem that in the New Testament

¹⁰² Rom 12:6-7: "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us: If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach."

¹⁰³ 1 Cor 12:28-29: "And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers... Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?"

¹⁰⁴ Eph 4:11: "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers..."

¹⁰⁵ Thus Agabus, on the basis of revelations given to him, prophesied a severe famine (Acts 11:28) and that Paul would be taken captive in Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-11).

¹⁰⁶ In Acts 15:35 Paul, Barnabas and many others taught and "preached the word of the Lord". In Ephesus Paul taught God's word for eighteen months. In 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul writes that all Scripture is "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness".

¹⁰⁷ In 2 Timothy 4:2, for example, Paul tells Timothy to preach the word (κήρυξον). In 1 Timothy 4:11 and 6:2 he is instructed to teach (διδάσκειν).

prophecy was never part of their ministry. This was probably because prophecy appears to have occurred spontaneously ('charismatically') and was not linked to any of the ordained ministries.¹⁰⁸

Thus the reference to men and women who pray and prophesy in 1 Corinthians 11:4-5 does not seem to have any implications for the ministry of preachers or elders. The women who prayed and prophesied did not necessarily have to be ordained in order to do so. Their prophecies, like those of male prophets, were spontaneous, and in any case had to be judged by the elders to ensure that they accorded with God's word (cf 11.4.1.2 below).

Hence the problem addressed in this passage is not the *fact* that women prayed or prophesied, but that they did so in a *manner* (unveiled) that cast doubt on their husbands'/males' headship.

10.5 Conclusion

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 affirms:

- The fundamental headship of males in regard to (1) their wives, or (2) another viewpoint: women (ie all Christian males are heads over all Christian women).
- A woman's position vis-à-vis males is not humiliating but is in fact a glorious position granted by God
- Within the church men and women need one another and neither gender is superior to the other (11:11-12)
- In church services women prayed and prophesied, from which one infers that there was no absolute prohibition of women speaking in church.

10.6 Application to gender in ordained ministries

- The pericope gives no indication that women who prayed and prophesied were ordained to any special ministry.
- Women's conduct in church should be such that it acknowledges the headship of (1) her husband, or (2) males, and hence the headship of Christ (cf 1.1.6.9). Men should also conduct themselves in a way that does not dishonour Christ's headship but in fact epitomises it.

The overseers, too, must be competent to teach (1 Tim 3:2), to admonish with sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it (Titus 1:9).

¹⁰⁸ Also see the comments on prophets and prophecy in the discussion of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 (cf 11.4 below).

- On the point whether such acknowledgment includes women's admissibility to ordained ministries the answers differ:
 - Interpretation 1 concludes that women may be admitted – provided she does not cast doubt on her husband's headship in the execution of her ministry.
 - Interpretation 2 concludes that 1 Corinthians 11 does not give a definite answer on the issue of women in ordained ministries, since the praying and prophesying referred to in the pericope entail participation by congregants rather than persons in ordained ministries.
 - A third interpretation could be that the praying and prophesying mentioned in the pericope refer to women in contexts outside church services (cf 11.4.1.1), hence the pericope does not attest the activities of persons in ordained ministries.

Chapter 11

EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUSIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40

Greek UBS ⁴	NRSV	NIV
<p>²⁶ Τί οὖν ἐστίν, ἀδελφοί; ὅταν συνέρχησθε, ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει, διδασχὴν ἔχει, ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, γλῶσσαν ἔχει, ἐρμηνείαν ἔχει· πάντα πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν γινέσθω.</p> <p>²⁷ εἴτε γλώσση τις λαλεῖ, κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς καὶ ἀνὰ μέρος, καὶ εἷς διερμηνευέτω· ²⁸ ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἦ διερμηνευτής, σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἑαυτῷ δὲ λαλεῖτω καὶ τῷ θεῷ. ²⁹ προφητῇ δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλείωσαν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν·</p> <p>³⁰ ἐὰν δὲ ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένῳ, ὁ πρῶτος σιγάτω. ³¹ δύνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἓνα πάντες προφητεύειν, ἵνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν καὶ πάντες παρακαλῶνται.</p> <p>³² καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται, ³³ οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλὰ εἰρήνης. Ὡς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἁγίων ³⁴ αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν· οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν, ἀλλὰ ὑποτασσέσθωσαν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει.</p>	<p>²⁶ What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. ²⁸ But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. ³⁰ If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. ³² And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, ³³ for God is a God not of disorder but of peace. (As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴ women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says.</p>	<p>²⁶ What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. ²⁸ If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God. ²⁹ Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. ³⁰ And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. ³¹ For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. ³² The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, ³⁴ women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.</p>

<p>³⁵ εἰ δέ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν· αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ. ³⁶ ἢ ἀφ' ὑμῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξῆλθεν, ἢ εἰς ὑμᾶς μόνους κατήντησεν; ³⁷ Εἴ τις δοκεῖ προφητῆς εἶναι ἢ πνευματικὸς, ἐπιγινωσκέτω ὃ γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι κυρίου ἐστὶν ἐντολή· ³⁸ εἰ δέ τις ἀγνοεῖ, ἀγνοεῖται. ³⁹ Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί [μου], ζηλοῦτε τὸ προφητεύειν καὶ τὸ λαλεῖν μὴ κωλύετε γλώσσαις· ⁴⁰ πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω.</p>	<p>³⁵ If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. ³⁶ Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached? ³⁷ Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. ³⁸ Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized. ³⁹ So, my friends, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; ⁴⁰ but all things should be done decently and in order.</p>	<p>³⁵ If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. ³⁶ Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? ³⁷ If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. ³⁸ If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored. ³⁹ Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.</p>
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11.1 Argument of 1 Corinthians

See discussion of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (cf 10.1 above).

11.2 Origin of 1 Corinthians

See discussion of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (cf 10.2 above).

11.3 First readers of 1 Corinthians and their world

See discussion of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (cf 10.3 above).

11.4 Relevant exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:33-35

In expounding this scriptural passage we are careful not to project the present-day order of worship services onto the Corinthian situation.

11.4.1 First hermeneutic option: women not in ordained ministries

Under hermeneutic option 1, 1 Corinthians 14:34 is interpreted in one of two ways. The first (A) is that this scriptural passage forbids women to speak during church services by praying or prophesying. The second (B) is that they are forbidden to take part in the evaluation of prophecies during services.

11.4.1.1 Interpretation A: not praying or prophesying during worship services

According to to this view 1 Corinthians 11:5 ("every woman who prays or prophesies") does not refer to behaviour in church services but to public activities outside the church

(cf Grosheide sa:134). 1 Corinthians 14:34, on the other hand, refers to conduct during church services. On these occasions women, because of the submission due to their husbands, were not permitted to speak but had to keep quiet. That meant that they could not preside over church services, for example by praying or prophesying (Grosheide sa:176; Lenski 1963:437).

This interpretation poses a problem, however, in that it makes the entire pericope nonsensical. If Paul's intention was to say that women were not allowed to pray or prophesy during services, why didn't he say so? Why dwell at length on the fact that they had to cover their heads when praying or prophesying? (Cf Barret 1968:250.)

This interpretation, which is sometimes accepted in reformed circles, implies that women may not preside over church services by leading in prayer or preaching. That means that appointing women as elders or ministers of the Word would be counter to the injunction in 1 Corinthians 14:34. But it does not take into account the relation between New Testament prophecy and the ministries of elders and preachers.¹⁰⁹ The prayer and prophecy mentioned in 1 Corinthians 11:5 – whether during church services or elsewhere – do not really affect the issue of women in ordained ministries.

11.4.1.2 Interpretation B: not to evaluate prophecies

According to this view 1 Corinthians 11:5 does refer to women praying or prophesying during church services, but doing so charismatically rather than in an official capacity. To assess this argument we must first deal briefly with the ministry of prophets in the early Christian church.

11.4.1.2.1 Prophets and prophecy

Prophets and prophecy feature prominently in 1 Corinthians 11-14 as a whole (11:4-5; 12:10,28-29; 13:2,8; 14:1-24,29,31-32,37,39). In 11:4-5 the topic is women who pray or prophesy; in 12:10-29 and 13:1-13 it is the gift of prophecy; 14:1-24 compares the use of that gift with that of glossolalia; and 14:26-40 deals specifically with an orderly way of handling prophecy during worship services. Hence it is important to determine what is meant by prophecy in these chapters and to grasp the position of prophecy in the overall revelation-historical framework of scriptural revelation.

In the period when the New Testament canon was still evolving¹¹⁰ the ministry of the Word in the early churches could not function properly as it eventually did in the period

¹⁰⁹ Cf section 10.5.4.7 on 1 Corinthians 11.

¹¹⁰ At the time when 1 Corinthians was written (± AD 54) the only completed books of the New Testament canon were probably James's letter and the three Pauline epistles (Galatians and 1 & 2 Thessalonians).

of Timothy and Titus.¹¹¹ The apostles' teachings (*kerygma* and *didache*, according to Floor [1982:67]) were known, but the significance of Christ for everyday life on that basis had to be proclaimed to the faithful. To this end God bestowed the gift of prophecy on the early church (Grosheide sa:134-135). The early missionary letters indicate that, in addition to the apostles and teachers, 'official' prophets were appointed in the churches (1 Cor 12:28). But it seems that at these assemblies there were also occasional 'unofficial' (charismatic) prophecies by congregants who had not been officially appointed to the role (14:26,31). It would seem that in the Corinthian church women, too, sometimes pronounced such unofficial, charismatic prophecies during assemblies (11:5).

11.4.1.2.2 Evaluation of prophecies

1 Corinthians 14:29 indicates that all prophecies in the church, both official and unofficial, had to be evaluated or tested to determine whether they were true to the sound doctrine of the apostles. Not just 14:29 but also the ensuing verses (14:30-38) should be read in the context of the evaluation of prophecies (cf Calvin, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*). In that case the thought structure of these verses can be represented as follows:

¹¹¹ Remarkably, the later New Testament documents contain no mention of prophecy. Instead there is the instruction to preach the Word (cf 2 Tim 3:16,17; 4:2).

Basic instruction: Prophets' prophecies to be evaluated in turn

14:29. Let two or three prophets speak and the others assess it.

→ Related instruction 1: Other prophecies may also be permitted¹¹²

14:30. But if someone else who is sitting down has a revelation, let the first speaker stop.

↳ Motivation for permitting other prophecies

14:31. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.

→ Who should evaluate prophecies

14:32. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets¹¹³

→ Motivation for the instruction that prophecies had to be spoken and evaluated in turn

14:33a. for God is not a God of disorder but of peace

→ The instruction applies to all congregations

14:33b. As in all the congregations of the saints¹¹⁴

→ Related instruction 2: Women may not take part in the evaluation

14:34a. women should remain silent in the churches;

↳ Motivation for the instruction that women may not take part in the evaluation

14:34b. They are not allowed to speak

↳ Grounds for the instruction that women may not speak (in evaluation)

14:34c. but must be in submission

↳ Motivation for instruction to be submissive

14:34d. as the Law says

→ Conditions under which women should ask their own husbands at home

14:35a. If they want to inquire about something

→ Related instruction 3: Women should ask their husbands about the prophecy at home

14:35b. they should ask their own husbands at home

↳ Motivation for the instruction to ask their husbands at home

14:35c. for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church

↳ Motivation why the Corinthians should not act differently from other congregations

14:36. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?

→ Who has to acknowledge apostolic doctrine as the Lord's word

14:37a. If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted

→ Related instruction 4: Apostolic doctrine must be acknowledged as the Lord's word

14:37b. let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command

↳ Grounds for acknowledging that apostolic doctrine has to be acknowledged in evaluation

14:38. If he ignores this, he will be ignored.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Calvin, *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*.

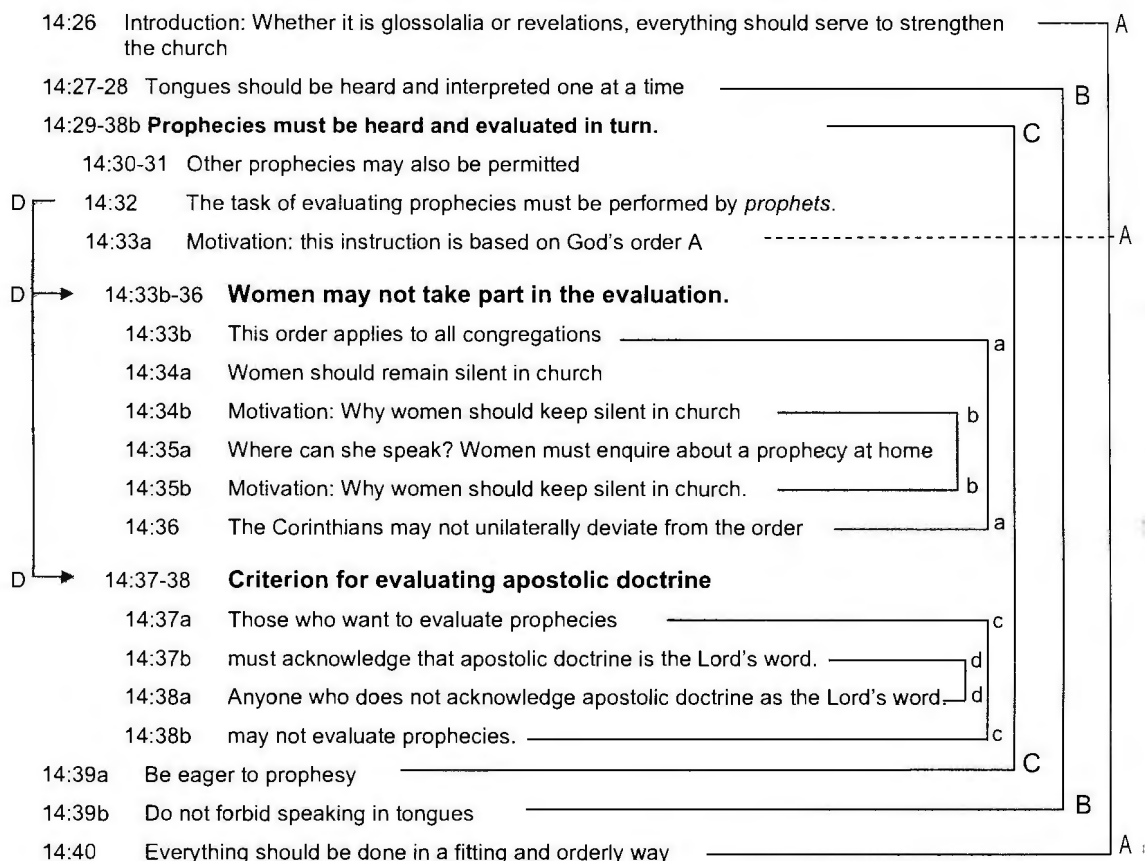
¹¹³ Grosheide (*Comm op het NT*), Bruce (New Century Bible) and others interpret 14:32 as indicating that prophecy, unlike the uncontrollable emotional outbursts of gentiles, could be restrained by the prophets. Following this, the NIV renders 14:32 as: "The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets." Calvin (*Commentary*, p 463-465), however, plausibly refutes this interpretation of the verse (καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφηταῖς ὑποτάσσεται). He proceeds to interpret it as follows: when somebody prophesies, the other prophets must judge whether the prophecy really emanates from the Holy Spirit, that is, corresponds with the teaching that the Spirit imparted to the apostles.

¹¹⁴ 14:33b can be read either as modifying 14:34 or as modifying 14:33a. Both the NIV and the and the NRSV opt for the former reading, as we do here.

¹¹⁵ The reading of the UBS text (ἀγνοεῖται) is followed.

As noted in 10.1 above, these verses form part of a larger pericope extending from 14:26 to 14:40. The overall thought structure of the pericope may be represented as follows:

SUMMARY OF PROPER ORDER IN ASSEMBLIES



According to this interpretation the pericope has an *inclusio* structure. The concentric pattern of the argument of the pericope centres on the instruction that church assemblies should proceed in an orderly, decorous fashion (cf **A** in the diagram above, at 14:26 and 14:40, with the principle laid down in the dictum on order in verse 33a as the mainstay). Order thus includes order in regard to glossolalia (cf **B**, at 14:27-28 14:39b) and prophecies (cf **C**, at 14:29-33a en 14:39a). Regarding order in relation to prophecies, the main point is that they should be evaluated correctly (cf **D**). In 14:29-38

the evaluation of prophecies is expounded in three main components: (1) everyone may prophesy, but only prophets may judge (14:29-33a); (2) women have to keep quiet when prophecies are evaluated (14:33b-36); (3) apostolic doctrine should be the yardstick for evaluation because it comes from the Lord (14:37-38).

11.4.1.2.3 Position of women

The foregoing clearly shows that the commandment to keep silent in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 should not be read on its own, since it is intimately linked to the evaluation of prophecies: women may not take part in that evaluation in church services. When it comes to the evaluation of prophecies they must keep silent.

- Why must they keep silent? Because in church women must be models of submissiveness (34c: “[they] must be in submission”), while evaluation of prophecies is typical of ruling tasks (32: “The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets”).
- Why must they be submissive? Not because of some social custom or ephemeral circumstance, but because that is what the Law says (34d). As in many other instances in the New Testament, “the Law” refers to the Lord’s written Word.¹¹⁶ Hence Paul is making it quite clear that this is a scriptural principle: a wife’s conduct should entail nothing that casts doubt on her recognition of her husband’s headship (cf 1 Cor 11:3-10). Women’s submission in church epitomises the church, which submits to her head, Jesus Christ (cf 1 Cor 11:3-4; Eph 5:21-33).
- What, then, should women do if they have questions about a prophecy or want to learn more about it? In 14:35b Paul says: “they should ask their own husbands at home.”
- Why not do so in church? The answer appears in 14:35c: “for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.”

The instructions in 14:34a and 14:35b have similar grounds, although the phraseology differs. In 14:34 the instruction is justified with “as the Law says”, and in 14:35 with “it is disgraceful (αἰσχρόν) for a woman to speak in the church”. In contrast to 11.6, this αἰσχρόν is not merely horizontal but vertical as well (“as the Law says”). Scripturally it is not permissible for her to speak evaluatively in the assembly.

Although the form of church services at that time undoubtedly differed from that of present-day services, the pericope highlights a vital principle. God imposed an indisputable task of submission on female church members, namely that of acknowledging their husbands’ headship – thus testifying to the church that acknowledges the headship of her bridegroom, Jesus Christ (cf 1 Cor 11:3-7; Eph 5:21-33). One way in which female members have to accomplish this unique task is by not

¹¹⁶ Paul is probably thinking specifically of Genesis 1-2.

taking part in supervision of the preaching (a task typical of the ruling ministry of present-day elders). In contemporary terms: women should not be part of the church council (= elders).

11.4.2 Second hermeneutic option

11.4.2.1 Interpretations 1 and 2

A second hermeneutic option, while largely corresponding with the first, differs in one respect: 14:34 and 14:35 are considered to refer to two distinct forms of disorderly female behaviour in church (linked by *δέ* in 14:35). In 14:34 women are forbidden to speak during the official proclamation of the word in a service of worship. In 14:35 they are forbidden to speak during a service by asking questions. According to this interpretation 'speaking' is regarded as something different from 'prophesying' in 11:5, which concerns unofficial activities in a church service. This 'official' view is substantiated by pointing out that Paul had already raised the issue of official proclamation of the word in 12:28-29, so 14:26-40 is actually a recapitulation of what went before (both unofficial and official conduct in worship services). As in hermeneutic option 1, the prohibitions in 14:34 and 14:35 are both substantiated by the need for wives to acknowledge their husbands' headship ("must be in submission", 14:34c; and: "it is disgraceful (*αἰσχρόν*) for a woman to speak in the church", 14:35c). In 14:35c *αἰσχρόν* signifies disgraceful in terms of the law (34c).

11.4.2.2 Representation of the thought structure

In 14:26 we find the basic instruction: "When you come together everyone has something to contribute for the strengthening of the church." This is followed by three sets of precepts: (1) for speaking in tongues (14:27-28), (2) for prophets (14:29-33), and (3) for women (14:34-35). This view of the thought structure may be represented as follows:

Practical arrangements for congregational gatherings

Basic rule for congregational gatherings

14:26: **When you come together everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church**

Rule for speaking in tongues if an interpreter is present

- * 14:27a: **only two – or at the most three – must speak**
- * 14:27b: **one at a time**
- * 14:27c: **someone must interpret**

Rule for speaking in tongues when no interpreter is present

14:28: **then the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God**

Rules for prophets when nobody else has a revelation

- * 14:29a: **two or three prophets should speak**
- * 14:29b: **the others should weigh carefully what is said**

Rules for prophets when somebody else has a revelation

14:30: **And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop**

Motivation for rules to prophets

- * 14:31: **For you can all prophesy in turn, so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged**
- * 14:32: **The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets**
- * 14:33a: **God is not a God of disorder but of peace**

Rules for women who wish to speak

14:33b-34a: **As in all the congregations of the saints,³⁴ women should remain silent in the churches**

Motivation for injunction to keep silent

- * 14:34b: **They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission**
- * 14:34c: **as the Law says**

Rules for women who want to find out something

14:35a: **If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home**

Motivation for instruction to ask their own husbands at home

- * 14:35b: **for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church**

Paul's manner of substantiating the injunction to women to keep quiet indicates that he is not making an ephemeral or situational arrangement that applies only to that age and that congregation. After all, he substantiates it with "as the Law says".

