

THESIS ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE: SHOULD WOMEN REMAIN SILENT IN CHURCH?
AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS
14:34-35**

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A reexamination of Greco-Roman culture highlights that it was the accepted social code of honor and shame that determines the injunction to women in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. The injunction was culture specific and the “speech” branded “shameful” by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 was not sacred speech at all; Paul had allowed the exercise of sacred speech all through the contexts of the passage. It was the ordinary speech carried on by women in public gathering that was branded “shameful” because of the sexual implication of women’s public display. Women’s leadership is not the issue; rather, Paul’s motive was that “orderly management of the existing social codes ensures an orderly society.” Today that same cultural social code does not apply, as women freely have public roles in one capacity or the other.

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SHOULD WOMEN REMAIN SILENT IN CHURCH?
AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS
14:34-35

A thesis

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

by

Oluseyi Akinwande

July 2016

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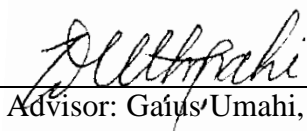
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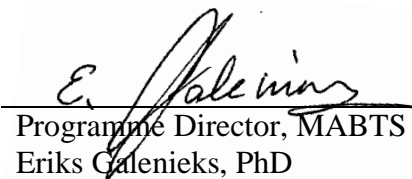
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Thomas R. Schreiner wrote that the role of women in the church is the most controversial and sensitive issue within evangelicalism today.¹ There is no doubt that this subject has generated intense and divisive debates which have resulted in significant changes in women's roles in the church in the last half century.

The text of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 is one of the texts from the New Testament often used as a major argument against women preaching; or teachings in the church.² Much has been written concerning women that have been attributed to Paul in 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35. This passage seems to deny women the right of speaking and playing active roles in church assembly.³

There has been a great deal of debate surrounding this passage and its history of interpretation is quite varied. This is a result as some claim, that Paul's command

¹Thomas R. Schreiner, "Women in Ministry", *Two Views on Women in Ministry* ed. J. Beck and C. Blomberg, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001) 177; see also Walker William O. "1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul's views regarding women," *Journal of the Biblical Literature* 94, no 1 (1975): 94-110.

²Angel Manuel Rodriguez, "1 Corinthians 14: 34, 35," *Biblical Research Institute*, accessed 11th July 2015, <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible-nt-texts/1-corinthians-1434-35> He argues that if that text is interpreted absolutely, women would basically disappear from the church. To him such an understanding of the text is not supported by the Bible; see also Patrick Stitt, "Women in Leadership Examined in 1 Corinthians," *American Journal of Biblical Theology*, accessed 30 March 2016, <http://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/StittP02.pdf> He argues that 1 Cor. 14: 34, 35 are harsh and extremely restricting that, if taken literally, interdict all women preachers, evangelists and worship leaders.

³K. A. Gerberding, "Women Who Toil in Ministry, Even as Paul," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 18, no. 4 (1991): 285-91.

for women to be silent in the church assembly in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 intrudes the flow of discussion and that it is also contrary to his instruction in 11: 5 where he speaks of women praying and prophesying.⁴ Therefore, the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is seen by many commentators as a “Corinthians quote” that is, Paul is quoting the view held by some people in Corinthian Church that are trying to silence women not to speak in church assembly and that Paul in verse 36 of 1 Corinthians 14 is refuting their view.⁵

Other commentators hold that Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is forbidding women not to evaluate prophecy though in 1 Corinthians 11: 5 he encourages them to prophesy.⁶ While others who claim that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 was not authored by Paul argued that the passage was interpolated into the text.⁷ Moreover, others continue to see the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 as a universal prohibition of women against speaking in the church.⁸ The debate is endless.

This study is aimed at understanding the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 in its place in the immediate context and thereby bringing harmony between it and 1 Corinthians 11:5. The seeming contradictions between the texts will disappear when both texts and ancient societies are better understood.

⁴Andrew B. Spurgeon, “Pauline Commands and Women in 1 Corinthians 14,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 168 (July-September 2011): 319.

⁵Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 1151.

⁶Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987) 703-4.

⁷ Antoinette C. Wire, *The Corinthians Women Prophets* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990) 149.

⁸Andrew B. Spurgeon, “Pauline Commands and Women in 1 Corinthians 14,” 319.

Statement of the Problem

In view of the foregoing remarks regarding the disagreement about what Paul has in mind in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 how shall we correctly interpret