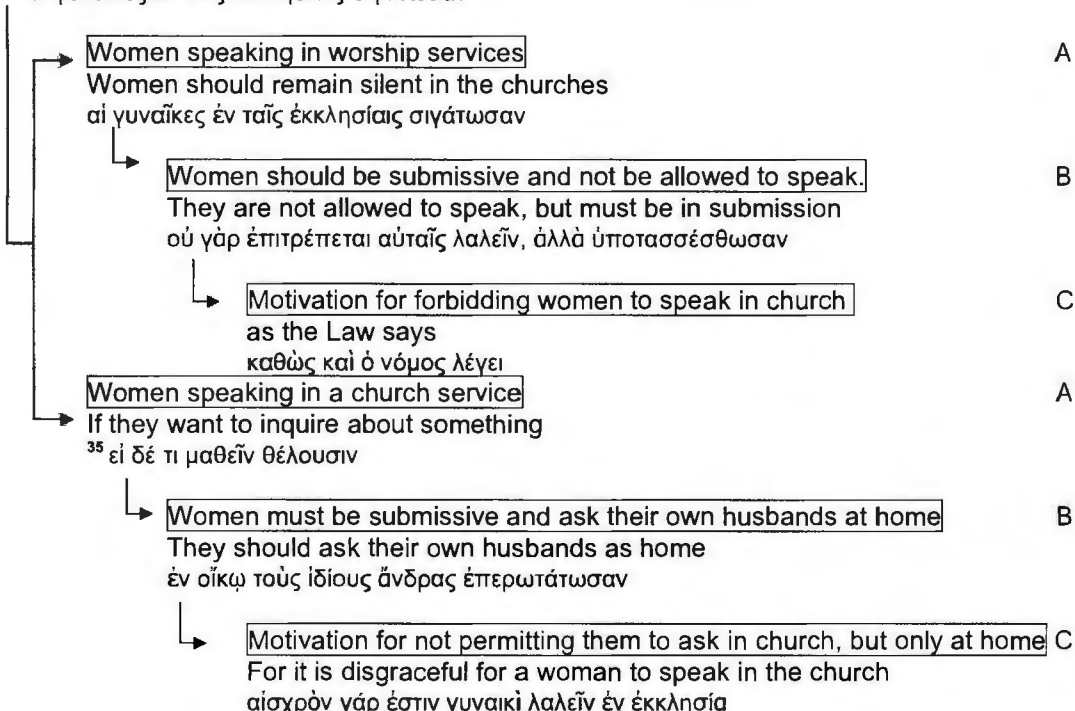
The fact that 11:5 shows that women were permitted to speak in church services (it is said that they prophesied and prayed) indicates that the prohibition in 14:34 does not mean that they were forbidden to speak in church at all. *Ἀλλεῖν* in 14:34 refers to a specific kind of speech.

There appears to be a close link between Paul's injunctions in 14:34 and 14:35. The following diagram depicts the thought structure according to this interpretation:

A rule for the Corinthian church as for all congregations of saints

As in all the congregations of saints

³⁴ αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν·



This diagram highlights the following points:

- In both 14:34 and 14:35 Paul deals with women speaking in church (A), their submissiveness (B) and the motivation for the submission of women (C).
- When Paul says in 14:35 that it is disgraceful for women to speak in church, this motivates his statement that they should ask their own husbands at home (hence not in church), but it manifestly also accords with the statement in 14:34 that women are not allowed to speak but must be submissive.

It appears that in 14:34-35 Paul is not dealing with two separate issues regarding women's conduct in worship services, but with a single issue: women's behaviour when

they want to find out something. The speaking (cf λαλεῖν) he refers to in verse 34 is the questions they must ask at home, not in church. It is also clear that the injunction is aimed specifically at married women, for he says explicitly that if they want to inquire about something, they must ask their *own* husbands at home. The reason is given in both 14:34 and 14:35. In 14:34 he motivates it by saying that it is what the law dictates (καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει). We can assume that “the Law”, as in 1 Timothy 2:13-14, refers to Genesis, and specifically to the sequence of their creation. In 14:35 Paul says that it is disgraceful (αἰσχρόν) for a woman to speak in the church. The connection between 14:34 and 14:35 indicates that αἰσχρόν signifies disgraceful according to the law.

Married women may not ask questions during services, for if they do so, they are not submissive and fail to acknowledge their husbands’ headship. One might ask why women, by asking questions in church, would display lack of submissiveness. The question is not explicitly answered in the text. It seems highly likely, however, that such behaviour would indicate that they do not accept their husbands’ leadership and therefore ask their questions in church rather than at home.

11.4.2.3 Women’s position according to hermeneutic option 2

What we have said suggests that we are dealing with a major scriptural principle, namely that wives should demonstrate their submission to their husbands in church services as well. It must be evident that in what they say (or ask) they accept their husbands’ leadership.

The question whether women may act as preachers cannot be answered on the basis of this passage. After all, it does not deal with women acting as ministers of the Word in church services, but with women who (as members of the congregation) asked questions and by so doing showed that they rejected their husbands’ leadership.

Just as 1 Corinthians 11:5, according to which women (as congregants) prophesied during church services, does not permit the inference that they may act as ministers of the Word, so this passage forbidding them (as congregants) to ask questions does not permit the inference that they are therefore not allowed to act as ministers of the Word.

11.5 Evaluation of the different hermeneutic options

11.5.1 Evaluation of hermeneutic option 1

Positive

- Hermeneutic option 1 provides a scriptural solution to the problem that women who, according to 11:5, were permitted to speak in church (they prayed and prophesied), were not allowed to λαλεῖν according to 14:35-36. According to this interpretation the λαλεῖν at issue in 14:35-36 is a specific kind of speech, namely that of evaluating prophecy.

- Hermeneutic option 1 does not look for the reason why women should keep silent in church outside the text. The motivation given in the text – “as the Law says” – is accepted.
- The obvious connection between 14:34 and 14:35 is acknowledged in that, according to this option, λαλεῖν in 14:34 and 14:35 is taken to refer to evaluation of prophecy.

Possible weaknesses

- The text does not give any strong indication that Paul’s λαλεῖν in 14:34 refers to evaluation of prophecies. Hermeneutic option 1 leans heavily on the assumption that 14:29-38b concerns evaluation of prophecies. Although such a connotation is perfectly possible, one could also argue that from 14:32b onwards Paul simply continues elaborating on his main theme, being the orderly conduct of church services, but is now dealing with a sub-theme besides evaluation of prophecies, namely orderly behaviour by women during worship services. After all, he phrases it very broadly that women should ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις keep quiet, and does not specify evaluative speech.
- Since in Corinthians 15 Paul takes up a new topic (the resurrection), it may well be that 14:37-40 serves to conclude the entire section on gifts of the spirit (1 Cor 12-14:25). In the exposition in 11.4.1.2.2 it is assumed that the pericope is imbedded in an *inclusio* pattern formed by 14:20 and 14:40. But the three issues – prophecy, tongues and order – constitute the theme from Corinthians 12 onwards. The fact that 14:37 refers not merely to προφήτης but also to πνευματικός means that 14:37-40 covers everything he had said about gifts of the spirit in chapters 12-14. If so, 14:26-36 should not be seen as directly linked with 14:29-32a but rather with 1 Corinthians 12-14:32a as a whole.

11.5.2 Evaluation of hermeneutic option 2

Positive

- Like hermeneutic option 1, option 2 finds scriptural grounds for the fact that, according to 11:5, women were permitted to speak during church services (pray and prophesy), whereas according to 14:35-36 they may not λαλεῖν. In hermeneutic option 2 the λαλεῖν referred to in 14:35-36 is questions to their husbands.
- Hermeneutic option 2 likewise does not look for extra-scriptural grounds why women should not speak in church. The reason given in the text (“as the Law says”) is accepted.

- The strikingly close connection between 14:34 and 14:35 is acknowledged by assuming that Paul's λαλεῖν refers to the inquiries mentioned in 14:35 (cf ἐπερωτάωσαν).

Possible weaknesses

- While there is undeniably a close connection between 14:34 and 14:35, as hermeneutic option 2 points out, there is no *explicit* indication in the two verses that Paul's λαλεῖν in 14:34 refers to the questions that women, according to 14:35, should ask their husbands at home.
- Hermeneutic option 2 accepts that by asking questions in church women were denying their husbands' headship. But it does not clarify how they would be transgressing the law and, like Eve at the time of the fall, not esteeming their husbands.

11.6 Conclusion

- When appraising the two hermeneutic options neither of them is considered *unwarranted* or *exegetically untenable*. But opinions differ on their respective exegetical persuasiveness.
- Both interpretations accept that women prophesied, prayed and spoke in tongues during Corinthian church services. Hence the injunction to keep quiet (14:34-35) does not indicate total silence and λαλεῖν (14:34) refers to a qualified 'speaking'.
- According to hermeneutic option 1 the prohibition of λαλεῖν (14:34) indicates prohibition of evaluating prophecies. Hence the injunction forbidding women to speak during church services means that they may not take part in the evaluation of prophecies.
- According to hermeneutic option 2 λαλεῖν (14:34) refers to women who cast doubt on their husbands' headship by asking questions in church.

11.7 Application to gender in ordained ministries

Application according to hermeneutic option 1

Since evaluation of prophecies forms part of elders' supervision of sound doctrine, hence is peculiar to the ruling ministry (cf 1.1.6.6), it means that in terms of 1 Corinthians 14:34 women may not serve in ordained ruling ministries.

Application according to hermeneutic option 2

This pericope offers no definite answer to the question about women's admissibility to ordained ministries. It may be inferred, however, that if they do function in these ministries, they must do so in a manner that does not cast doubt on their husbands' headship.

Chapter 12

EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUSIS OF 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15

Greek UBS ⁴	NRSV	NIV
<p>⁸ Βούλομαι οὖν προσεύχεσθαι τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἐπαίροντας ὁσίους χεῖρας χωρὶς ὀργῆς καὶ διαλογισμοῦ. ⁹ Ὡσαύτως [καὶ] γυναῖκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ, ¹⁰ ἀλλ' ὃ πρέπει γυναῖξιν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσέβειαν, δι' ἔργων ἀγαθῶν. ¹¹ Γυνὴ ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μανθανέτω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ. ¹² διδάσκειν δὲ γυναῖκί οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἄνδρός, ἀλλ' εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ. ¹³ Ἀδὰμ γὰρ πρῶτος ἐπλάσθη, εἶτα Εὕα. ¹⁴ καὶ Ἀδὰμ οὐκ ἠπατήθη, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἐξαπατηθεῖσα ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν. ¹⁵ σωθήσεται δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, ἐὰν μείνωσιν ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ καὶ ἁγιασμῷ μετὰ σωφροσύνης.</p>	<p>⁸ I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; ⁹ also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. ¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. ¹² I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. ¹⁵ Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.</p>	<p>⁸ I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. ⁹ I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. ¹¹ A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. ¹² I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. ¹⁵ But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.</p>

12.1 Origin of 1 Timothy

In the early Christian church practical guidelines for ministry were not readily available. There were no theological schools, Bible colleges or manuals. Leaders received in-service training. The wide dissemination of the gospel and primitive communication networks in those times meant that inexperienced young pastors were often thrown in

at the deep end. This gave rise to a distinct set of writings, the pastoral letters, to advise young leaders. As an experienced Christian leader Paul wrote to Timothy, who had certain pastoral responsibilities in the church in Ephesus. The purpose was not merely to pass on information, but also to give guidance at a confidential, personal level, like a father teaching his son (1:2).¹¹⁷

The immediate reason for writing 1 Timothy was probably that certain people were confusing the Christians in Ephesus with heretical teachings.¹¹⁸ Paul's purpose in writing the letter was not so much to refute the false doctrines as to counsel Timothy, the leader of the church, so that he and his flock together could combat the heresy. His counsel is that the church should be properly and thoroughly organised so that, as "God's household" it could be "the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15). Thus they would be able to uphold sound doctrine, even in the face of heresy (Moo 1991:177; Schreiner 2005:87-88).

12.2 Argument of 1 Timothy

The thought units in the letter alternate in a manner that clearly reveals both the cause (false doctrine) and the aim (proper church organisation).

¹¹⁷ 1 Tim 1:2: "To Timothy, my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

¹¹⁸ The same heresies probably prompted all three pastoral letters. The false teachers were members of the congregation and caused endless wrangling and divisions (Acts 20:30; 1 Tim 1:19-20; Tit 3:10). The false doctrine was markedly Judaic in character. Its adherents were "Jewish converts" (Tit 1:10), who "want to be teachers of the law" (1 Tim 1:7; Tit 3:9) and were constantly spreading myths and probing genealogies (1 Tim 1:4; 4:7; Tit 3:9). At the same time there are signs that the heretical teachers, like some philosophers at that time (notably the Cynics), taught a type of asceticism. Thus they prohibited marriage and partaking of certain foods (1 Tim 4:3; Tit 1:14-15). Like these philosophers, the heretics also professed to have superior knowledge (1 Tim 6:20) and wanted to earn money by selling this knowledge (1 Tim 6:3-5).

1:1-2	Salutation	
1:3-20	Mandate of the ministry	
1:3-7	False doctrine , in the midst of which the gospel had to be preached	
1:8-19a	Instruction <i>to preach the gospel as the trustworthy word</i>	
	:8-17 Paul was given this ministry as an apostle	
	:18-19a Paul entrusts this ministry to Timothy	
1:19b-20	Hymenaeus and Alexander strayed from sound doctrine	
2:1-3:16	Precepts for orderly church organisation	
2:1-15	Conduct of the church as a whole	
3:1-13	Requirements for elders and deacons	
3:14-16	Summary (main purpose of letter): ¹¹⁹ <i>The church should function as God's household</i>	
4:1-6:19	Precepts for ministering as a good pastor and preacher	
4:1-5	False doctrine , to be rebutted with sound doctrine	
4:6-16	Precepts for <i>proclaiming sound doctrine</i>	
5:1-6:2	Precepts for <i>pastoral handling of diverse groups</i> in the church	
6:3-5	Folly of false doctrine	
6:6-19	Shun and combat financial greed	
6:20-21	Conclusion	

Thus the argument of the letter is as follows: In response to false doctrines the sound doctrine of the gospel, a trustworthy message, should be preached. This ministry was assigned to Timothy (1:3-20) and he had to accomplish it (4:1-6:19). In short, Timothy must simply perform his task as pastor and preacher. The crucial issue was that the entire congregation must be able to stand firm against the false doctrines (as the pillar and foundation of the truth). How was this to be done? Through proper church organisation and by functioning as God's household (2:1-3:16).

12.3 First reader of 1 Timothy and his world

Timothy was one of Paul's most loyal companions. After working together in Ephesus for some time Paul left him there as full-time minister of the Word and himself proceeded to Macedonia. At the time of his departure Paul already suspected that heresies would arise in the church (Acts 20:29-30) and 1 Timothy indicates that his fears were confirmed. He exhorts Timothy to put a stop to the false doctrines (1:3b) and to ensure that everyone conducted themselves so that the church would serve its purpose (3:15).

We know little about the time and place of origin of 1 Timothy. The assumption that Paul was the author makes it likely that it was written after his release from his first spell of imprisonment in Rome. That would make AD 62-64 a probable date of writing.

¹¹⁹ Moo (1991:177) maintains that the words in 3:15, "... how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God", encapsulate the main purpose of the letter.

Although Paul expresses the hope that he would be returning to Ephesus shortly (3:14), he does not indicate his whereabouts.

Timothy was working as full-time minister of the word in Ephesus.¹²⁰

The various groups mentioned in 1 Timothy suggest that the the church reflected the normal composition of Ephesian society.¹²¹ The Christians in Ephesus were probably a very insular group, predominantly Jewish Christians living in that Hellenistic city.

Timothy worked among the Ephesians under difficult conditions. He was young (4:12) and confronted with false doctrines (1:3). By preaching and exemplifying sound doctrine he had to combat heresy and ensure that the church fulfilled its God-given purpose.

12.4 Relevant exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:8-15

12.4.1 Submission, headship and substantiation

Women are clearly expected to be submissive in recognition of their husbands' headship (as defined in the exegesis of Eph 5) and, as in 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, the command is substantiated with reference to the order of creation (1 Tim 2:13) and the fall (1 Tim 2:14). Opinions differ, however, as to whether 1 Timothy 2:8-15 lays down rules for male and female conduct at church gatherings or in their marital life (Breed 2006a:247-263; Breed 2006b:453-464; Breed 2006c:597-616).

The crux of the different interpretations is as follows:

- How should we interpret "everywhere" (ἐν παντί τόπω, 2:8)?
- Does it pertain to men's prayers at church gatherings or their private prayer?
- Do these rules pertain to women's conduct in church services, in their marriages or in society?
- Is the substantiation in 2:13-14 directed to conduct at church gatherings or in marriage?

¹²⁰ Ephesus was a major harbour on the main route between Rome and the East. It was one of the five principal cities in the Roman empire. Excavations have revealed a large city with a theatre, public buildings, a marketplace and various temples, including that of the city's patron deity, Artemis. Paul first visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-21). On his second missionary journey he laboured there for close on three years (Acts 19-20). This established a strong congregation in that city.

¹²¹ On the basis of a careful study of contemporary sources Bauch (2005) shows that Ephesus was thoroughly Greek with a fair degree of Roman influence. He refutes claims that the Ephesian community was exposed to a strong 'feminist movement' and that it was in reaction to this that Paul forbade women to assume ἀυθεντεῖν over their husbands in the church (cf Sharon Gritz 1991:308). "There is no reason to suspect that the Christian women in Ephesus would regard Paul's exhortation to modesty and humility as unusual or necessarily unpalatable" (Bauch 1991:36).

- Does “God’s household” (οἶκός θεοῦ) in the purpose of the letter (3:15) refer to congregational life, including church gatherings, or does it extend specifically to marriage as well?

12.4.2 Hermeneutic option 1: Precepts for men and women’s conduct at church gatherings

12.4.2.1 Summary of this hermeneutic option

In 1 Timothy 2:1 - 3:16 Paul gives pastoral counsel to Timothy, leader of the church in Ephesus, on how the church should function as “God’s household” (3:15) (cf analysis of the thought structure of the letter in 12.2 above). In 1 Timothy 2 Paul points out that it should take the form of a prayerful church.

- In 2:1-7 he indicates that the church’s prayers should be for the well-being of society at large, especially in the sense that it should ultimately result in everybody hearing the gospel and thus coming to “a knowledge of the truth” (2:4).
- In 2:8-15 he indicates how the church’s prayers should be organised at every church service (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, 2:8). First he deals with men’s conduct at these gatherings (2:8), then with women’s (2:9-15). In both instances he explains that their prayers should at all times be backed up by fitting conduct, which also applies to worship services.

12.4.2.2 Ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ (2:8)

Although several expositions of ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ in 2:8 have been proposed, the only ones that do justice to both text and context are the following:¹²²

- ‘every occasion’ when the church gathers for worship;
- ‘everywhere’ in Ephesus where the faithful gather, that is house churches;
- ‘everywhere’ apart from Ephesus, that is wherever there are churches.

Whichever interpretation one accepts, the upshot is that the words ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ refer to church gatherings (cf Schreiner 2005:91).

The notion that ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ does not refer to ‘every place of assembly’ but to ‘every responsibility’ (of husbands in marriage) (cf interpretation 2 and Breed [2006a:252]) is unconvincing.

- The word τόπος is not used in the sense of ‘responsibility’ anywhere in the New Testament, also not in Acts 1:25

¹²² According to most exegetes, for instance Calvin (1979:67), Bouma (sa:60), Moo (1980:62), Fee (1988:70), Witherington (1988:119), Ferguson (1991) and Knight (1992:128).

(the sole example that Louw & Nida [domain 71.6] cite under this semantic field).

- This interpretation of ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ is based on the view that marriage features prominently in the letter (on the strength of which τόπος in 2:8 is taken to refer to every responsibility in *marriage*). Although 1 Timothy does contain some references to marriage and married people,¹²³ they are not connected in a way that permits the inference that they constitute a theme of the letter.¹²⁴
- Besides, exegesis aims at determining the meaning of a word in a sentence in its immediate context. The quite explicit context of 2:8 is not marriage¹²⁵ but prayer: βούλομαι οὖν προσεύχεσθαι τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ("I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer"). Purely grammatically ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ clearly modifies προσεύχεσθαι ('pray'). Hence the immediate explicit context obliges the reader to interpret ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ as 'every place/opportunity' (of worship).

12.4.2.3 Injunction to men in 2:8

The injunction in 2:8 is that "men everywhere [should] lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing". These words can be interpreted as follows:

- That only men may pray. But this interpretation of 2:8 is refuted by 1 Corinthians 11:5, which makes it clear that women were also permitted to pray and prophesy.
- That in *church services* only men may pray (lead in prayer).¹²⁶ This exposition is supported by the fact that 1 Timothy 2:11 forbids women to speak in church services. However, that entails the further assumption that 1 Corinthians 11:5 does not refer to women who pray and prophesy during church services.
- That in church services men should "lift up holy hands, without anger or disputing". The following are possible reasons for this injunction:

¹²³ 1 Tim 3:2,12 (an elder/deacon must have only one wife and should manage his household and children well), 4:3 (the false teachers forbid people to marry), 5:9 (a widow who has been married only once), 5:11,14 (young widows may/should remarry).

¹²⁴ Although the Pastoral Letters contain no direct evidence to this effect, it may be that the false teachers encouraged contemporary women to prove their independence of males by not marrying, by wearing flashy clothes and by assuming authority over men (cf Moo 1991:177-178; Breed 2006c:611). Moo (1991:178), however, sticks to the view that ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ refers to nothing but every place of worship (every house church) and that the injunctions in 2:8-11 are explicitly aimed at conduct at church gatherings.

¹²⁵ Grudem (1995:296-299) argues that the context of 1 Tim 1-3 is not marriage but that of orderly church functioning.

¹²⁶ Cf Clark (1980:194) and Robert Culver (1989:34, reference by Schreiner [2005:92, n 52]).

- Men, unlike women, are generally inclined to action. Hence they must beware of the danger of praying with sullied hands (literally or figuratively) at church gatherings (Bouma sa:60). It is unlikely, however, that 'hands' are meant this literally. Besides, nothing in the context supports such an interpretation.
- Because men, unlike women, provide leadership in the church they run the risk of being contaminated by unholy motives, engaging in disputes or praying in church services with anger in their hearts.¹²⁷
- The false doctrines were leading to dissension, even anger in the church. Since men were specifically tasked to provide spiritual leadership in the church, they were the ones who had to refute the false teachers. Hence they had to be careful not to bring this dissension and anger into their prayers (Moo 1991:178).

The last two options, which are closely linked, do most justice to text and context and can therefore be accepted. But they do not contain any instruction that the church should be under male leadership – they merely assume that it is.

12.4.2.4 Injunction to women in 2:9-12

Women are given three instructions:

- They must not be flamboyant but should dress demurely, accompanied by modest demeanour and good deeds (2:9-10).
- Women must learn in quiet submission (2:11).
- Women are not permitted to teach or have authority over men (2:12).

12.4.2.4.1 Precept about appropriate dress

The first precept raises the question whether 2:9-10 in fact alludes to church gatherings. After all, proper clothing and good deeds are required in everyday life.¹²⁸ Still, if decent dress, modest behaviour and good deeds are virtues that should adorn women in everyday life, they should also, and more especially, be displayed in church gatherings (cf Knight 1992:130-131). Hence this instruction does not place the pericope or any part of it outside the framework of church gatherings.

Why give women these special instructions? The text gives no direct indication. They should therefore be interpreted in terms of the cause and purpose of the letter. Paul

¹²⁷ This exposition largely concurs with Bouma's view, but shifts the emphasis to a figurative interpretation of 'hands'.

¹²⁸ Cf JM Holmes (reference in Schreiner [2005:91, n 48]), who holds that all the precepts in 2:8-15 apply to everyday life and that the pericope does not pertain to church gatherings.

issued these instructions as part of his precepts for the orderly functioning of the church as God's household (cf 12.2 above), so that it could combat the false doctrines in its midst (cf 12.1 above). The heretical teachers were opposed to marriage (1 Tim 4:3; cf 12.1 and 2). This heresy probably meant that women refused to marry and wanted to hold their own as independent individuals in the church (cf Padgett 1987:19-24). To demonstrate their independence they may well have worn garish clothes¹²⁹ and tried to assume leadership in the church, inter alia by instructing and teaching (cf Padgett 1987:22-23). Thus it would seem to be Paul's reason for issuing these three instructions.

For the purposes of this study the following question has to be clarified: are these precepts meant to be binding for all times or not? Some exegetes (eg Padgett 1987:22) maintain that they were meant only for the church in Ephesus and its particular circumstances. Their argument is that the instruction on dress is so manifestly culturally bound that the subsequent injunctions to keep silent must be viewed in the same light (cf Schreiner 2005:94). In fact, to be consistent anyone who wants to forbid present-day women to teach on the strength of 2:11-12 must also forbid them to wear jewellery and expensive clothes.¹³⁰ But this argument does not take account of the purport of 2:9-10. It is not, after all, a rule for female fashions but an instruction to women in church gatherings to be models of modesty and propriety, also in their apparel. The following outline of the thought structure of 2:9-10 suggests as much.

- The main message of the verses clearly puts the accent on women's inner adornment: women should adorn themselves with modesty (αἰδοῦς) and propriety/wisdom (σωφροσύνης) by dressing appropriately (2:9a).
- The fact that it concerns inner adornment is affirmed by the phrase in 2:10: " ... with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God."
- Thus women who set store by outward adornment (eg "braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes", 2:9b) have the wrong attitude.

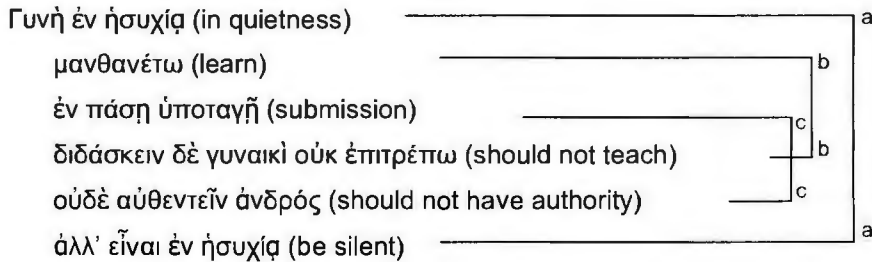
None of these precepts are culturally confined. There is always a danger that in church assemblies women will not be intent on inner adornment but will try to capture the limelight with outward beautification of whatever kind (cf Schreiner 2005:94-97). Hence the precept in 2:9-10 applies to Christians in every age.

12.4.2.4.2 Precepts on learning, teaching and exercising authority

1 Timothy 2:11 and 12 must be read together. This is evidenced by the way the ideas are arranged: semi-chiastically (crosswise), hence a circular composition encompassed by the idea of 'silence':

¹²⁹ Padgett's theory (1987:22) that these women were generally wealthy is quite feasible in view of the reference to gold and pearls in 2:9.

¹³⁰ This argument is adduced by, for example, David Scholer and Alvera Mickelsen (cf Schreiner 2005:94-97).



The interrelationship between the two verses is also evident in that 2:11 says what women *must* do and 2:12 what they must *not* do. They must learn, but must not teach and exercise authority. Both the do and the don't have to take place silently (ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ). Ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ probably does not imply total silence. After all, 2:11 qualifies silence with the prepositional phrase ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ ["in full submission"] and 2:12 with οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός ["without having authority over a man", NRSV]. Thus ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ implies an attitude of demure submission with due acknowledgment of male authority.

The injunction to women to learn (μανθανέτω) indicates that a woman should in no way be passive in church gatherings. She should actively learn. What is not permissible is for her to teach (διδάσκειν) and assume authority (αὐθεντεῖν).

What kind of teaching is forbidden?¹³¹ From the rest of Scripture it is apparent that not all teaching was prohibited for women. There is sufficient evidence of women who did teach: Priscilla and Aquila together instructed Apollos (Acts 18:26); in Titus 2:3 older women are told to train younger women; according to Colossians 3:16 all Christians must teach and admonish one another. But 1 Timothy 2:8-15 concerns conduct in church gatherings (cf 12.4.2.2 above). What is explicitly forbidden is that women should teach *in the church's public assemblies*.¹³²

¹³¹ Some exegetes (eg Witherington 1988:118) believe that women were spreading false doctrines in Ephesus and that is why Paul forbade them to teach. But there is no indication in 1 Timothy that the false doctrines were spread by women. It is also virtually impossible that *all* women, and *only* women, would have been swayed by these teachings. Besides, that would make 2:11 the only place in the Pauline letters where he uses διδάσκειν to refer to heretical teaching. Köstenberger (2005:53-74) points out, moreover, that the syntax demands a positive connotation of διδάσκειν (= 'teach').

¹³² To cite 1 Timothy 2:11-12 as grounds for prohibiting any learning and teaching by women – even outside church services – is to overlook the textual context of the injunction. The same applies to attempts to invalidate the prohibition on the basis of texts like Acts 18:26 and Titus 2:3 (cf Schreiner 2005:101).

The second thing forbidden to women is to hold a position of authority (αὐθεντεῖν). The word αὐθεντεῖν means 'to cause something', 'to rule', 'to dominate', 'to exercise authority', 'to lay claim to ownership or authority over something', 'to perpetrate violence', even 'to copulate' (cf Kroeger, 1992:84-104). In a detailed semantic study Baldwin (2005:51) shows that αὐθεντεῖν in all its connotations basically concerns *authority*. In the context of 1 Timothy 2:12 the most likely meaning is 'exercise authority over'.¹³³

Again the context in which the injunction is given is that of church meetings. When the church assembles women may not teach or exercise authority. According to 1 Timothy 3:2-3 teaching and church leadership are tasks for overseers/elders.

12.4.2.4.3 Substantiation of the prohibition of teaching and exercising authority

In 1 Timothy 2:13 Paul substantiates these injunctions in a sentence introduced by γάρ.¹³⁴ In 2:14 the substantiation is expanded in a sentence introduced by καί. Paul finds his grounds in the Old Testament. He traces the revelation-historical line back to creation: "For Adam was formed first, then Eve." Women's conduct is governed by the order/sequence of creation that God laid down in the beginning.¹³⁵ The order/sequence of creation is the grounds advanced in 1 Corinthians 11 for male headship over women. Although 1 Timothy 2 does not explicitly refer to male headship, it is implied in Paul's use of Scripture. Because the man was created first, God appointed him as head over the woman, who has to assume leadership of her. It seems, then, that from the outset God intended men rather than women to teach and exercise authority in the church.

Paul's second substantiation (2:14) traces the revelation-historical line back to the fall: "And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner." From the context the verse is clearly not concerned about who was the real guilty party at the time of the fall (Adam or Eve), but about who took the lead. Adam, the head who should have taken the lead, left it to Eve and followed her in the fall. Both sinned equally and were equally guilty (cf Schreiner 2005:115). The point is: men and women must respect the special places God assigned each of them. Paul applies this point to the command to women to keep quiet in church services.

¹³³ Objections such as that of Kroeger (1992:202) that if Paul had meant 'exercising authority over', he would rather have used words like ἐξουσιάζειν, κυριεύειν or ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν, are rebutted by Baldwin (2005) (also cf Schreiner 2005:101-102).

¹³⁴ The theory of Padgett and other exegetes that in this instance γάρ introduces some Old Testament examples rather than a substantiation is rejected by Schreiner (2005:105-106).

¹³⁵ Paul could easily have invoked the prevailing patriarchal social structure of his day. Instead he chooses to ground his injunction in God's order of creation. Note that he invokes the man-woman relationship *before* the fall, that is before the start of sinful male domination (cf Schreiner 2005:106-108).

12.4.2.4.4 Saved by childbearing

Paul concludes his discourse in 2:15 with the words: “But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.” The verb σωθήσεται (‘will be saved’) refers to the salvation attested by the gospel.¹³⁶ The noun τεκνογονίας (‘childbearing’) refers to the unique ability that God gave women at their creation: that of giving birth.¹³⁷

The function of the preposition διὰ in this verse is particularly significant. As a rule it indicates the manner in which, or the instrument through which, an action is performed. In this verse, however, both a modal and an instrumental use of διὰ poses problems, since it would amount to preaching salvation by works, as if women have to accomplish their own salvation through something they do. Yet from the textual context it is evident that διὰ could have a modal (or an instrumental) function without necessarily referring to the grounds for salvation. After all, earlier in the letter (1:15; 2:3-7) Paul unequivocally states that salvation is to be found in Christ alone. So in 2:15 he is not saying that women should bring children into the world so as to earn their salvation: they are saved by Christ. But the way they receive that salvation is by being faithful to their unique, God-given role. Put differently, women need not become like men in order to share in salvation.

12.4.2.5 All women or only wives?

There is considerable disagreement on the point whether Paul is speaking about women and men generally or about wives and husbands. This is because the Greek words ἀνὴρ and γυνή used in 1 Timothy 2:8-15, like their equivalents in some other languages, may refer either to men and women generally (ie a gender marker), or to husbands and wives. Accordingly some exegetes¹³⁸ believe that in this pericope Paul is referring specifically to married women rather than women generally. The following considerations militate against this interpretation (cf Grudem 2004:297-299):

- Everywhere in the New Testament where ἀνὴρ and γυνή refer to husband and wife this is apparent from the immediate context. Romans 7:2 refers to a married (ὑπανδρός) woman; 1 Corinthians 7:2,12,39 specifies that each man should have his own (ἑαυτοῦ) wife and each woman her own (αὐτῆς) husband; in Ephesians 5:22 women are instructed to submit to their own (ἰδιοῖς)

¹³⁶ Contrary to Craig Keener’s view, Paul does not have in mind the physical survival of childbearing women (cf Schreiner 2005:115).

¹³⁷ The early church fathers’ view that τεκνογονίας here refers to the birth of Christ (ie that women will be saved by the birth of the Jesus child) was taken up again by Knight (1992:146-147). Apart from the fact that the context provides no grounds for shifting the topic from Eve to Mary, it would be foreign to Paul’s preaching to proclaim salvation through Jesus’ *birth* rather than his *death and resurrection* (cf Schreiner 2005:116).

¹³⁸ Eg Gordon Hugenberger (cf Grudem 2004:296-297).

husbands. In 1 Timothy 2, however, there is no such indication that Paul is speaking specifically about husbands and wives.

- The context of 1 Timothy 2 provides several clues indicating that it deals with men and women generally. It is unlikely that in 2:8 Paul would have meant that only *married* men should pray. And in 2:9 Paul would hardly have expected only *married* women to dress appropriately.
- It appears that the overall context of 1 Timothy 1-3 is not that of marriage but of the orderly functioning of the entire church as God's household (cf 12.2). If we assume that in 2:8-15 Paul wants to fortify the church against the heresy that women may not marry (1 Tim 4:3; cf Breed 2006c:601), it would mean that he was in fact addressing single women who refused to marry but would rather hold their own in the church as independent individuals (cf Padgett 1987:19-24). That would imply that 2:9-15 pertains primarily to unmarried women. That is not the view adopted here; the assumption is rather that 2:8-15 concerns men and women in general (married or single).

The following considerations favour a general interpretation of ἀνὴρ and γυνή:

- In 2:11 the subject of μαθησέτω is γυνή without an article ("A woman should learn in silence ..."). The absence of the article means that the word manifestly does not refer to a particular woman but is used generically to include all women¹³⁹ (cf Schreiner 2005:92-94). Similarly 2:12 instructs her not to have authority over a man (ἀνδρός without an article). Hence it seems that in these verses both ἀνὴρ and γυνή have a generic (general) purport and are not directed only to married men and women.
- The fact that Paul bases his injunction on creation and the fall indicates that it applies universally and is not confined to certain men and women only (Schreiner 2005:109).

Thus it appears that 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is a universal command addressed to all women, married or single.

12.4.2.6 Relevant conclusions

In church gatherings women, on account of the special position assigned to them, should, in contradistinction to men, not preach the Word, teach or exercise authority. This task – teaching (proclaiming the Word) and exercising authority – is assigned to overseers/elders, as is evident in 1 Timothy 3:1,3. It means that in the church women ought not to serve in an ordained ministry that entails any form of authority or leadership.

¹³⁹ The switch to the plural 'they' in 2:15 confirms the generic intention of γυνή. In 2:14 γυνή does have an article, because there it refers to a specific woman, Eve.

12.4.3 Hermeneutic option 2: Precepts for the conduct of husbands and wives in marriage

12.4.3.1 Summary of hermeneutic option 2

In 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Paul gives behavioural rules for Christian husbands and wives as members of God's household (3:15) so that unbelievers may come to knowledge of the truth (2:4; also cf 3:15c). In the context of the havoc that the false doctrine was wreaking in marriages (4:3), Paul first instructs men how to conduct themselves in marriage ("holy hands" as a condition for prayer) (2:8). He then instructs women how to conduct themselves in marriage (2:9-11). He grounds these precepts in the history of creation and the fall (2:13-15).

12.4.3.2 Theme and purpose of the letter

Paul wants the faithful, as people who belong to God's household (3:15), to preserve pure doctrine and proclaim it through their lifestyle. Paul's purpose is that the lifestyle of Christians in Ephesus should conform to true doctrine. He wants to prevent Timothy or other believers in Ephesus from bringing the true doctrine in disrepute among unbelievers through bad stewardship.

1 Timothy 2 forms part of 2:1 - 6:2a (cf 12.2); the structure of 2:1 - 6:2a is as follows:

2:1-15	Conduct of the faithful
3:1-13	Requirements of elders and deacons
3:14-16	Purpose of the letter: conduct of God's household
4:1-14	Doctrine and conduct of heretical teachers
5:1-6:2a	Behaviour of various groups within the church

The thought structure of 1 Timothy 2 should be scrutinised carefully before making inferences about its significance for the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

In proclaiming their doctrine the heretical teachers invoked the Old Testament (1:7) and were probably opposed to taking the gospel to everybody. The passage 2:1-7 makes it clear that the faithful in Ephesus were acting in accordance with God's will when they proclaimed 'the truth' to all people. Paul calls God a "Saviour" (2:3) and says he wants "all men" to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth (2:4). In 2:5 he again stresses salvation for the unconverted when he says that there is "one" God.¹⁴⁰ To Paul God's oneness confirms that the gospel is not intended just for some people but for everybody (cf Ridderbos 1979:339). To this he adds that there is but one mediator between God and humankind: the man Jesus Christ. This further underscores the need to proclaim the truth to everyone. In verse 6 he specifically points out that this mediator

¹⁴⁰ Ridderbos (1979:338) points out that the words εἰς ἕνα θεός in verse 5 shows parallels with the Jewish *Shema* (cf the words יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד in Deut 6:4). The Jewish *Shema* highlights both God's oneness and his uniqueness (Vriezen 1977:350-356).

gave himself as a ransom for “all men”. And in verse 7 he gives another reason why the gospel should be preached to the gentiles when he stresses that he was appointed as a teacher to the gentiles. Hence in proclaiming the gospel to gentiles the faithful were acting in accordance with the task Paul had been given by God.

We have said that the lifestyle of the faithful occupies a prominent place in the purpose of the letter. Paul wanted Christians to get gentiles to believe by living in conformity with the true faith. 1 Timothy 2 explicitly focuses on this lifestyle. In 2:1-3 he instructs them to intercede for all people, for kings and everyone in authority, the object being that the faithful should live peacefully and quietly. The “peaceful and quiet lives” does not refer to their inner state of mind (Mounce 2000:82). As in 1 Thessalonians 4:11, Paul sees it as a life in which Christians are not at loggerheads with other people. He amplifies his description with the words εὐσεβείᾳ and σεμνότητι. The εὐσεβείᾳ refers to a life committed to God in which humans obey God’s will (Louw & Nida, 1988a:531). Σεμνότητι indicates appropriate behaviour that is dignified and compels respect from others (Louw & Nida 1988a:747-748). Hence when believers are given a chance to live without conflict (peacefully and quietly) they should not use it for their own indulgence. They should seize the opportunity to live in a manner that demonstrates commitment to God and compels respect from other people.

When in 2:3-4 Paul substantiates this with “This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth”, the import of such holy and godly living becomes clear. In living their lives thus the faithful are acting according to God’s will for all people to be saved. Through their way of life they proclaim the truth and people can “come to a knowledge of the truth” (De Kruijf 1966:36).

In 2.8 Paul comes to grips with holy, godly living. Here he says that he wants men to lift up “holy hands” without “anger or disputing”. The “holy hands” refers to hands purged of sinful deeds (cf Ex 30:17-21, James 4:8 and 1 Pet 3:7). The words “anger and dissenting” probably indicate the sinful acts that Paul feels these men’s hands should be purged of. Their hands must be ‘holy’ in that they do not nurse anger and live in conflict with others (cf 12.4.2.3).

In 2:9-12 Paul elaborates on holy, godly living. In 2:10 he emphasises that women should adorn themselves in a manner that attests their faith and relationship with God.¹⁴¹ In the same verse he points out their responsibility to do good deeds

¹⁴¹ Cf Louw & Nida (1988:539) for the connotation of the word θεοσεβειαν in 2:9.

(ἐργῶν ἀγαθῶν). One may infer that when he requires women to learn and not teach or assume authority over men (2:11-15) he is still speaking about such holy, godly living.

From the foregoing we make the following inferences:

1 Timothy 2 highlights the believers' lifestyle, which, in accordance with God's will, must lead gentiles to knowledge of the truth (2:1-7). In 2:8-15 Paul indicates what kind of life Christian men and women must live when they proclaim the truth to gentiles.

The following analysis of the thought structure of 1 Timothy 2 summarises the foregoing explanation:

2:1-2 Injunction for intercessionary prayer so that the faithful can lead quiet, peaceful lives in holiness and godliness

2:3-7 Reason for living holy, godly lives: people's salvation.

- God is a saviour (2:3)
- God wants all people to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth (2:4)
- There is only one God and mediator through whom people can be saved (2:5)
- Christ gave himself as a ransom for all (2:6)
- Those who aim at saving sinners act in accordance with Paul's vocation (2:7).

2:8 Holy, godly conduct by men who, in keeping with God's will, will lead people to salvation and knowledge of the truth.

2:9-15 Holy, godly conduct by women who, in keeping with God's will, will lead people to salvation and knowledge of the truth.

Because Timothy 2 deals with the holy conduct of men and women – conduct that should lead people to salvation and knowledge of the truth – 1 Timothy 2:8-15 is more likely to refer to their conduct in marriage than in church meetings. After all, Christians' conduct in church was visible to gentiles only on rare occasions when gentiles happened to attend such a service.

12.4.3.3 Marriage in 1 Timothy

In 1 Timothy 2 Paul pays explicit attention to marriage. He is concerned about the marriages of leaders, namely overseers (3:2), deacons (3:12) and widows (5:9). He stresses that young widows should remarry, have children and run their homes (5:14). His concern about marriage, especially the marriages of leaders, suggests that the

false teachers' preaching that people should not marry (cf 4:3) must have caused some problem regarding marriage among the believers.

Marriages of leaders

Paul specifies that both overseers and deacons should have just one wife (μῑς γυναικός ἄνδρα). To be "put on the list of widows" a widow must have been married only once (ένος ἀνδρός γυνή) (NRSV).

Paul's recommendation in 5:14 that young widows should remarry indicates that he did not regard remarriage as counter to God's will. Hence it may be assumed that he would not require leaders to be people who had only been married once.

Like several other exegetes,¹⁴² we take Paul's use of the words μῑς γυναικός ἄνδρα to refer to the fidelity of the leaders concerned. Hence in 3:2 and 3:12 μῑς γυναικός ἄνδρα refer to leaders' marital fidelity. Thus he posits a *moral requirement* for leaders, corresponding with the other requirements of overseers and deacons in 1 Timothy 3, all of which are moral requirements. In view of the low esteem in which the false teachers held marriage, the requirement of marital fidelity is a manifest correction of their attitude. Hence Paul's use of the words μῑς γυναικός ἄνδρα and ένος ἀνδρός γυνή connotes the marital fidelity of church leaders. He wants them to be people whose marital fidelity makes it plain to all that they – unlike the heretical teachers – rate marriage highly.

Remarriage of young widows

In view of the purpose of 1 Timothy outlined above, it is noteworthy that when dealing with the remarriage of young widows Paul presents it as a testimony to gentiles. Having indicated in 5:14 that he wants young widows to remarry, have children and manage their homes, he spells out why this is expected of them. He says they must not give the enemy¹⁴³ opportunity for slander. In 5:11-13 he sketches what kind of behaviour by widows will give the enemy such opportunity. If widows succumb to sexual desire (καταστρηγιάσωσιν), marry unbelievers and deny their faith in Christ,¹⁴⁴ they give the enemy opportunity to slander. Guided by Satan, gentiles will have occasion to malign the church. But if a Christian widow marries (a *Christian* man), has children and manages her home, gentiles will have no occasion to malign the church under Satan's guidance. In that case these widows' marriage is a testimony to gentiles.

¹⁴² Including Holmes (2000:148-149), Okorie (1988:159-166) and Ridderbos (1967:90).

¹⁴³ Mounce (2000:296) proves convincingly that Paul's τῷ ἀντικειμένῳ refers to Satan (also cf 1 Tim 3 where Paul indicates that Satan is actively at work in the church).

¹⁴⁴ Cf Mounce (2000:289-292) for a detailed substantiation of this interpretation of 1 Timothy 5:11-15.

Refutation of false doctrine about marriage

1 Timothy permits many inferences about what false doctrine Paul is combating in his letter to Timothy. The only explicit reference to the content of that doctrine is in 4:3. According to this verse the heretical teachers proclaimed certain doctrines regarding some foods and marriage. They forbade people to marry and told them to abstain from the specified foods.

Although the sections referring to marriage do deal with the marriages of leaders and young widows, one observes that Paul does not give Timothy any explicit precepts for marriage. Hence he is not contrasting the true doctrine for marriage with the heretical teachings that were current. If in 2:8-15 he had not dealt with marriage either, the letter would have contained no systematised counterweight to the false teachers' doctrine regarding marriage.

Summary

The false teachers' doctrine about marriage had caused problems in this regard in the Ephesian church. They concerned the esteem in which Christians held marriage. The heretical teachers forbade marriage, which could have led Christians not to rate it at its true worth. When Paul stipulates marital fidelity as a requirement of church leaders in 1 Timothy, this must be viewed against the background of the false doctrine about marriage that had been proclaimed in Ephesus. In his instructions to young widows, too, he makes it clear that marriage is a meaningful testimony to the outside world. When young widows marry, have children and run their homes they do not give Satan an opportunity to put the church in a bad light. According to this interpretation the pericope 1 Timothy 2:8-15 is Paul's systematised rebuttal of the heretical teachers' false doctrine about marriage.

12.4.3.4 Ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ (2:8)

The phrase Ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ can be rendered in English as 'in every place' (NRSV) or 'everywhere' (NIV). The Good News Bible, like the 1983 Afrikaans Translation, shows that τόπῳ is understood as "church service". In 2:11 the 1983 Afrikaans Translation adds a phrase from the same semantic field. Verse 2:11a has: Γυνὴ ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μαθησέτω ("a woman should learn in quietness"). To translate this phrase with "a woman should learn in quietness in the worship service" – as the 1983 Afrikaans version does (" 'n vrou moet in die erediens haar laat leer") – shows that the whole pericope is understood as containing instructions for the worship service. Although this interpretation is widely accepted, the actual pericope does not justify the view that the instructions apply directly and exclusively to conduct during church services.

Τοιόχος in the phrase Ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ can also be understood as 'in every respect'. Louw and Nida (1988a:513), with reference to Acts 1:25, indicate that the word can also be used in the semantic field of *doing*, in the sense of *a role entailing activity and responsibility* (also cf Köster 1975:205-206). Hence the pericope from 2:8 onwards

does *not* necessarily deal with conduct in church services. That means the ensuing instructions in 1 Timothy may be seen as referring to conduct in marriage rather than in church services.

12.4.3.5 Injunction to men in 2:8

Unity in marriage as opposed to anger and disputing

In 2:8 Paul instructs men to make sure their hands are holy before they pray. The hands they raise (in prayer) must not be sullied by anger and disputing. On the strength of the context this 'anger and disputing' is interpreted as a consequence of marital quarrels. Counter to the false doctrine that denigrated marriage (4:3), Paul stipulates proper conduct for husbands in marriage. As members of "God's household" (3:15) husbands' conduct towards their wives should attest a life lived "in holiness and godliness" (2:2), so that God the saviour (2:3) can use their lives to lead people to "knowledge of the truth" (2:4). In this way they can help to make the church a "pillar and foundation of the truth" (3:15), as opposed to the false doctrine that denigrated marriage (4:3).

Grounding in the Old Testament

Even though the heretical doctrine would result in the erosion of marriage and marital anger and strife, these teachers still invoked divine authority. After all, they based their doctrine on the Old Testament (cf eg 1 Tim 1:7). In a sense Paul does invoke divine authority in 2:8. He wants men to give account of themselves before God. Before praying to God they must first ensure that they are purged of all anger and disputing.

Responsibility in every respect?

If men were to accept the false doctrine circulating in Ephesus and hold marriage in contempt, it would entail neglect of their marital responsibilities. That could explain Paul's specific reference in 2:8 to ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ. He wants husbands to fulfil all their marital responsibilities.¹⁴⁵ Before they pray they must make sure that there is no anger or disagreement about any of these responsibilities.

12.4.3.6 Injunction to women in 2:9-12

The instructions in 2:9-12 concern, firstly adornment (2:9-10) and, secondly, learning, teaching and exercise of authority (2:11-12). Both sets of instructions are directed to their conduct in marriage.

- **Adornment:** Several scholars¹⁴⁶ point out that both αἰδοῦς and σωφροσύνης (2:9) may pertain to sexuality. Αἰδοῦς may refer to reticence about sexual matters and σωφροσύνης to sexual self-restraint. It would seem that Paul, like Peter (1 Pet 3:3-4), is instructing wives in particular not to beautify themselves in sexually provocative ways.

¹⁴⁵ The word *τοπός* can be used in the semantic field of *doing* to connote a role entailing activity and responsibility, as argued above (6.7.4.3.3).

¹⁴⁶ Cf eg Groenewald (1977:36), Kelly (1972:66) and Mounce 2000:109.

- **ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μανθανέτω ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ:** Women should learn “in quietness and full submission” (2:11). By μανθανέτω Paul means that they should learn from their husbands.¹⁴⁷ Their attitude should be one of inner serenity (ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ, 2:11-12) (cf Louw & Nida 1988a:327).¹⁴⁸ The injunction in 2:12 regarding women’s relationship to men indicates that they are expected to submit fully and willingly (ἐν πάσῃ ὑποταγῇ). Since, as argued above, Paul is speaking about marriage, it concerns wives’ obedience to their husbands, as in Ephesians 5.
- **Teaching and exercise of authority:** The word διδάσκειν in the instruction, “I do not permit a woman to διδάσκειν” (2:12) must be understood correctly. From the context it is evident that in this instance it refers to ‘dictate’.¹⁴⁹ Hence according to 2:12 wives should not dictate to their husbands. In addition to this prohibition Paul also forbids them to exercise authority over their husbands (αὐθεντεῖν). The manner of exercising authority at issue is evident in 2:12: she is forbidden to have authority over him by dictating to him.
- **Twofold grounds for the injunctions to women:** The injunctions to women are grounded in the Old Testament.
 1. Firstly, Paul cites the sequence in which human beings were created (2:13). He emphasises that Adam was created first and Eve second. In 2:13 this sequence means that women should learn from their husbands submissively with inner serenity (2:11) and not seek to have authority over them by dictating to them (2:12). It seems that Paul infers from the sequence of creation that God gave men a special position, which their wives must recognise. This corresponds with the notion of headship in 1 Corinthians 11 (also cf 1 Corinthians 14 and Ephesians 5).

¹⁴⁷ Louw & Nida (1988a:327) explain that it should be inferred from the context in which μανθάνω is used whether information is gathered in a formal or informal setting. It would seem that in 1 Timothy Paul in fact used the word μανθάνω to indicate gathering information in an informal situation. He writes about widows who learn (μανθάνουσιν) to be idle (5:13) and children who have to learn (μανθανέτωσαν) to care for their own family (5:4). Hence it cannot be assumed that in 2:11 Paul’s use of μανθάνω necessarily refers to obtaining knowledge during church services.

¹⁴⁸ The word ἡσυχία is not used only in the semantic field of *communication* to indicate a *state of silence* (ie not speaking) (cf Louw & Nida 1988b:116). In 2:11 Paul may have used ἡσυχία in the semantic field of *problems, relief, favourable circumstances* to connote a *state of imperturbable silence and serenity* (cf Louw & Nida 1988a:247). In that case Paul’s use of women’s ἡσυχία in 2:11 would not be an instruction to keep quiet but to learn with *inner serenity*.

¹⁴⁹ Rengstorff (1973:138) points out that in the New Testament διδάσκω is also used for teaching in completely nonreligious contexts. According to Matthew 28:15 the soldiers, after they were told to spread the rumour that the disciples had stolen Jesus’ body, did as they were *instructed* (ἐδιδάχθησαν). Here the word is used in the sense of *prescribed*.

2. Secondly, Paul points out that it was Eve, not Adam, who was deceived (2:14). Here Paul's reasoning is that Eve took over the leadership and thus repudiated her husband's headship. Her conduct did not display the submissiveness required in 2:11. On the contrary, she did what Paul forbids Christian women to do in 2:12. In 2:14 Paul argues that after her deception Eve ended up in a sinful state (ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν, perfect tense), as a result of which all women are in that state (cf the 3rd person plural of μένωσιν in 2:15). In 2:15 Paul says that women may be saved by bearing children and by living in faith, love and holiness with propriety. If we consider that what Paul has in mind is the false doctrine about marriage, the aim of his argument is clear. He is not arguing that women can achieve salvation by childbearing. Instead he is saying that if women regard childbearing as a God-given privilege, they show that they accept the pure doctrine, which means that they *have* been saved. Hence if, contrary to the heretical teachers' doctrine, women rate marriage highly and in addition bear children, they demonstrate that they cling to the truth and affirm it with their faith and their living. That will show that they have been saved.

12.4.3.7 Relevant conclusions

In 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Paul deals with the conduct of men and women generally and more specifically in marriage, rather than primarily with their behaviour during church services. The signs are that in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Paul is giving positive instructions to counteract the false doctrine about marriage that was proclaimed in Ephesus.

Like other scriptural passages, the pericope 1 Timothy 2:8-15 stresses the husband's headship and requires wives to acknowledge it. Although this passage does not deal with ordained ministries, it implies that women should in no way – including in regard to such ministries – cast doubt on their acceptance of their husbands' headship.

12.5 Evaluation of the two interpretations

In appraising the two viewpoints both are found to be **warranted** and **exegetically tenable**. But opinions differ about their exegetic persuasiveness, so they are subjected to further evaluation.

12.5.1 Evaluation of hermeneutic option 1

Positive

- Although τόπος can be used in at least six other semantic fields, the possibility that in 2:8 Paul was using it in the semantic field of *space/place* certainly merits primary consideration. In that case, if this interpretation is accepted, ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ most probably refers to places of worship.

- Hermeneutic option 1 gives a plausible solution to the paradox that, whereas other scriptural passages tell of women teaching men, Paul nonetheless forbids them to teach in 2:11-12.
- Hermeneutic option 1 (unlike many other interpretations) accepts the reason advanced by Paul himself for his instruction that women should learn in quietness and his prohibition of their teaching and assuming authority over men (that God created Adam first and that Eve sinned; cf 1 Tim 2:13-15).
- Hermeneutic option 1 takes the theme of the letter seriously, namely that the church should be organised and should function as God's household.

Possible weaknesses

- Hermeneutic option 1 accepts that in 1 Timothy 2 Paul is telling Timothy that the church should assume the form of a prayerful community. Paul does in fact point out that it has a responsibility to pray for government and makes it clear that in this respect the church ought to be a prayerful community. It could be, however, that the point he was actually emphasising in 2:8 was not so much their praying as such but the conduct of men: their hands should not be sullied by anger or dissension. Possibly Paul merely mentions men's prayers because, as is evident 1 Peter 3:7 as well, Christian men have to take stock of their lives before they pray. Hence it is not all that clear that 2:8-15 Paul is dealing with prayer in church gatherings (cf 12.4.2.1).
- In section 12.4.2.4.1 we explained why in 2:9-10 Paul gives women specific instructions regarding dress and adornment. Despite this explanation the way Paul contrasts "good deeds" (ἐργῶν ἀγαθῶν) with "braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes" still raises the question whether he did not have a broader context in mind than just church services. Why would Paul focus so specifically on church services in 2:8, then give women instructions for their lives as a whole (2:9-10), and then revert to church services (2:11-15)?
- According to hermeneutic option 1 the instructions to women in 2:9-12 are directed to all women, not only to wives. It is argued that the immediate context does not mention marriage. It could be, however, that in his substantiation in 2:14 Paul does in fact implicitly refer to marriage by citing Eve who, at the time of the fall, assumed leadership and thus failed to acknowledge her husband's headship (cf Breed 2006b:457).
- This option narrows down the central theme of the letter (orderly church organisation, cf 12.2) in 2:8-15 to conduct during worship services.

12.5.2 Evaluation of hermeneutic option 2

Positive

- If the instructions to women in 2:9-12 are read in the context of marriage, as happens in hermeneutic option 2, the substantiation of the injunctions in 2:14 tallies perfectly. After all, Paul's substantiation in 2:14 is that by assuming leadership at the time of the fall Eve failed to recognise her husband's headship (cf Breed 2006b:457).
- Hermeneutic option 2 (unlike many other interpretations) accepts Paul's own substantiation for the injunctions given in 2:11-12.
- The interpretation of the instructions to men and women in 2:8-15 in the context of marriage highlights a clear parallel with Peter's precepts in 1 Peter 3:1-7. Both passages require wives to submit to their husbands, stress what constitutes a woman's true beauty, and substantiate the injunctions with reference to the Old Testament.
- Hermeneutic option 2 takes seriously the specific false doctrine mentioned in the letter (cf 4:3), namely that the heretical teachers forbade people to marry.

Possible weaknesses

- Although *τόνος* can be used in the semantic field of *doing, achieving* (cf Louw & Nida, semantic field 42.21) and can thus be rendered with 'responsibility', it is questionable whether Paul is using it in this sense here. Would he not have specified that men had to meet their responsibility *to their wives* if that was how he was using the word?
- Paul does mention explicitly that the heretical teachers forbade people to marry and one would therefore expect him to correct this false doctrine about marriage somewhere in the letter. But if this is what he is doing in 2:8-15, would he not have referred to marriage directly and dealt with it in greater detail?
- The analysis of the thought structure of 2:1-15, which forms the basis of the argument that 2:8-15 deals with conduct *in marriage*, is less plausible. At most it raises the possibility that the conduct described in 2:8-15 relates to the rebuttal of false doctrine, hence with bringing all people to knowledge of the truth.
- This hermeneutic option narrows down the central theme of the letter (orderly church organisation, cf 12.2) in 2:8-15 to marriage, whereas it actually deals with the church as a whole.

- The hermeneutic option restricts the possible false doctrine to false teachings about marriage, whereas – according to Interpretation 1 – it could concern broader issues.

12.6 Conclusions

In appraising the two viewpoints both are found to be **warranted** and **exegetically tenable**, but opinions differ about their respective exegetic persuasiveness.

Each interpretation leads to a different conclusion:

- **Hermeneutic option 1:** Because of their special position, as distinct from that of men, women should not proclaim the Word, teach or exercise authority in church gatherings. That task – teaching (preaching the Word) and exercise of authority – is assigned to overseers/elders, as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1,3.
- **Hermeneutic option 2:** In 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Paul deals with male and female conduct generally and specifically in marriage, and not primarily with their behaviour in church services. Everything points to the fact that in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Paul is giving positive instructions to rebut the false doctrine about marriage that was proclaimed in Ephesus. Like other scriptural passages, the pericope 1 Timothy 2:8-15 stresses male headship and requires wives to acknowledge it.

12.7 Application to gender in ordained ministries

Hermeneutic option 1

Since the task of teaching (proclamation of the Word) and exercise of authority is assigned to church elders, women should not function in an ordained ministry that entails any authority or leadership whatever (cf 1.1.6.6).

Hermeneutic option 2

1 Timothy 2:8-15 does not deal with ordained ministries. But the pericope does imply that wives should in no way – also as regards ordained ministries – cast doubt on their recognition of their husbands' headship. Factors that can cast doubt on such headship vary from one culture and one era to another.

Chapter 13

EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUSIS OF 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-16

GreekUBS ⁴	NRSV	NIV
<p>¹ πιστὸς ὁ λόγος. Εἴ τις ἐπίσκοπῆς ὀρέγεται, καλοῦ ἔργου ἐπιθυμεῖ. ² δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνεπίλημπτον εἶναι, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα, νηφάλιον σώφρονα κόσμιον φιλόξενον διδακτικόν, ³ μὴ πάροινον μὴ πλήκτην, ἀλλὰ ἐπιεικῇ ἄμαχον ἀφιλάργυρον, ⁴ τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ, μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος ⁵ (εἰ δέ τις τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου προστῆναι οὐκ οἶδεν, πῶς ἐκκλησίας θεοῦ ἐπιμελήσεται;), ⁶ μὴ νεόφυτον, ἵνα μὴ τυφωθείς εἰς κρίμα ἐμπέσῃ τοῦ διαβόλου. ⁷ δεῖ δὲ καὶ μαρτυρίαν καλὴν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἑξωθεν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ὀνειδισμόν ἐμπέσῃ καὶ παγίδα τοῦ διαβόλου. ⁸ Διακόνους ὡσαύτως σεμνοὺς, μὴ διλόγους, μὴ οἴνῳ πολλῷ προσέχοντας, μὴ αἰσχροκερδεῖς, ⁹ ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει.</p>	<p>3 The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. ² Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way—⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil. ⁸ Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; ⁹ they must hold fast to the mystery of the</p>	<p>3 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. ⁸ Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the</p>

<p>¹⁰ καὶ οὗτοι δὲ δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρῶτον, εἴτα διακονείωσαν ἀνέγκλητοι ὄντες.</p> <p>¹¹ Γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως σεμνάς, μὴ διαβόλους, νηφαλίους, πιστάς ἐν πᾶσιν. ¹² Διάκονοι ἔστωσαν μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρες, τέκνων καλῶς προϊστάμενοι καὶ τῶν ἰδίων οἰκῶν. ¹³ οἱ γὰρ καλῶς διακονήσαντες βαθμὸν ἑαυτοῖς καλὸν περιποιούνται καὶ πολλὴν παρρησίαν ἐν πίστει τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ¹⁴ Ταῦτά σοι γράφω ἐλπίζων ἐλθεῖν πρὸς σέ ἐν τάχει. ¹⁵ ἔὰν δὲ βραδύνω, ἵνα εἰδῇς πῶς δεῖ ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεσθαι, ἣτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζῶντος, στῦλος καὶ ἑδραῖωμα τῆς ἀληθείας.</p> <p>¹⁶ καὶ ὁμολογουμένως μέγα ἐστὶν τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον· ὃς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι, ὤφθη ἀγγέλοις, ἐκηρύχθη ἐν ἔθνεσιν, ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ, ἀνελήμφθη ἐν δόξῃ.</p>	<p>faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. ¹¹ Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; ¹³ for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, ¹⁵ if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth. ¹⁶ Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.</p>	<p>faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. ¹¹ In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. ¹² A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. ¹³ Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵ if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶ Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.</p>
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13.1 Argument of 1 Timothy

The overall argument of 1 Timothy was examined in the discussion of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 above, hence this chapter is confined to the immediately pertinent part of the letter.

In the second main section of the letter (2:1 - 4:16) Paul dwells at length on the purpose of the church: it exists to serve God's purpose (that all people should be saved by coming to "knowledge of the truth" [2:3-4]). He deals separately with the conduct of men (2:8), women (2:9-15), elders (3:1-7) and deacons (3:8-13). In his instructions to deacons he specifically mentions women: "Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things" (1 Tim 2:11 [NRSV]).

13.2 Origin of 1 Timothy

See the discussion of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 above (cf section 12.2).

13.3 First reader of 1 Timothy and his world

See the discussion of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 above (cf section 12.3).

13.4 Relevant exegesis of 1 Timothy 3:1-16

The analysis of the thought structure of 1 Timothy in chapter 12 (cf 12.2) naturally applies to the exegesis of 1 Timothy 3:11 as well. Like 2:11-12, 3:11 ("Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things" – NRSV) appears in the part of the letter where Paul is giving Timothy guidelines for the proper organisation of the church as the house(hold) of God. 3:1-13 deals specifically with requirements for persons in ordained ministries in the church.

Verse 3:11 is part of a unitary structure, namely 3:1-13, which may be divided up as follows:

- 3:2-7: "Now the overseer must..."
- 3:8-10: "Deacons, likewise..."
- 3:11: "Women, likewise..."
- 3:12: "A deacon must be the husband of but one wife..."

Thus 3:11, which deals with women, is imbedded in the section on deacons (3:8-12).

There are three possible interpretations of "Women, likewise" in 3:11. We outline and assess each of them briefly.

13.4.1 First hermeneutic option: deacons' wives

The first hermeneutic option is to read γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως in 2:11 as if γυναῖκας was followed by αὐτῶν, implying tat the words refer to 'wives of deacons'.

In favour of this interpretation is the position of 3:11 in a section dealing with deacons (3:8-12). Paul might have deemed it necessary to set specific requirements for the wives of deacons in Ephesus.

The following points militate against this interpretation:

- the absence of the pronoun αὐτῶν (their) after γυναῖκας: if 3:11 in fact refers to deacons' wives, one would expect an αὐτῶν after 'women'.
- position of ὡσαύτως in 3:11: as in 3:8, the word signals a new category within the framework of church ministries. This is reinforced by the parallels between

3:8 (διακόνους ὡσαύτως σεμνούς) and 3:11 (γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως σεμνάς), both without an article.

- the absence of any qualifications for the wives of elders: that being the case, one may assume that 3:11 does *not* concern deacons' wives.¹⁵⁰

13.4.2 Second hermeneutic option: women ministering in the diaconal field

A second option is that 3:11 refers to women ministering in a separate category alongside overseers and deacons. Although not formally ordained, such women do minister in the diaconal sphere.

The following points favour this exposition:

- position of ὡσαύτως in 3:11: as in 3:8, the word signals a new category within the framework of church ministries. This is reinforced by the parallelism between 3:8 (διακόνους ὡσαύτως σεμνούς) and 3:11 (γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως σεμνάς), both without an article.
- the position of the reference to 'women' (3:11) in a section dealing with deacons (3:8-12): it indicates that these women's ministry lay in the diaconal field.
- the fact that 3:11 sets requirements for women that partly correspond with those for deacons, yet differ in important respects. Particularly striking is that the trial period that deacons must undergo before they can start their ministry (3:10) is not required of women. This differentiation in requirements could indicate differential ministries.
- other portrayals of (unordained) ministry by women in early church history: there is evidence that women rendered diaconal services without being officially ordained like overseers, elders and deacons. They were regarded as 'deaconesses'.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ But there is another view of this. This hermeneutic option accounts as follows for the fact that no qualifications are stipulated for elders' wives: (1) Requirements are set for deacons' wives because they are/ought to be/may be involved in their husbands' diaconal work. The nature of diaconal work often requires women to minister to women to avoid any hint of impropriety. Helping with diaconal work also accords with the prominent role assigned in the Bible to women as caregivers. (2) In the case of elders there are no requirements for women, because they were not allowed to take part in the ordained ministry of teaching and ruling. Elders' wives were not permitted to share their husbands' ministry.

¹⁵¹ Schwertley (1988:6-30) gives a detailed overview of early Christian literature on the position of women ministering as deacons in the early church, from the *Didache* (± AD 100) to the synod of Chalcedon (AD 451). He finds no mention of women operating in the same ordained diaconal ministry as men, although there are clear references to women rendering diaconal service without being officially ordained like overseers, elders and deacons. They could be regarded as 'deaconesses'. It would seem that the position and activities of deaconesses were organised according to the requirements in 1 Timothy 5:9f, hence differed considerably from those of deacons. Unlike deacons, deaconesses had to be at least 60 years old (the synod of Chalcedon in AD 451 brought the age limit down to 40); they had to be widows or at any rate single (this probably evolved

The following points militate against this interpretation:

- There is no clear indication elsewhere in Scripture of such a separate (unordained) ministry.¹⁵² The pericopes Romans 16:1 (Phoebe) and 1 Timothy 5:9-14 (ministry of widows) may, however, be regarded as support for this view.
- In this view 3:11 is not simply imbedded in 3:8-12, but actually interrupts the account of the requirements for male deacons (3:8-10,12).
- The parallel between 3:8 (διακόνους ὡσαύτως σεμνούς) and 3:11 (γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως σεμνάς) does not necessarily indicate a different category of ministry, but could set specific requirements for women in the existing diaconal ministry (cf 13.4.3 below).

13.4.3 Third hermeneutic option: women also served as deacons

A third option is that 3:11 refers to female deacons.

The following points favour this hermeneutic option:

- the parallelism between 3:8 (διακόνους ὡσαύτως σεμνούς) and 3:11 (γυναῖκας ὡσαύτως σεμνάς) could refer to specific requirements for women operating in the existing diaconal ministry.
- this hermeneutic option means that there is no interruption of the requirements for persons in diaconal ministry (3:8-12). In fact, the requirements for female deacons precede those in 3:12, because the latter ("must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his ... household well") would not apply to women.

into female monastic orders in Catholicism in later times); they worked under the supervision of a deacon and bishop; their charitable work and assistance were confined to women; and they could instruct female converts in the faith. From the 3rd century onwards deaconesses did undergo some form of ordination in the Eastern church, but it was never an official ordination to a formal church ministry. The synod of Nicea (AD 325) spelled it out (Schwertley's translation): "And we mean by deaconesses such as have assumed the habit, but who, since they have no imposition of hands, are to be numbered only among the laity." In his letter to Trajan (± AD 113) Pliny refers to two female servants (*ancillae*) known as deaconesses (*ministrae*). In view of the evidence in church history it seems reasonable to assume that the *ministrae* mentioned by Pliny were an early version of such 'deaconesses'.

¹⁵² It would be an invalid premise, however, to posit that women can only serve in an ordained ministry if the Bible contains examples of women serving in that capacity. Put differently, the only valid inference to be made from the fact that Paul's exposition of the requirements for elders (3:1-7) refers exclusively to men is that in Ephesus all the elders were probably men. To infer that this is a ruling that women may not serve as elders would be exegetically valid only if the interpretation is supported by other scriptural passages.

Points that militate against this interpretation are as follows:

- the fact that some attributes required specifically of women (3:11) reiterate those for men (σεμνούς ["worthy"] in 3:8 and σεμνός in 3:11), whereas others are merely similar (μὴ διλόγους ["not double-tongued" – NRSV] in 3:8 and μὴ διαβόλους ["not malicious talkers"] in 3:11; and μὴ οἴνω πολλῷ προσέχοντας ["not indulging in much wine"] in 3:8 and νηφαλίου ["temperate"] in 3:11). There are also attributes mentioned only for men (3:8-μὴ αἰσχροκερδεῖς ["not pursuing dishonest gain"] and 3:9-ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει ["keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience"], and others mentioned only for women (3:11-πιστὰς ἐν πᾶσιν ["trustworthy in everything"].
- This hermeneutic option does not take sufficient account of the fact that the trial period for men (3:10) is not required of women as well.
- the fact that there is no explicit reference to female deacons anywhere else in Scripture. The pericope Romans 16:1 (Phoebe) could, however, be interpreted as supportive of this view.

13.5 Evaluation of the three hermeneutic options

This scriptural passage in itself does not provide sufficient information to make a definite choice between the three options.

13.6 Conclusion

1 Timothy 3 does not permit any conclusion regarding gender in ordained ministries.

Chapter 14

EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUSIS OF 1 TIMOTHY 5:3-16

Greek UBS ⁴	NRSV	NIV
<p>³ Χήρας τίμα τὰς ὄντως χήρας. ⁴ εἰ δὲ τις χήρα τέκνα ἢ ἔκγονα ἔχει, μανθανέτωσαν πρῶτον τὸν ἴδιον οἶκον εὐσεβεῖν καὶ ἀμοιβὰς ἀποδιδόναι τοῖς προγόνοις· τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν ἀπόδεκτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. ⁵ ἡ δὲ ὄντως χήρα καὶ μεμονωμένη ἡλπικεν ἐπὶ θεὸν καὶ προσμένει ταῖς δεήσεσιν καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, ⁶ ἡ δὲ σπαταλῶσα ζῶσα τέθνηκεν. ⁷ καὶ ταῦτα παράγγελλε, ἵνα ἀνεπίλημπτοι ᾖσιν. ⁸ εἰ δὲ τις τῶν ἰδίων καὶ μάλιστα οἰκείων οὐ προνοεῖ, τὴν πίστιν ἥρνηται καὶ ἔστιν ἀπίστου χειρῶν. ⁹ Χήρα καταλεγέσθω μὴ ἔλαττον ἐτῶν ἐξήκοντα γεγонуῖα, ἐνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή, ¹⁰ ἐν ἔργοις καλοῖς μαρτυρουμένη, εἰ ἐτεκνοτρόφησεν, εἰ ἐξενοδόχησεν, εἰ ἀγίων πόδας ἔνιψεν, εἰ θλιβομένοις ἐπήρκεσεν, εἰ παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ ἐτηκολούθησεν.</p> <p>¹¹ νεωτέρας δὲ χήρας παραιτοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ καταστρηνιάσωσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, γαμεῖν θέλουσιν ¹² ἔχουσαι κρίμα ὅτι τὴν</p>	<p>³ Honor widows who are really widows. ⁴ If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some repayment to their parents; for this is pleasing in God's sight. ⁵ The real widow, left alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; ⁶ but the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷ Give these commands as well, so that they may be above reproach. ⁸ And whoever does not provide for relatives, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. ⁹ Let a widow be put on the list if she is not less than sixty years old and has been married only once; ¹⁰ she must be well attested for her good works, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. ¹¹ But refuse to put younger widows on the list; for when their sensual desires</p>	<p>³ Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. ⁴ But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. ⁵ The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. ⁶ But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷ Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. ⁸ If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. ⁹ No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, ¹⁰ and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. ¹¹ As for younger</p>

<p>πρώτην πίστιν ἠθέτησαν· ¹³ ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἀργαὶ μανθάνουσιν περιερχόμεναι τὰς οἰκίας, οὐ μόνον δὲ ἀργαὶ ἀλλὰ καὶ φλύαροι καὶ περίεργοι, λαλοῦσαι τὰ μὴ δέοντα. ¹⁴ Βούλομαι οὖν νεωτέρας γαμεῖν, τεκνογονεῖν, οἰκοδεσποτεῖν, μηδεμίαν ἀφορμὴν διδόναι τῷ ἀντικειμένῳ λοιδορίας χάριν· ¹⁵ ἥδη γάρ τινες ἐξετράπησαν ὀπίσω τοῦ σατανᾶ. ¹⁶ εἴ τις πιστὴ ἔχει χήρας, ἐπαρκεῖτω αὐταῖς καὶ μὴ βαρεῖσθω ἡ ἐκκλησία, ἵνα ταῖς ὄντως χήραις ἐπαρκέσῃ.</p>	<p>alienate them from Christ, they want to marry, ¹² and so they incur condemnation for having violated their first pledge. ¹³ Besides that, they learn to be idle, gadding about from house to house; and they are not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not say. ¹⁴ So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, and manage their households, so as to give the adversary no occasion to revile us. ¹⁵ For some have already turned away to follow Satan. ¹⁶ If any believing woman has relatives who are really widows, let her assist them; let the church not be burdened, so that it can assist those who are real widows.</p>	<p>widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. ¹² Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. ¹³ Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. ¹⁴ So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. ¹⁵ Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan. ¹⁶ If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.</p>
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14.1 Argument of 1 Timothy

The overall argument of 1 Timothy was outlined above in the discussion of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 (cf section 12.1). Here we confine ourselves to the directly pertinent part of the letter.

In the third main section of the letter (5:1 - 6:19) Paul offers practical counsel for different types of ministry, inter alia how to deal with widows in the congregation (5:3-16).¹⁵³ He distinguishes between two facets of the problem. One is care of widows (5:3-8, 16), the other requirements to be put on the list of widows (5:9-15).

14.2 Origin of the letter

See discussion of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 above (section 12.2).

¹⁵³ The other types of ministry covered by Paul's counsel are: how to admonish fellow Christians (5:1-2), how to work with other leaders (5:17-22), how to keep healthy (5:23), how to know people (5:24-25), how to deal with discrimination (6:1-2), how to work with the right motivation (6:3-16) and how to handle wealth (6:17-19).

14.3 First reader of 1 Timothy and his world

See discussion of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 above (section 12.3).

14.4 Relevant exegesis of 1 Timothy 5:3-16

14.4.1 First hermeneutic option: practical measure to care for the 'needy'

14.4.1.1 Introduction

Widows who had no family to look after them were extremely vulnerable in the societies of those days. There were no pension schemes or government provision for them. The Christian churches took good care of their widows, who in their turn rendered valuable congregational service.

The scriptural precepts for dealing with widows¹⁵⁴ show that God comes to the aid of the humble (Ps 25:9).

14.4.1.2 The 'list of widows' (5:9–10)

It is unclear exactly what being put on the 'list of widows' entailed (χήρα καταλεγέσθω – 5:9). It would seem that 'in exchange' for financial care they were assigned certain duties in the church. Some of them were organised in a group of 'listed widows' (5:9), who made a *pledge* to Christ to minister full-time to the faithful and outsiders by doing good deeds (5:12). It would seem that part of their role in Ephesus was to act as nurses, social workers and providers of hospitality and emergency services. These tasks required both commitment (an exemplary life) and experience of the faith and of life (5:9-10).

Timothy 5:11-15 indicates that some widows exploited their widowhood in order to be listed. Their lifestyle showed that they actually wanted to and could remarry. The principle Paul lays down – given the position of women at the time – is clear and perfectly practical: if a widow is in a position to look after herself by remarrying, she should do so in order not to burden the church financially.

14.4.1.3 Implication of the guidelines for our time

Many widows in our culture are provided for relatively well by way of insurance policies, pension schemes and the like. Besides, apart from remarriage, society offers far more scope (than in Paul's day) for widows to find a vocation and even pursue a career and thus remain financially independent.

¹⁵⁴ The Bible sets great store by caring for widows, calling it "pure and faultless religion" (James 1:27). In the Old Testament laws God provides for the care of widows (Deut 24:29; 24:19-21; 26:12-13); he ensures that widows can rejoice (Deut 16:11-14); he blesses those that assist widows (Is 1:17-18; Jer 7:6; 22:3-4) and punishes those who treat them unjustly (Ex 22:22; Deut 24:17; Ps 94:6; Mal 3:5). Jesus himself showed concern for widows (Luke 7:11-17; 18:3-5; 20:47; 21:2-3), while the early church also instituted measures to help them (Acts 6:1-6).

In our society the principle laid down in 1 Timothy 5:3-16 applies not only to widows, but to everyone who ends up in a situation where they cannot help themselves, such as people in backward communities or those disadvantaged by government policy to the extent that they are unable to help themselves. But the principle still applies: believers act irresponsibly and in fact encourage slackness if they do not first establish whether there are 'children' or 'grandchildren' who neglect their duty towards the person in need.

14.4.1.4 Synoptic pertinent conclusion

The principle at issue is clear: a congregation must ensure that the necessary structures (or ordained ministries) are in place to see to it that the 'needy' in its midst receive proper care.

It would be false to infer from Paul's guidelines about the 'list of widows' that we should still have such an ordained ministries today and that this is where female believers who have been widowed can render a special service. In 1 Timothy 5 Paul is not making dogmatic, universally valid pronouncements on which ministries women may conduct. He was simply instituting practical measures for a real-life, contemporary situation with a view to the desperate situation of widows in that culture to ensure that this category of needy people is not overlooked.

14.4.2 Second hermeneutic option: a separate ministry reserved for widows

14.4.2.1 Introduction

As in the first hermeneutic option, 1 Timothy 3:3-16 is viewed as a passage dealing partly with care for widows and partly with their ministry in the church. The pericope is part of a larger section (5:1 - 6:2), in which Paul instructs Timothy on his pastoral dealings with various groups in the church. He indicates that two of these groups should be treated with special respect: widows (5:3 "Honor widows who are really widows" [NRSV]) and elders (5:17 "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor"). The underlying theme of 5:3-16 would thus be that real widows deserve to be honoured (De Boer 2006:118; also see third hermeneutic option). Widows should

- receive honourable care in the church (5:3-8);
- be able to render honourable service in the church (5:9-16).

Below is an outline of the thought structure of 5:3-16.

14.4.2.2 Thought structure of 1 Timothy 3:3-16

Basic injunction to Timothy

5:3 Honour widows who are really widows

→ First way of honouring widows: provide their material needs (3 categories of widows)

→ Category 1: Widows who should be cared for by their families

5:4a Widows who have children and grandchildren

→ Such widows are their families' responsibility

5:4b-c These should first learn to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents

→ Reason why the family should look after widows

5:4d It is pleasing to God

→ Category 2: Widows with no family need care from the church

5:5a The widow who is really in need and left all alone

→ After all, such a widow is, materially speaking, totally dependent on God

5:5b-d puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and ask God for help

→ Category 3: A widow with no family who leads a loose life does not require care from the church

5:6 The widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives

→ Synoptic instruction on material care of widows

→ They (3 categories and family) must be instructed and admonished about this

5:7 Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame

→ The families of needy widows in particular must know their duty

5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives ... he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever

→ Second way of honouring widows: give them recognition by allowing them to render special services in the church

→ Widows meeting certain requirements should be involved

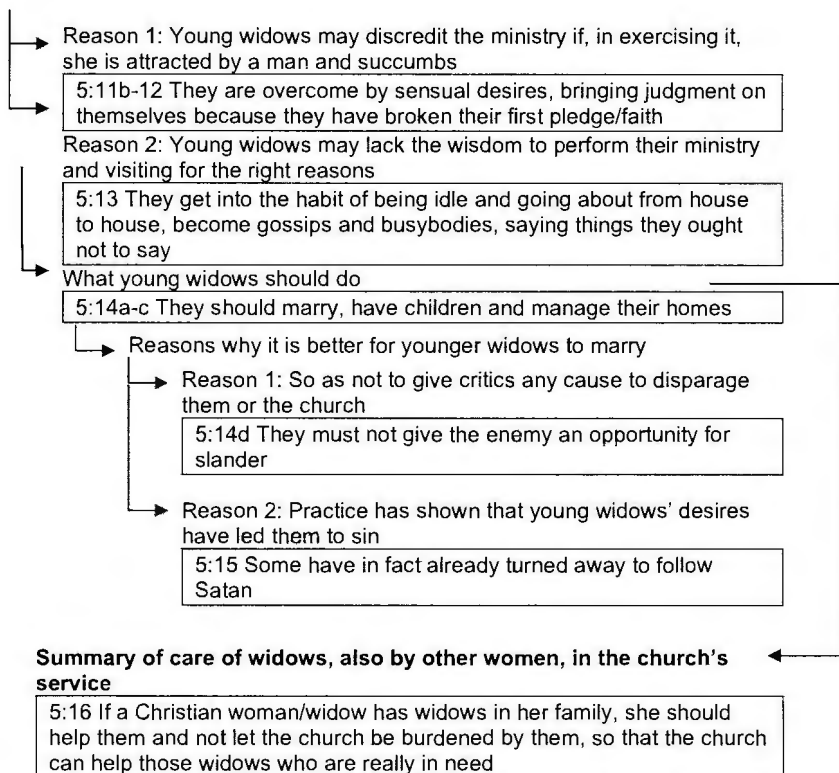
5:9a A widow may be put on a list

→ Requirements such widows have to meet

5:9b-10 They must be at least 60 years old, must have been the wife of only one husband, provide evidence of good deeds, have raised children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of the saints, helped those in trouble and devoted themselves to all kinds of good deeds

→ Why widows should not be below the age of 60

5:11a Young widows must be turned down



It seems that 5:16 synoptically concludes the entire pericope: widows must be looked after. In this respect a 'woman who is a believer' should render assistance. It is not clear what exactly Paul means by a 'woman who is a believer'. The Greek merely has the feminine form of 'believing' (πιστή) with no noun.¹⁵⁵ It could mean any Christian woman who, along with her family, must care for their widows (Ridderbos 1967:138), or a Christian widow who should help take care of widows in her family. At all events, 5:16 makes it clear that such care in itself benefits the church by relieving it of the care of widows.

Widows who are really needy and whose services are well attested should be given special recognition by the church. They should be put on a list (καταλεγέσθω). The verb καταλεγέσθω does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament, but a study of contemporary sources reveals that it usually indicates entry on an official list (cf Quinn & Wacker 1995:418). 1 Timothy 5 does not tell us for what purpose widows should be officially listed. Two main reasons are advanced (cf Hendriksen 1976:172-173; Marshall 1999:592):

¹⁵⁵ The variant reading πιστός ή πιστή ('man or woman who is a believer') is probably a later addition.

- (1) It is a list of widows who require permanent care from the church.¹⁵⁶
- (2) It is a list of widows who may perform charitable work in the church.

Proponents of the first reason (eg Marshall 1999:592; Mounce 2000:273) point out that 5:9-10 gives no instructions for widows, but merely mentions the requirements they should meet. Hence it is not a matter of a service they have to render. From the preceding 5:4-8 the inference then follows that 5:9-10 also concerns widows who need to be looked after. Thus the explanation is that the list referred to in 5:9 is one of widows to be cared for. But this exposition does not explain satisfactorily why widows first have to meet certain requirements (be over 60, hospitable, helpful to people in distress) before being eligible for inclusion in the care list (cf Hendriksen 1976:173). Hence the second explanation (a distinct category of charitable work) seems more plausible.

14.4.2.3 A distinct category of charitable work

Most commentaries concur that 1 Timothy 5:9 refers to a list of widows who have to conduct a distinct category of charitable work in the congregation.¹⁵⁷ True, 1 Timothy 5:9-10 contains no instructions to widows, only requirements (cf Mounce 2000:273). But that does not mean that they are not assigned any tasks. Remarkably, 1 Timothy 3:1-13 does not assign overseers and deacons any tasks either, merely sets certain requirements. Yet the requirements relate directly to their task (cf Hendriksen 1976:120-121).

A similar relation between listed widows and a particular task is evident in the striking parallels between the requirements for widows in 5:9-10 and those for overseers in 3:2-3:

<u>Overseers</u>	<u>Listed widows</u>
3:2 husband of one wife only	5:9 wife of one husband only
3:2 respectable	5:10 evidence of good deeds
3:2 hospitable	5:10 hospitable
3:4 keep his children obedient	5:10 bring up children

Yet there are major differences between the two sets of requirements as well:

¹⁵⁶ The third hermeneutic option uses this theory.

¹⁵⁷ Eg Ridderbos (1967:133), Hendriksen (1976:172), Quinn & Wacker (1995:418, 436) and De Boer (2006:118).

- Unlike elders, widows must be over 60 and no longer married. Whereas elders must be qualified to teach, widows must be competent charitable workers (wash saints' feet, help people in trouble). Hence widows' ministry does not relate to teaching and instruction but is basically diaconal, entailing practical help and charitable work. The point, however, is this: 1 Timothy 5:9-10 seems to fit better into chapter 3, maybe after verse 11.¹⁵⁸ Yet the apostle reserves it for chapter 5. Thus he appears to be saying that this ministry of widows, although a separate ministry alongside that of elders and deacons, is distinctive, belonging to the informal activities of the church. It is not an ordained ministry like that of elders and deacons.
- That this is not an ordained ministry like that of elders is also evident in 1 Timothy 5:9: widows are "put on the list" (καταλεγέσθαι, 'catalogued'), whereas elders are ordained by laying on of hands (χείρας ἐπιτίθειν, according to Tit 1:5: 'appoint' καταστήσαι).
- Church history indicates that the early church indeed linked this separate female ministry (1 Tim 3:11) to the requirements and ministry of widows (1 Tim 5:9-10). In this regard, also see 14.4.3 below.

14.4.2.4 Summary

The most plausible exposition of 1 Timothy 5:9-10 is that women of good repute may be officially appointed to do charitable work in the church. Although not ordained to the ministry (as deaconesses), they operate in the diaconal field.

14.4.3 A third hermeneutic option: not a special ministry but a rule determining which widows are to be cared for

14.4.3.1 Introduction

As in the previous two hermeneutic options it is assumed that 5:3-16 concerns the ministry of widows (cf 14.1 above). Unlike the other two options, however, the third one does not hold that the passage deals with two facets of the problem of widows in the church, but focuses on one facet only: care of widows.

It is evident that the words *χήρα καταλεγέσθω* do not necessarily mean that the widows in question should be put on a list of *ministering* widows. One can only gather from the context what kind of list it is.

Careful scrutiny of the context makes it seem more likely that it was a list of widows who needed care on a *permanent* basis.

¹⁵⁸ In 14.4.2 we mentioned the possibility that the women referred to in 1 Timothy 3:11 could be the listed widows of 5:9-10.

14.4.3.2 Signs that it is a matter of specific widows in need of ministry**14.4.3.2.1 Requirements for or responsibilities of these widows?**

Nothing in 5:3-16 indicates that Paul is speaking about women charged with certain responsibilities. He merely sets requirements that they have to comply with. It would be hard to infer from these requirements that the widows in question also had certain responsibilities.

14.4.3.2.2 Πρώτην πίστιν (v 12)

In verse 12 where Paul refers to young widows who should not be admitted to the list, he mentions the possibility that they may have broken their “first pledge” (πρώτην πίστιν). Judging by the immediate context, it seems implausible that πρώτην πίστιν refers to a pledge that widows made to Christ (cf 14.4.1.2). After all, in 5:11-12 Paul says that young widows who want to marry incur judgment (ἐχουσαι κρίμα). It is hardly conceivable that a young widow who wants to remarry would be condemned for it. It seems more feasible that Paul was referring to young widows who marry unbelievers and thus turn their backs on the true faith (πίστιν) (cf Breed 2006c:609).

14.4.3.2.3 Relation between 1 Timothy 3:2-4 and 1 Timothy 5:9

There are certainly parallels between the requirements set for people admitted to the ministry of overseers and those for widows who may be listed. But can one infer from this that 5:9 refers to a kind of ministry for widows? The same requirements could apply to widows who were listed as permanently in need of care.

14.4.3.2.4 Care of young widows

If we assume that in 5:9 Paul is speaking about widows aged 60 or older who were permanently in need of care, does that mean that younger widows in real financial need were not entitled to care? We may assume that by “put on the list” (καταλεγέσθω) Paul meant widows receiving help on a permanent basis. Younger widows needing care could be assisted, but were not put on the list of widows, because the assistance would cease the moment they no longer required it, whether because of remarriage or otherwise.

14.4.3.2.5 Thought structure of 1 Timothy 3:3-16

The thought structure below shows the following:

1. Paul’s instruction in 5:3 that women who are really widows should be honoured is a consistent theme in this thought unit. This is evident in the following:

- Immediately after the injunction in 5:3 Paul explains in 5:4 that a widow who has children to take care of her is not really in need of care. The section on widows concludes on the same note (5:16).
 - Thrice in the passage he contrasts women who are really widows with those who are not really widows. In 5:4-5a he contrasts widows with children to take care of them with those who have been left all alone. In 5:5b-6 he contrasts widows who put their hope in God and perseveringly pray for help with widows who live for pleasure and are dead even while alive. Thirdly, in 5:9-15 he contrasts widows who lived devout lives with young widows who may start living sinfully.
 - At the core of the passage (5:7-8) Paul commands Timothy: "Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame." What 'these instructions' are and who should receive them emerge in 5:8: they are the relatives of widows, who must be instructed to care for them.
2. It would be strange if Paul, while writing a passage clearly specifying which widows should be honoured, were to switch abruptly to widows who had to fulfil certain duties in the church.
 3. The passage reflects two other themes directly related to the injunction that women who are really widows should be honoured. The first is that widows' relatives should do their duty by these women so that the church could take care of those who were truly destitute (cf 5:4,8,16). Secondly, Paul stresses that widows must be cared for in a way that does not bring the church into disrepute in the eyes of the world (cf 5:14).

This thought structure appears in a diagram overleaf.

Basic instructions to Timothy

v. 2 Honour widows who are really widows

If there is someone to care for a widow, she is not really a widow

v.4a Widows who have children and grandchildren

Responsibility of others, not the church

v. 4b-c Let them learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents

Reason why they should look after widows:

v. 4d This is pleasing to God

A

A widow who has no one to take care of her is really a widow

v. 5a The widow who is really in need and left all alone

B

A widow living in dependence on God is really a widow

v. 5b-d puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray

B

Widows living sinful lives are not really widows

v. 6 The widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives

A

Instruction to Timothy, stressing that Christians who do not look after their own family are spiritually dead

v.7-8 Give the people these instructions If anyone does not provide for his relatives he has denied his faith and is worse than an unbeliever

Widows who live devout lives really are widows

v. 9-10 No widow may be put on the list unless she is over 60, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds

A

Widows in danger of living sinfully are not really widows

v. 11a Young widows should not be put on the list

Reason for excluding them

v.11b-13 When their sensual desire overcome them they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their pledge. They get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. They become gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.

B

What young widows should do

v. 14c Marry, have children and manage their homes

Reason for honouring real widows

v. 14 d to give the enemy no opportunity for slander

Incentive from harsh reality for young widows to marry

v.15 Some have already turned away

Widows who have someone to take care of them are not really widows

v. 16 a-b If any woman [or man] who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them

A

Reason why they should not receive care from the church

16c-d The church should not be burdened with them, so it can help those who really are in need

14.4.3.3 Conclusion

- In 5:9 Paul's reference to widows to be listed indicates those who need assistance from the church on a permanent basis.
- 1 Timothy 5 gives no indication whether or not women may serve in ordained ministries.

14.5 Evaluation of the various hermeneutic options

14.5.1 Evaluation of hermeneutic option 1

Positive

- Hermeneutic option 1 makes it clear that we cannot simply assume that 1 Timothy 5:9-10 deals with a kind of special ministry for widows which should exist in the church *for ever*.
- This hermeneutic option explicitly acknowledges that the passage is not easy to understand. Thus it is not clear what it means to be on the list of widows. It merely 'seems' as if widows may be assigned certain duties in the church in return for financial assistance. It also 'seems' as if their role could have been that of nurse, social worker and provider of hospitality and emergency services in Ephesus.

Possible weaknesses

- The hermeneutic option does not look into the assumption that the passage is not about a permanent ordained ministry for women.
- The hermeneutic option does not consider another principle that could be inferred from the practical arrangement, namely that those receiving financial assistance should in their turn fulfil certain duties in the church.
- The numerous possibilities are not properly considered, hence the conclusions drawn are dubious.
- No grounds are advanced for assuming that the passage is about a group of 'listed widows'. This possibility will have to be explored in depth. After all, Paul could have been referring to widows who were listed and were given assistance (cf hermeneutic option 3).

14.5.2 Evaluation of hermeneutic option 2

Positive

- This hermeneutic option carefully analyses 1 Timothy 5:3-16 in light of the basic theme of 5:3.

- The option is based on a thorough exposition of the thought structure, showing that it concerns two categories of widows who can claim assistance. It also highlights the fact that 1 Timothy 5:3-17 deals with two groups (widows and elders) who should be honoured. In addition the thought structure makes it clear that there should be two ways of honouring widows.
- The hermeneutic option demonstrates a possible connection between 1 Timothy 3:11 and the list of widows.

Possible weaknesses

- The hermeneutic option does not examine whether the widows' ministry was one which, like that of elders and deacons, was meant to function in all churches through the ages.
- The option assumes that Paul is not dealing with widows to be cared for and listed. Only one reason is given for this assumption. It offers no explanation why women in need of care had to meet certain requirements. Hermeneutic option 2 does not take into account that these requirements should be seen against the background of the false doctrine that was circulating in Ephesus (cf τῷ ἀντικειμένῳ in 5:14). Paul makes the point that the church should not give rise to slander of the gospel by looking after women who are living in sin (cf 5:14 μηδεμίαν ἀφορμὴν διδόναι τῷ ἀντικειμένῳ λοιδορίας χάριν). If widows meet the requirements set in 5:9-10, the gospel would not be brought into disrepute when the church took care of them.
- If 5:16 is a 'synopsis' of the preceding section (as argued in 14.4.1.3), one could fairly expect Paul to mention the 'second way of honouring widows' in the summary as well. But Paul underscores only one point in 5:16: the ones to be helped must be real widows; those who had somebody to take care of them should be cared for by those people. Hence it seems more likely that the latter (honour by relatives) is the only way in which widows should be honoured.
- The conclusions drawn from the comparison between the requirements for elders in 1 Timothy 3 and those for widows in 1 Timothy 5 rest on shaky grounds. True, as in the case of widows, 1 Timothy 3 merely sets requirements for elders without assigning tasks. But does that correspondence mean that 1 Timothy 5 also deals with a separate category of ministry alongside that of elders and deacons? After all, 1 Timothy 3 refers explicitly to τὸν ἐπίσκοπον as a group, in contrast to the passage on widows.

A further question is whether the *similarities* in the requirements really indicate a special ministry for widows. Are the requirements set in 5:9-10 not merely a closer specification of 5:5-6, that is of widows who put their hope in God, pray night and

day for help, and are not dead while alive (cf 5:5-6: ἤλπικεν ἐπὶ θεὸν καὶ προσμένει ταῖς δεήσεσιν καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας)?

The inference from *disparities* between the requirements for elders and those for widows is also questionable. True, the requirements regarding “washing the feet of saints” and “helping those in trouble” fall in the field of charitable work. But careful analysis of the requirements suggests that they extend beyond that field. Widows are explicitly required to show evidence of good deeds: the requirements conclude with one that demands that she must have devoted herself to “all kinds of good deeds”.

- The list of widows is not interpreted against the background of the false doctrine that was proclaimed in Ephesus, whereas 5:15-16 most probably contains a reference to these heretical teachers (cf τῷ ἀντικειμένῳ).

14.5.3 Evaluation of third hermeneutic option

Positive

- Hermeneutic option 3 recognises that the meaning of χήρα καταλεγέσθω must be traced in the context.
- The option is based on a meticulous exposition of the thought structure, which indicates that the passage concerns two categories of widows who are entitled to care.

Possible weaknesses

- The hermeneutic option is based on the assumption that χήρα καταλεγέσθω refers to widows in need of permanent care; that is not explicitly stated in the text.
- The text does not state plainly that it concerns care of widows; this is inferred from the context.
- The hermeneutic option does not convincingly account for the highly specific requirements set for widows to be listed. It begs the question why widows first had to raise children and must have shown hospitality to qualify for congregational care.

14.6 Conclusion

- Appraisal of the three hermeneutic options finds that all three are **warranted and exegetically tenable**. Opinions differ, however, when it comes to their exegetic persuasiveness.
- The three hermeneutic options lead to different conclusions:

- **Hermeneutic option 1:** A congregation must see to it that the necessary structures (or ordained ministries) are in place to ensure proper care of the 'needy', like the widows in 1 Timothy 5. Gender in the ordained ministries should not feature in this context.
- **Hermeneutic option 2:** 1 Timothy 5:9-10 attests that women of good reputation may be officially appointed to do charitable work in the church. Such women are not in an ordained ministry (that of deacon), but they do function in the diaconal field.
- **Hermeneutic option 3:** In 1 Timothy 5:9 Paul's reference to widows to be listed indicates widows in need of permanent care from the church.

14.7 Application to gender in ordained ministries

- 14.7.1 Hermeneutic option 1:** It cannot be validly inferred from Paul's instructions regarding a list of ministering widows that such an ordained ministry should exist today and that this is where widowed females can and may serve in an ordained ministry. In 1 Timothy 5 Paul is not making dogmatic, always applicable pronouncements on ministries to which women may be admitted. He is simply instituting practical measures in a real-life situation at the time, given the dire straits that widows were reduced to in that culture, to ensure that this category of needy people was not overlooked.
- 14.7.2 Hermeneutic option 2:** By analogy with the widows in 1 Timothy 5:9-10 female congregants can be officially appointed to do charitable work in the diaconal field without being ordained to the diaconate.
- 14.7.3 Hermeneutic option 3:** 1 Timothy 5 gives no indication whether or not women may serve in ordained ministries.

Chapter 15

EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUSIS OF ROMANS 16:1-2

Greek UBS ⁴	NRSV	NIV
<p>Συνίστημι δὲ ὑμῖν Φοῖβην τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν, οὕσαν [καὶ] διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κενχρεαῖς, ² ἵνα αὐτὴν προσδέξησθε ἐν κυρίῳ ἁγίως τῶν ἁγίων καὶ παραστήτε αὐτῇ ἐν ᾧ ἂν ὑμῶν χρῆσις πράγματι· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὴ προστάτις πολλῶν ἐγενήθη καὶ ἐμοῦ αὐτοῦ.</p>	<p>16 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, ² so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.</p>	<p>16 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. ² I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me.</p>

15.1 Argument of Romans

The letter opens with the usual (albeit unusually long) salutation (1:1-7). It is followed by thanksgiving, in which Paul thanks God for the faithful in Rome (1:8-12). In 1:3-17 he gives a preamble to the main argument and indicates the theme of the letter (1:16-17). Paul then reasons that every one – Jew and gentile alike – is guilty before God (1:18 - 3:20), but that God graciously absolves those who believe (3:21 - 4:25). In chapters 5-8 he explains that, having been justified, believers are new human beings. In chapters 9-11 he clarifies the position of the Jewish people. Then he deals with various practical facets of Christian life (12:1 - 15:13). He communicates some news, inter alia his intention to visit Rome (15:14-33), sends greetings to a number of people and gives a few final instructions (16:1-23). The letter concludes with an eulogy (16:25-27).

Hence the passage focused on in this chapter, 16:1-2, is the start of the greetings and final instructions at the end of the letter.

15.2 Origin of Romans

Paul addressed this letter to the faithful in Rome. He had never been to Rome himself, neither had any of the other apostles. The Christians in Rome probably came from elsewhere, where they had been converted, and settled in that city. Possibly some of

them had been among the crowd that was converted in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2:10). Itinerant preachers like Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2; Rom 16:3-5) probably visited the faithful in Rome as well and ministered to them. Paul wrote the letter while still in Corinth, hence towards the end of his third missionary journey shortly before his return to Jerusalem (Acts 20:3; Rom 15:25; 16:1). He had various objectives in writing the letter: he wanted to encourage them and especially to introduce himself and his preaching. Consequently the letter gives a lucid, comprehensive exposition of Paul's way of proclaiming the gospel. His self-introduction was for a particular purpose: he was planning to work in Rome and further west, as far as Spain.

15.3 First readers of the Letter to the Romans and their world

Rome in AD 56 was a bustling metropolis with an estimated 1 to 1.5 million residents. The population was fairly cosmopolitan, including some 60 000 Jews. At the time when Paul wrote the letter (AD 55-56) Nero was emperor (54-68). The early years of Nero's reign was a golden age in the history of the Roman empire. Later (AD 64) Nero was to accuse Christians of causing a fire that destroyed large parts of the city. This marked the beginning of the imperially sanctioned persecution of Christians.

We do not know when or by whom the gospel was first preached in Rome. It seems unlikely that the church was founded by Paul, Peter or one of the other apostles, but it must have been before AD 49, for the Roman historian Suetonius reports, in his biography of the emperor Claudius, that the latter had banished all the Jews from Rome for constantly causing riots instigated by the agitator Chrestus. The emperor's decree is reflected in the Bible when Paul encountered Priscilla and Aquila (who had to flee Rome following the imperial decree) in Corinth (Acts 18:2).

Acts 2:10 mentions that people from Rome were present in Jerusalem at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Hence the first 3000 converts may have included founder members of the church in Rome. The lengthy list of greetings in Romans 16 (before Paul had ever been to Rome) could indicate a dynamic migration process within the Roman empire, as a result of which Christians from other churches joined the congregation in Rome. Nine of the names on the list of greetings also feature in Paul's other letters.

The church in Rome comprised mainly gentile converts, although there were probably quite a number of Jewish Christians. Many of these were likely to have been people of gentile stock that had first embraced Judaism and eventually became Christians. That would account for Paul's lengthy discussion of the Jewish faith in the letter to the Romans (9:1-11:32), as well as the divisions in the church in regard to food and feast days (14:1-15:13).

15.4 Relevant exegesis of Romans 16:1-2

In his long list of greetings starting in Romans 16:1 Paul names people with whom he was personally acquainted. The list reveals Christians' helpfulness to one another, the ties of love that held them together and the important role that believers of every cultural background and gender played in the church.

Phoebe was probably the messenger who carried the letter to the Romans. She would be delivering the letter in Rome, which was why Paul included a brief testimonial about her life.

The word for deacon (διάκονος) here is the masculine form, indicating that it is used in a 'technical' (generic) sense.¹⁵⁹ In Greek the phrase 'a deacon/servant' (οὗσαν διάκονον) is used as a static indication of diaconal status rather than a reference to diaconal activity. The connection between her status and the church in Cenchrea (οὗσαν διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κενχρεαῖς) probably puts the reference to Phoebe as a διάκονος outside the context of purely personal ministry. Paul also refers to her as a benefactor (NRSV) (προστίτις), derived from the same root as the word προίστημι, which in Romans 12:8 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12 denotes leadership and overseeing. The designation probably indicates that her role as διάκονος represented a recognised ministry.¹⁶⁰

In the New Testament, however, the word διάκονος can refer to virtually any form of ministry: ordinary waiters (Luke 10:40; John 2:5,9), Christ as διάκονος of the Jews (Rom 15:8), Paul as διάκονος of Christ (Rom 1:1), Paul and Apollos both as διάκονοι of God and his church (1 Cor 3:5). Timothy (1 Thess 3:2), Tychicus (Col 4:7) and Epaphras (Col 1:7), too, are identified as διάκονος. None of them (as far as we know not even Tychicus and Epaphras) were ordained deacons. Of the more than 30 incidences of the word διάκονος in the New Testament only four refer to the ordained ministry of deacons (Phlp 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8,12,13).

Thus it is not clear whether Phoebe was an ordained deaconess in the Corinthian church (whence Paul wrote this letter). But she did minister in the adjacent congregation of Cenchrea, a harbour city just east of Corinth. Paul himself was a beneficiary of her ministry.

¹⁵⁹ The Greek word διάκονος is both masculine and feminine. It does not have a feminine form διακόνῃ. To refer to a female in that capacity the feminine form of the article is used: ἡ διάκονος (cf Liddell & Scott's Lexicon).

¹⁶⁰ As a διάκονος she could have ministered to the church of Cenchrea as part of the category of women mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:11. The fact that she was a προστίτις ('benefactor') to many people, including Paul himself, tallies with a facet of the potential ministry of widows according to 1 Timothy 5:10 ("helping those in trouble"); but also see the different interpretations of 1 Timothy 5:10 above. Thus Phoebe could have been a widow in the church of Cenchrea who offered hospitality to indigent Christians, maybe to travellers in transit like Paul as well, and protected them against antagonistic people.

15.5 Conclusion

Women like Phoebe occupied an honoured position in the early churches. Neither Romans 16 nor any other New Testament passage proves that women conducted ordained ministries. Hence it is unlikely (but not impossible) that Phoebe was a deacon in the technical sense of the word.

15.6 Application to gender in ordained ministries

The information about Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2 is too scanty to provide grounds for any conclusion about women in the (diaconal) ministry.

But to determine the role of gender in calling people to ordained ministries in our day and age it is not crucial to know whether or not Phoebe was a deacon in the technical sense. An approach that requires her proven diaconal status as grounds for admitting present-day women to the diaconate would amount to an application of the regulatory principle (cf 3.2.3.1.1).

Chapter 16

EXEGETIC AND HERMENEUTIC CONCLUSIONS

Below we give a summary of the exegetic and hermeneutic conclusions (16.1) and then, on the basis of these, two broad conclusions about gender in ordained ministries (16.2).

16.1 Summary of exegetic and hermeneutic conclusions

Below we summarise the exegetic conclusions of each component of the book. This is followed by a synopsis of the hermeneutic conclusions in the form of the implications of the respective conclusions for gender in ordained ministries.

16.1.1 Old Testament data (cf 5.6)

In the Old Testament gender plays a role in the 'offices' of prophet, priest and king:

- **Priest:** There is no evidence that women ministered as legitimate priests of the Lord. This lack of evidence in itself does not shed much light on the issue of gender in ordained ministries, although it could have some implications.
- **Prophet:** There is evidence that women acted as prophets. This could have implications for the question of gender in ordained ministries.
- **King:** While there is no evidence that women ruled as legitimate kings, there are a few references to women occupying leadership positions. This could have implications for the issue of gender in ordained ministries.

The Old Testament ministries of king, prophet and priest cannot simply be identified or correlated with the respective New Testament ministries of elder, minister of the Word and deacon. Christ in a sense consummated the ministries of king, prophet and priest.

This means that there is no direct connection. But there is an indirect link in the sense that the ordained ministries in the New Testament church contained elements of the

Old Testament ministries of prophet, priest and king. Here the revelation-historical connection between the Old and the New Testament plays a major role.

16.1.2 Women in the Gospels (cf 6.9)

In keeping with Jesus' conduct towards women, they may not be regarded or treated as inferior to men. This equality does not necessarily mean that the Lord assigned men and women the same vocation and task.

It implies that appraisal of biblical data on Jesus' dealings with women is not decisive when it comes to the question whether present-day women may be called to ordained ministries.

16.1.3 Ephesians 5:21-33 (cf 7.5 and 7.6)

Paul treats the commandment on female submissiveness as a practical corollary of Christ's headship of his body, the church (Eph 1:22; 5:23). He repeatedly highlights the implications of Christ's headship:

- Christ is proclaimed sole *Kurios* in the marital relationship, in that husbands and wives should submit to each other *out of reverence for Christ* (Eph 5:21).
- The submission that wives owe their husbands is qualified in two ways: (1) it must be modelled on the church's submission to Christ, and (2) it must be understood in terms of (and as the counterpart to) the injunction to husbands to love their wives as Christ loves his bride, the church.
- The husband's headship over his wife must mirror Christ's headship over the church, in that he allows himself to be 'crucified' for her and feeds and cares for her. If a wife is more gifted than her husband in certain areas, she should be able to exercise her gifts to the full in a manner that does not cast doubt on her recognition of her husband's headship.

Thus Paul showed that marriage is a palpable illustration of Christ's headship over his church. Over time his instructions also helped to put an end to the prevailing societal code regarding marriage with its denigration of wives.

Ephesians 5:21-33 does not permit any direct inference regarding women's admission to ordained ministries. It does, however, show how Christ's headship over his church determines wives' conduct towards their husbands, and vice versa (cf 1.1.6.10). Secondly, it shows that husbands' and wives' marital roles are not interchangeable, but entail a restriction on wives: they may not become heads over their husbands. There is also a restriction on the husband: his headship over his wife should be modeled on Christ's headship over the church.

The implications are as follows:

- The distinctive injunctions to husbands and wives cannot be transposed directly to women's functions in the church. Yet in the overall framework of revelation history regarding the ecclesiastic functioning of men and women it provides valuable supplementary evidence. In this regard it should be noted that a wife's relation to her head/Head in Ephesians 5:21-35 locates her marital role squarely *within the framework of God's kingdom* (Christ's headship). This is highly relevant when interpreting other, related scriptural data.
- The fact that husbands' headship and wives' submission should be modelled on the relation between Christ, the head, and his body, the church has the following implications:
 - The husband's leadership of his wife should be loving, caring and self-effacing, just like Christ's leadership of the church. Hence the requirement of loving conduct in imitation of Christ limits the husband's leadership, a limitation he has to accept in loving submission.
 - The wife's submission is not slavish subordination. She must have scope to exercise her gifts to the full. Yet, just as the church in loving submission to Christ wholeheartedly refrains from usurping his position, so wives should act in marriage. A wife should exercise her gifts in a manner that shows that she acknowledges and takes account of her husband's headship. Hence there are limitations on wives' exercise of their gifts, which they should accept in loving submission. Ephesians 5 does not tell us what these limitations are, but they are dealt with in other scriptural passages.

16.1.4 1 Peter 3:1-7 (cf 8.5 and 8.6)

The pericope 1 Peter 3:1-7 gives an application of the general instructions for marriage (cf Eph 5 and Col 3) in specific circumstances: (1) a wife's duty when her husband is unjust (and/or non-Christian) is to preach to him without words, simply by her lifestyle, and (2) a husband's duty to his wife in a society where discrimination against women is accepted as common practice is not to look down on her but to honour her, because he knows that before God they are co-heirs to life.

The principles involved are clear: (1) If God gives you an instruction about your relationship to your spouse, obedience to that command should not depend on your spouse's behaviour towards you. (2) Any licence society gives for unjust treatment of your marriage partner does not give you the right to do so; God requires you to demonstrate your co-heirship to life before him by honouring your (weaker) partner.

It seems that God the Holy Spirit guided Peter the writer not merely to instruct marriage partners on their relationship with each other in and in spite of the sinful society in which they lived, but also to lay down principles which in due course would lead marriage partners not to consider each other inferior in any way.

These inferences have the following implications:

- 1 Peter 3:1-7 does not permit a direct inference on whether or not women may serve in ordained ministries. It does indicate how wives and husbands should behave to each other.
- The fact that husband and wife are assigned different roles in marriage cannot be transposed directly to women's functions in the church.
- The instruction to husbands to treat their wives considerately affirms the injunction in Ephesians 5:25 that his leadership in marriage should be loving, caring and self-effacing. Indeed, 1 Peter 3:7 reinforces that injunction: in his leadership he should also treat his wife respectfully.
- The accentuation of Christian husbands' and wives' co-heirship to life concurs with the evidence in Galatians 3:28 that in Christ man and woman are one and share equally in God's gracious covenant. 1 Peter 3:7 tells us nothing about the exercise of the wife's gifts. For that we have to consult other scriptural passages.

16.1.5 Galatians 3:26-29 (cf 9.6 and 9.7)

The two binary pairs – slave/free person and male/female – underscore the point that *everyone* who believes in Jesus Christ shares in the promise made to Abraham. Galatians 3:28 has special significance for the interpretation of scriptural passages dealing with relations between husband and wife. Passages that posit that (i) the husband is the wife's head (cf eg Eph 5; 1 Cor 11), (ii) wives should submit to their husbands (cf eg 1 Cor 14; Eph 5; Col 3:18), and (iii) wives should keep quiet (cf eg 1 Cor 14; 1 Tim 2) would contradict Galatians 3:28 if they are taken to indicate that wives do not share in Christ's salvation along with their husbands. *Everyone* who believes in Christ – including women – shares in the promise to Abraham.

This interpretation means that Galatians 3:26-29 does not deal with the issue of women's admission to ordained ministries. It does clarify that in Christ all believers, including women, share in the covenantal promises to Abraham. In view of this one may ask whether any distinction between men and women in any other area – including ordained ministries in the church – is justified. But Galatians 3:26-29 does not answer that question.

16.1.6 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (cf 10.5 and 10.6)

There is some consensus on the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. The following conclusions are unanimous:

- The pericope concerns the husband's fundamental headship.
- The wife's position in relation to the husband is not a humble one but is in fact glorious and God-given.
- Men and women need one another in the church and neither is superior to the other.
- The fact that women prayed and prophesied in church gatherings shows that they were not totally forbidden to speak during church services.
- The pericope gives no indication that women who prayed and prophesied were in an ordained ministry.

Whether these concessions include admission to ordained ministries is a matter of dispute:

- Hermeneutic option 1 concludes that it is permissible – provided she does not through her ministry cast doubt on her acknowledgment of her husband's headship.
- Hermeneutic option 2 concludes that 1 Corinthians 11 does not clinch the question of women's admission to ordained ministries, since the prayer and prophecy referred to in the pericope involve congregants' participation rather than activities of persons in ordained ministries.
- There is a third hermeneutic option: the praying and prophesying refer to women's activities outside church gatherings (cf 11.4.1.1); hence the pericope does not testify to the conduct of persons in ordained ministries.

16.1.7 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 (cf 11.6 and 11.7)

There is consensus that in Corinth women prophesied, prayed, talked and spoke in tongues during church services, hence that the injunction to keep quiet (14:34-35) does not indicate total silence; λαλεῖν (14:34) refers to a qualified 'speech'.

There are two viewpoints on what this 'qualified speech' entails, the consensus being that both views are warranted and exegetically tenable:

- According to the first view the prohibition of λαλεῖν (14:34) is a prohibition of evaluating prophecies. Thus the instruction to women to keep quiet during

church services means that they may not participate in the evaluation of prophecies during public worship. This view implies that in terms of 1 Corinthians 14:34 women may not be admitted to an ordained ministry that entails overseeing, since evaluation of prophecies is part of elders' supervision of sound doctrine and is therefore peculiar to their ministry (cf 1.1.6.6).

- According to the second view λαλεῖν (14:34) refers to women's way of asking questions during church assemblies, thus casting doubt on their husbands' headship. This view implies that the pericope does not answer the question about women's admission to ordained ministries. The inference, however, is that if women are admitted to ordained ministries, they must conduct them in a manner that casts no doubt on their acknowledgment of their husbands' headship.

16.1.8 1 Timothy 2:8-15 (cf 12.6 and 12.7)

There are two interpretations of the relevance of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 to the issue of gender in ordained ministries, the consensus being that both are warranted and exegetically tenable:

- **Hermeneutic option 1:** In view of the special position assigned to them, women, unlike men, should not proclaim the Word, teach or exercise authority in church services. These tasks – teaching (proclaiming the Word) and exercising authority – are assigned to overseers/elders (1 Tim 3:1,30). The implication of this interpretation is that women may not be admitted to any ordained ministry that entails authority or leadership (cf 1.1.6.6).
- **Hermeneutic option 2:** In 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Paul deals with men's and women's behaviour generally and specifically in marriage and is not primarily concerned about their behaviour in church services. In this pericope he gives positive precepts for marital relations in rebuttal of the false doctrine about marriage that was preached in Ephesus. Like other scriptural passages, the pericope stresses the husband's headship and requires wives to acknowledge it. The implication of this interpretation is that 1 Timothy 2:8-15 does not deal with ordained ministries. What the pericope does imply is that wives may in no way – even when conducting an ordained ministry – cast doubt on their acknowledgment of their husbands' headship, just as husbands in their ministry must not cast doubt on their self-effacing love for their wives.

16.1.9 1 Timothy 3:1-16

1 Timothy 3 does not permit any inference about gender in ordained ministries.

16.1.10 1 Timothy 5:3-16

There are three interpretations of 1 Timothy 5:3-16 in respect of gender in ordained ministries, the consensus being that all of them are warranted and exegetically tenable:

- **Hermeneutic option 1:** Congregations should ensure that the necessary structures (or ordained ministries) are in place to take proper care of the 'needy' (like widows in 1 Timothy 5). The implication of this option is that the issue of gender in ordained ministries does not arise here, because in 1 Timothy 5 Paul was not making dogmatic, universally applicable pronouncements on ministries in which women can operate. He was merely introducing practical measures in a real-life contemporary situation, given the dire straits to which widows were reduced in that culture, to make sure that this category of needy people was not overlooked.
- **Hermeneutic option 2:** 1 Timothy 5:9-10 is evidence that women of good repute may be officially appointed to do charitable work in the church. Such women were not ordained to a special ministry (unlike deacons) but rendered services in the diaconal field. The implication of this option is that female congregants may be officially appointed, without ordination, to the diaconate to render services in the diaconal field.
- **Hermeneutic option 3:** Paul's reference to the listing of widows in 1 Timothy 5:9 indicates widows who need congregational care on a permanent basis. The implication of this option is that 1 Timothy 5 is not pertinent to the issue of women's admission to ordained ministries.

16.1.11 Romans 16:1-2

Women like Phoebe occupied a valued position in the early church. Neither Romans 16 nor any other New Testament passage proves that women served in ordained ministries. Hence it is unlikely (but not impossible) that Phoebe was a deacon in the technical sense of the word. The implication of this hermeneutic option is that the information about Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2 provides insufficient grounds for any inference about the admission of women to ordained ministries. But when determining the role of gender in calling people to ordained ministries in our time it is not crucially important to know whether or not Phoebe was a deacon in the technical sense of the word. Any view that requires proof of Phoebe's (non-)deaconship as a basis for admitting present-day women to the diaconate would amount to an application of the 'regulatory principle' (cf 3.2.3.1.1).

16.2 Conclusion about gender in ordained ministries

16.2.1 Revelation-historical summary

1. At the time of creation God declared man and woman equal, the differentiation being that the man should be the leader and the woman his fitting helpmeet. According to one view this creation order applies to men and women generally, according to the other it applies only to marriage.
2. At the time of the fall the man shirked his headship and the woman wrongfully assumed leadership. As a result of the fall male headship tends to domination and women, instead of being submissive, tend to aspire to authority over men.
3. God reveals that, in addition to the ministry of all believers, he also provides for special ministries in his church and calls people to exercise them.
4. Nobody has any natural endowment (including gender) that qualifies her or him for an ordained ministry.
5. The Holy Spirit provides the right gifts for the church at the right time.
6. The Holy Spirit bestows these gifts as he pleases.
7. The Holy Spirit still provides the necessary gifts to serve in ordained ministries to this day. Not everyone endowed with these gifts is called by God to enter the ordained ministries.
8. The scriptural principles for the relationship between husband and wife have implications for the issue of gender in ordained ministries. According to one interpretation God reveals that women are not called to ordained ministries but should apply their gifts in other ways. According to another interpretation God reveals that gender plays no role in the calling to enter an ordained ministry.

16.2.2 Headship as a major theme in revelation history

In addition to the foregoing broad revelation-historical lines, the following themes in revelation history are pertinent to a study of gender in the Bible.

16.2.2.1 Christ's headship as point of departure

The basic premise of this study is that Christ, the sole head of the church, calls people to ordained ministries and through them administers his rule over the church (cf 1.1.6.5 and 1.1.6.9; also cf Belgic Confession Art 31). This basic premise should also be reflected in the way ordained ministries are organised and function in the church. Throughout they should be organised and function in a manner that leaves no doubt that Christ is the sole head of his church. The same applies to gender in ordained ministries.

The Lord reveals in Scripture that the male-female relationship (gender) epitomises Christ's headship in a special way.

16.2.2.2 Headship in marriage

The headship of Christ is revealed most clearly in Ephesians 5:21-33. In Ephesians 5 we learn that the relationship between husband and wife is a visible demonstration of Christ's relationship to his church (cf 7.5). "The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church" (Eph 5:23), and "as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything".

Ephesians 5:31 indicates that the man's headship over the woman was instituted by God at the time of creation. The fact that "a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife" (Gen 2:24) shows that the man acts as the leader in starting a new family that will fall under his headship (cf 5.3.3). Hence male headship in marriage is a God-given datum. He is the one who should assume leadership in marriage. The wife's role as helpmeet (Gen 2:18) is likewise God-given. She is the one who has to complement her husband physically, mentally and emotionally (cf 5.3.1) and submit to his leadership (Eph 5:22).

But the fact that the husband is the head and the wife the fitting helpmeet does not make either party superior or inferior. In Christ both husband and wife are equally children of God and as such co-heirs to the covenantal promises (Gal 3:38; 1 Pet 3:7). Still the male remains the head and the female the helpmeet and the two roles are not interchangeable. The husband's headship does not imply domination, however, nor does the wife's status as helpmeet entail slavish submission. It was already evident at the time of creation that the man's headship entailed loving leadership (cf 5.3.3). Ephesians 5:25 re-emphasises such loving leadership by admonishing men to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave his life for her.

But at the fall the woman wrongfully assumed leadership and the man shirked his headship by following her guidance (cf 5.4.1). This fact, implicit in Genesis 3:6-13, is spelled out explicitly in 1 Timothy 2:14. Thus the consequences of the fall directly affected the husband-wife relationship. Because of sin the husband's headship tends towards a lust for power, and the wife wants to take over her husband's leadership position (cf 5.4.2).¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ When dealing with the issue of gender in ordained ministries the consequences of sin should be a major consideration and all parties must subject themselves to constant self-examination. Is leadership in ordained ministries truly modelled on Christ's headship, or does it display features of a lust for power? In how far can the zeal of women who seek admission to ordained ministries be ascribed to a desire to take over men's leadership position? Also, in how far can the zeal of men who oppose women's admission to ordained ministries be ascribed to a male tendency to lust for power?

16.2.2.3 Headship in church gatherings

1 Corinthians 11:3-15 touches on a new dimension of headship. God is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of every man; the man is the head of the woman (1 Cor 11:3). 1 Corinthians 11 indicates that the authority relationship between God and Christ the mediator and head of the new humankind in church gatherings should be mirrored in the relationship between husband and wife (cf 10.4.2.2). Thus a woman whose conduct in church services casts doubt on male headship is casting doubt on God's authority (cf 10.4.5). The same applies to men whose conduct casts doubt on their self-effacing love for their wives: they fail to honour their head, who is Christ. But when women's behaviour attests acknowledgment of male headship good order prevails in church assemblies, so that even the angels rejoice (cf 10.4.6). Likewise, when men's exercise of their headship attests their self-effacing love of their wives good order will prevail in congregational gatherings.

How should a woman attest her acknowledgment of male headship in church services?

This question is answered in different ways. Hermeneutic option 1 concludes that it concerns relations between all men and all women, whereas Hermeneutic option 2 concludes that it concerns husbands' and wives' marital relationship. On the basis of this difference the ensuing conclusions also differ.

For the sake of an overview these two conclusions are juxtaposed in two columns.

Hermeneutic option 1	Hermeneutic option 2
1 Corinthians 11 cites a highly specific, culturally oriented code of conduct; a woman must cover her head when praying or prophesying (cf 10.4.1). 1 Timothy 2:8-15, which also deals with male and female conduct in church services (cf 12.4.2.2), ¹⁶² prescribes another code based on God's order of creation and the fall rather than on cultural usage (cf 12.4.2.4.3). The instruction is that she may not teach in church services or exercise authority over men	<p>The fact that husbands and wives are given differential tasks (eg Eph 5, Col 3, 1 Pet 3) cannot be transposed directly to women's functioning in the church. Full exercise of her gifts does not contradict Ephesians 5 – provided her conduct does not cast doubt on her acknowledgment of her husband's headship.</p> <p>The fact that male headship and female submission should be modelled on the relation between Christ, the head, and his body, the church, implies that a woman should have scope to exercise her gifts in</p>

¹⁶² In this possible conclusion the assumption, like that of most exegetes, is that 1 Timothy 2:8-15 deals with church gatherings (cf 10.4.2.2).

<p>(cf 12.4.2.4.2). Like 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Timothy 2 does not deal only with husbands and wives but concerns all men and women (cf 12.4.2.5).</p>	<p>every sphere – including ordained ministries – with due regard to her husband's headship. The same applies to 1 Corinthians 11 (women's conduct in church services) and 1 Peter 3:7 (women's co-heirship to life). These scriptural passages attest that there must be scope for women to exercise their gifts in every sphere – including ordained ministries – while recognising their husbands' headship. 1 Timothy 2:8-15, which deals with male and female conduct generally and specifically in marriage (cf 12.4.3.1-7), indicates that women should in no way – even when functioning in ordained ministries – cast doubt on their acknowledgment of their husbands' headship.</p>
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16.2.3 Practical implications

Hermeneutic option 1	Hermeneutic option 2
<p>16.2.3.1(1) Implications in a nutshell In order to recognise male headship in word and deed female congregants should not serve in the ordained ministries of elders and ministers of the Word. This does not mean that they are completely forbidden to teach or exercise leadership. But in public worship services women are specifically forbidden to teach.</p> <p>Inasmuch as diaconal ministry entails congregational leadership women, in deference to male headship, should not serve as deacons either. Female congregants can exercise their charitable gifts in orderly fashion in the diaconal field without being called or ordained as deacons. Like the widows in 1 Timothy 5:9, the diaconate can put them on a list of</p>	<p>16.2.3.1(2) Implications in a nutshell Gender per se is not decisive for eligibility to ordained ministries. Scriptural data present no prohibition or impediment to the election of female believers to ordained ministries – provided married woman do not cast legitimate doubt on their acknowledgment of their husbands' headship in the conduct of their ministry, just as men may not cast doubt on their self-effacing love of their wives through their conduct in every sphere.</p>

<p>ministering women who render special charitable services in the church under the leadership of the diaconate. However, if diaconal ministry is modified in a way that excludes leadership, the chief objection to female deacons falls away.</p>	
<p>16.2.3.2(1) Regarding the ministry of elders and ministers of the Word</p> <p>What is the practical implication of the prohibition of women teaching in church assemblies and exercising authority over men? To answer the question one first has to answer a second one: whose task is it to teach in church services and exercise authority over the congregation? According to scriptural passages like 1 Timothy 3:1,3 and 5:17 (cf 1.1.3.3.2.1) the tasks of teaching (proclaiming the Word) and rule (exerting authority over the church) are assigned specifically to overseers/elders and ministers of the word (cf 1.1.3.2.2). It implies that female congregants should not serve in these two ordained ministries if they are to acknowledge male headship in word and deed.</p> <p>But it does not mean that women are forbidden to teach and exercise leadership altogether. Scripture, after all, contains sufficient evidence of women who did teach: Priscilla and Aquila together instructed Apollos (Acts 18:26); in Titus 2:3 older women are told to teach younger ones; according to Colossians 3:16 all believers must teach and admonish one another. But 1 Timothy 2:8-15 deals with conduct during church services. Hence what is specifically forbidden is for women to teach <i>in the church's public worship</i>. Thus female congregants endowed with a</p>	<p>16.2.3.2(2) Regarding the ministry of elders and ministers of the Word</p> <p>The fact that the man has headship over his wife does not prevent her from serving in an ordained ministry, since the exercise of that ministry does not mean that she dominates. She merely, like her husband, ministers Christ's headship in and to the church. In relation to her husband she still respects his leadership in their conjugal life – otherwise she does not qualify. The same applies to husbands: if they do not manage their households properly (love their wives self-effacingly and guide the household lovingly according to Christ's example), they do not qualify.</p> <p>Hence the answer to the question of how wives should acknowledge their husbands' headship is this: by publicly (eg in church) behaving in such a way that no one can legitimately infer that they do <i>not</i> accept his headship. Even if a woman is a minister of the Word or an elder, she should still rate her husband's love, guidance and teaching, comfort and protection highly and must continue to honour and obey him just as the church submits to Christ.¹⁶³</p>

¹⁶³ The marriage liturgy enjoins the woman to love, honour and obey her husband in everything that is right and just (*Psalmboek*, 2003:153).

gift for teaching should continue to exercise their gifts in the church, for instance in catechesis, youth work and leadership of younger women.

That the instruction to women to keep quiet excludes them from the ministry of elders is also confirmed by 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 forbids women to speak in church services, but – in contrast to 1 Timothy 2:11-12 – the prohibition occurs specifically in the context of evaluation of prophecies (cf 11.4.1.2). Thus women may not participate in the evaluation of prophecies. Here it should be kept in mind that evaluation of prophecies, that is supervising the soundness of doctrine, forms part of the ministry of overseers/elders (cf 1.1.3.3.2.1). Hence 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 affirms that female congregants should not serve in the ordained ministry of elders.

The prohibition of λαλεῖν (14:34) in 1 Corinthians 14:34 refers to women's way of asking questions during church services, thus casting doubt on their husbands' headship (cf 11.4.2.1-3). The pericope in itself does not clinch the issue of women's admission to ordained ministries. But if women may serve in ordained ministries on the basis of other scriptural passages, 1 Corinthians 14 implies that they must do so in such a manner that nobody may legitimately infer – given the conventions of the evolutionary phase of that culture – that they do *not* accept their husbands' headship.

16.2.3.3(1) Regarding the ministry of deacons

What does a deacon's ministry entail? Can female congregants serve as deacons? In answering the question the following points are relevant:

- Deacons are called to a ministry of charity, not to that of teaching or ruling. Hence diaconal service as such does not involve exercise of authority or, if you will, 'headship'. That would mean that the command to women to keep quiet in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 does not prevent them from entering the diaconal ministry.
- There is good scriptural evidence of women who were active in the

16.2.3.3(2) Regarding the ministry of deacons

Gender as such plays no decisive role in eligibility for ordained ministries, including that of deacons. The condition continues to apply: in their conduct of their ministry wives should cast no doubt on their acknowledgment of their husbands' headship.

That is confirmed by 1 Timothy 5:3-16. The pericope indicates that a congregation should ensure that the necessary structures (or ordained ministries) are in place to see to it that proper care is taken of the 'needy' (eg widows in 1 Timothy 5;

<p>diaconal field, for example Phoebe (cf 15.4) and the ministering widows in 1 Timothy 5 (cf 14.4.2).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yet the Bible provides no direct evidence of women who served as deacons (cf 13.4.3). <p>On the other hand the study of church polity showed that deacons also had the task of initiating, coordinating and managing mutual aid and fellowship in the church, and of training people for these tasks (cf 1.1.3.3.2.3.2). Hence their ministry includes some measure of leadership. This is affirmed by the ordination formulary which calls on the congregation to be guided by the deacons in practising the communion of saints. Thus deacons are not merely personally in charge of charitable work in the congregation but also guide and manage the church in performing it.</p>	<p>cf 14.4.1.1-4).¹⁶⁴ Gender does not feature in this. In 1 Timothy 5 Paul is not issuing dogmatic, always applicable proclamations on ministries to which women may be admitted. He was merely instituting practical measures in a real-life contemporary situation, given the dire straits to which women may be reduced in that culture, to ensure that this category of needy people is not overlooked.</p> <p>The information about Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2 confirms this. The information is insufficient to permit any conclusion about women in ordained ministries (cf 15.4). But to determine what role gender should play in calling people to ordained ministries it is not crucially important to know whether Phoebe was a deacon in the technical sense of the word. Any view that requires proof of Phoebe's (non-)diaconship as a basis for admitting present-day women to the diaconate would amount to an application of the 'regulatory principle' (cf 3.2.3.1.1).</p>
<p>16.2.3.4(1) Practical consequences In practice there are two possible routes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Female congregants' gifts of charity can be exercised in an orderly fashion in the diaconal field without calling and ordaining these women as deacons. Like the widows in 1 Timothy 5:9 the diaconate can put them on a list of ministering women who perform special charitable work in the church under the leadership of the diaconate.¹⁶⁵ 	<p>16.2.3.4(2) Practical consequences</p> <p>In congregations where it can happen peacefully and constructively, church members who qualify in other respects may be called and ordained in ministries irrespective of gender.¹⁶⁷</p> <p>Women who have an inner call to the ordained ministries and meet the</p>

¹⁶⁴ It could also be that Paul's reference to widows that should be listed (1Tim 5:9) concerns widows who needed the church's care on a permanent basis.

¹⁶⁵ Following Calvin, such ministering women may be called 'deaconesses'.

<p>2) Deacons' ministry must be modified so as to get rid of all managerial tasks. This would entail amending the ordination formulary for deacons in this respect and making a special arrangement in regard to Article 38 of the Church Order.¹⁶⁶ If leadership does not (or ceases to) form part of the diaconal ministry, the chief objection to female congregants serving in that capacity falls away. As long as women do not assume leadership in the church, after all, they acknowledge male headship and hence Christ's headship of the church.</p>	<p>requirements in other respects can and may qualify themselves for it by way of further study.¹⁶⁸</p>
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¹⁶⁶ Article 38 reads inter alia: "If the number of elders is small, deacons may be counted as members of the church council by way of a local arrangement" [our translation].

¹⁶⁷ Here, as always, the biblical principle that church unity should take priority over the actualisation of personal gifts must be taken into account.

¹⁶⁸ The inner call should be confirmed by an external call. That happens after sincere prayer, thorough investigation, according to the availability of gifts, the needs of the ministry, peculiar circumstances and election by the church. Above all, it is God in his omnipotence and sovereignty that calls and uses people in his church. In the 1988 report the compilers, after meticulous study, put it as follows [our translation]: "It is the Lord who calls his servants and equips them with gifts of his Spirit to minister in his church and kingdom. As he did in the Old and possibly the New Testament church – albeit by way of exception – so in his omnipotence he can to this day call and use women in his service."

Chapter 17

IMPLICATIONS

This chapter first summarises the findings of the study (17.1). Then the points of agreement and disagreement are condensed and assessed (17.2), whereupon possible implications for churches are spelled out (17.3). This is followed by a final conclusion (17.4)

17.1 Introduction

The study that we conducted yielded the following findings:

1. Regarding relevant aspects of church polity there is agreement on the following points: the origin, nature, essential components, purpose, substance and authority of ordained ministries, as well as the distinction between general and ordained ministries and between ordained ministries and $\chi\alpha\rho\acute{\iota}\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$.
2. As far as scriptural premises are concerned, in terms of the Reformed confession there is full agreement that the Bible is God's word, is eternal and always applicable, is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and is temporally oriented but not time bound.
3. There is full consensus on the hermeneutic premises pertinent to the exegesis and hermeneusis.
4. Inferences regarding the 'offices' of prophet, priest and king in the Old Testament are unanimous.
5. Regarding the ministry of women according to the Gospels, there is full consensus that
 - o in imitation of Jesus' conduct towards women they may not be regarded or treated as inferior to men;
 - o this equality does not necessarily mean that the Lord assigned men and women the same calling and task;
 - o what the New Testament, particularly the Gospels, reveals about the ministry of women does not give a final answer to the question of women's admissibility to ordained ministries;

- the fact that Jesus did not call any woman to be one of his twelve disciples in itself does not give a final answer to the question of women's admissibility to ordained ministries;
- 5. There is consensus on the interpretation of the vast majority of New Testament scriptural passages that were explored exegetically and hermeneutically.
- 6. Three scriptural passages (1 Cor 14:26-35; 1 Tim 2:8-15; 3:3-16) were interpreted differently, but in terms of the presuppositions and premises all the interpretations are considered warranted and exegetically tenable. Hence the only difference of opinion concerns their exegetic persuasiveness.
- 7. One scriptural passage (1 Tim 3:1-16) can be interpreted in three different ways, but the passage itself does not contain sufficient information to make a definite choice between the three interpretations.
- 8. There are three views of how 1 Timothy 5:3-16 should be interpreted in respect of gender in ordained ministries. There is, however, full consensus that all three are warranted and exegetically tenable.
- 9. The final conclusions lead to different answers to the question of women's admissibility to ordained ministries.

17.2 Summary and assessment of points of agreement and difference

What follows is a condensation of the foregoing points of agreement and difference that emerged from the study.

17.2.1 Agreement

- There is full consensus on relevant aspects of church polity.
- There is full consensus on the scriptural and hermeneutic premises applied in the exegesis and hermeneusis.
- In the exegesis and hermeneusis conducted in accordance with the scriptural and hermeneutic premises and in terms of tenable exegesis there is broad consensus on what Scripture teaches about gender in ordained ministries.

Assessment of points of agreement

Although the study revealed a fair measure of consensus on the role of gender in ordained ministries, the question remains: does the consensus carry weight in the sense that it reflects unanimity on essential issues? The following points are clear:

1. When churches agree on scriptural and hermeneutic premises, as they do in this study, it indicates meaningful unity. In light of the reformed confession about Scripture and its interpretation (especially Belgic Confession Art 2-7) church unity would not be feasible if there were differences in this regard.
2. The interpretation of scriptural passages like Galatians 3:26-29, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and Romans 16:1-2 has a potential to cause major divisions in churches. However, when churches interpret the vast majority of relevant scriptural passages identically, as happened in this study, it offers a basis for meaningful unity.
3. Agreement on relevant aspects of church polity, as in this study, is equally essential for unity within and among churches. Differences regarding the origin, nature, essential components, purpose, substance and authority of ordained ministries, as well as the distinction between general and ordained ministries and between ordained ministries and $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ could easily cause major rifts.

17.2.2 Differences

- Agreement on relevant aspects of church polity did not issue in similar conclusions.
- Conducting the exegesis and hermeneusis on the foregoing premises and finding the exegesis and hermeneusis exegetically tenable did not lead to the same interpretation of all scriptural passages and the same conclusions about gender in ordained ministries.

Assessment of differences

It is important to assess not only the consensus outlined in this book, but also the differences.

1. The three passages on which there is disagreement in this study – 1 Corinthians 14, 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Timothy 5 – are focal in the interpretation of gender in ordained ministries. The fact that these passages are interpreted differently contributes substantially to the differing conclusions about the question of women's admissibility to ordained ministries. The question is, do these differences indicate dissension?
2. As for substantive differences, it was pointed out in 16.2.2.3 above that one interpretation regards the references to men and women in the relevant scriptural passages as applicable only to marriage (ie only to the relationship between a husband and his wife and a wife and her husband). The other interpretation concludes that the references to men and women in these scriptural passages also apply to men and women generally (ie that Scripture is laying down a principle for relations between men and women in general).

The difference of opinion relates directly to differing interpretations of the detailed exegesis of certain scriptural passages (especially 1 Cor 11 and 1 Tim 2). A further consequence is that the revelation-historical links between the relevant scriptural passages are understood differently.

The members of the research team agree that the differences do not result from different scriptural or hermeneutic premises, or from scientifically untenable exegesis. The only point of difference is the exegetic persuasiveness of the different interpretations. Differences about the persuasiveness of exegeses need not lead to dissension in the church.

17.3 Possible implications for churches

17.3.1 No contradictory truths in God's revelation

When exegetes conduct their research on the issue of women in ordained ministries in accordance with the previously defined premises and their exegesis is scientifically tenable,¹⁶⁹ yet they still arrive at different conclusions, can one accept that all these conclusions are correct? This raises the question whether there can be more than one truth.

The assumption in this study is that God's Word contains his revelation of the incontrovertible, immutable truth about him, his will and our way to salvation. God does not contradict himself in his Word, hence does not present two contradictory 'truths' on any issue.

When exegetes arrive at different interpretations of God's revelation on a particular issue, it could be attributed to the following:

- Scripture can only be expounded with the ability of discernment (the gift of interpretation [*donum interpretationis*]) that the Holy Spirit bestows. The sinfulness and deficiencies of human beings, including Christian scriptural exegetes, impair their ability to interpret purely according to the revelation. Despite all efforts at kenosis, exegetes interpret God's revelation arbitrarily. Hence they must continually and kenotically go back to Scripture in search of God's actual revelation.
- God's revelation on an issue is often given in such a way that it is illuminated from different angles in various scriptural passages. Hence it is important for exegetes not to study biblical passages in isolation, but wherever possible to scrutinise all relevant passages in their revelation-historical context. In that context certain scriptural passages are focal, whereas others are peripheral. Tracing the connecting lines in a way that gives access to God's revelation is part of the *donum*

¹⁶⁹ Cf definition of 'exegetically tenable' in section 4.2.

interpretationis, for which the Holy Spirit's guidance should constantly be invoked. Hence exegetes may keep disagreeing because

- they differ about the revelation-historical connecting lines in scriptural data;
- they have not taken all scriptural data (fully) into account.

In short: different exegetic findings simply confirm yet again that the exegesis is still incomplete.

- God's revelation is not meant to provide the (whole) answer on every issue. Hence there is a danger that Scripture may be stretched too far. If exegetes operating on the same scriptural and hermeneutic premises differ on whether certain scriptural passages are warranted and exegetically tenable, one must consider the possibility that on these points Scripture is being stretched too far. In that case church synods should not take decisions that sanction one interpretation and declare another interpretation heretical. Ultimately exegetic differences should not be a cause of dissension in churches. This also applies to the issue of gender in ordained ministries: churches must determine whether the differences are in fact exegetic.

17.3.2 The way ahead

17.3.2.1 Attitudes

- The endeavour to determine what Scripture teaches about gender in ordained ministries should clearly demonstrate everybody's awareness of their own sinfulness and weakness. It does not behove Christians engaged in this endeavour to label fellow Christians who differ from them or to foment factionalism. It is particularly inappropriate if those Christians take the aforementioned premises seriously and agree that their exegesis is exegetically tenable. Every believer should tell him/herself the following: "If I must acknowledge that I merely find somebody else's research exegetically less persuasive than my own, this should warn me to be extremely cautious in my appraisal."
- Self-searching and awareness of personal sinfulness and imperfection should also be a hallmark of all ecclesiastic and other meetings that decide on the issue of gender in ordained ministries.

17.3.2.2 Decision making

The study shows that Scripture says a great deal on the topic. We attempted to research all these scriptural pronouncements scientifically in accordance with the defined premises. If despite this the conclusions still differ, the second question to ask is whether the 'truth' of this matter can really be known. Can we truly know what God is revealing (eg) in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 and 5, scriptural passages that are

acknowledged in this study to be open to different interpretations? The answer to these questions is by no means clear-cut, since it entails both hermeneutic and scriptural issues.

- Hermeneutically it must be admitted that Bible readers' insight is clouded by sin (cf 2.2.5 above). While the Holy Spirit does illuminate the Bible reader's mind and thus guides it to knowledge of truth, the illumination occurs by way of continuing exegetic labour. That means that the relevant scriptural passages do not necessarily have more than one *meaning*, but that they can be *interpreted* in diverse ways. As long as exegesis fails to fathom the meaning of a biblical passage, it remains incomplete and the exegetes should persist prayerfully.
- As for the approach to Scripture, it must be recognised that Bible readers sometimes expect the Bible to pronounce on issues that fall outside its scope (cf 2.2.3). That would amount to stretching the Bible 'too far'. When there is no consensus on the interpretation of certain scriptural passages, exegetes should ask themselves whether they have not reached a point where the Bible is being stretched too far. In such cases – here: the study of gender in ordained ministries – they should prayerfully consider whether it is at all part of the scope of Scripture to provide information on gender in ordained ministries.

The following points may be pertinent to churches' reflection on gender in ordained ministries:

- The churches should work out carefully whether differences on the gender issue are a hermeneutic problem or one of stretching the Bible too far. That means asking themselves whether or not the issue of gender in ordained ministries falls within the scope of Scripture.¹⁷⁰
- If it should prove to fall within the scope of Scripture, it would mean that all existing decisions on gender in ordained ministries should be observed until such time as it has become clear what God's Word has revealed in that regard.
- If it should prove to fall outside the scope of Scripture, churches can stop looking for scriptural grounds. That would imply that future decisions on gender in ordained ministries should be taken purely with a view to proper order and upbuilding of churches, with due regard to the relevant ecclesiastic tradition.
- If the churches cannot clarify whether or not the matter falls within the scope of Scripture, they will need wisdom to organise the church in a manner that, humanly speaking, will entail minimum violation of God's will.

¹⁷⁰ It should be noted that no church in the reformed tradition has ever expressed any doubt that the issue of gender in ordained ministries falls wholly within the scope of Scripture.

- If it is agreed that every local church¹⁷¹ may deal with gender in ordained ministries as it sees fit, it may grieve God because church unity may be jeopardised.
- If female members are admitted to ordained ministries, it may grieve God because it seriously affects his church order (Christ the head's rule of his church via human beings, cf 1.1.6.9).
- If female members are not admitted to ordained ministries, it may grieve God because gifts that he bestowed for the benefit of his church (cf 1.1.6.12) are not utilised according to his intentions and Scripture is misused to keep female members out of ordained ministries.

17.4 Final conclusion

The authors of the book feel that this completes the task commissioned by the GTV. Our finding is that there is considerable unanimity among the three of us. Insofar as our formulation of our views (especially with the involvement of twelve additional persons) is representative of the GKSA, such unanimity shows that there are no grounds for dissension on this issue in the GKSA.

Such differences as exist do not concern scriptural, exegetic and hermeneutic premises. They are rather attributable to different appraisals of the exegetic persuasiveness of the viewpoints concerned. The churches' duty is to manage such differences as exist in their ranks responsibly and in dependence on the Lord.

¹⁷¹ Or classis, as is/was the practice in the CRCNA.

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"The book, **Male and female in the church: gender in the ordained ministries**, is a response to a specific assignment by the Reformed Theological Association (GTV), which commissioned the authors to probe the theological issue of women in ordained ministries in the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA). Fundamentally, therefore, it is a book about God... As such it represents an honest attempt to fathom the rich and complex nature of the Bible. The study creates scope for equal functioning of men and women in congregations, with differential ministries according to their various gifts. That in itself is an important milestone in an ongoing journey. However, women's voices are still conspicuously silent in the process, which probably limits its relevance. Nevertheless, may it invite both men and women to reflect anew on God's liberating, healing words all those centuries ago, and to respond courageously and joyously!"

Prof Dr Elna Mouton (Dean, Faculty of Theology,
University of Stellenbosch)



"**Male and female in the church: gender in the ordained ministries** is the product of a long, scientifically accountable process, in which diverse viewpoints in the GKSA regarding women in ordained ministries were thrashed out and pondered intensively by a group of leading theologians of these churches. The end product of their study is a balanced, useful work - the reader is lucidly and insightfully conducted through various aspects of the problem. That makes the book a worthwhile example of how Christians in search of truth, guided by the Spirit, can engage in and, more especially, remain in dialogue with one another. Differences all too often result in a laager mentality that does not tolerate other viewpoints. In this instance there is no 'laager', but rather an example of how mutual dialogue and respect help us to deal with thorny issues, on which opinions inevitably differ, in a way that induces wisdom and growth to spiritual maturity."

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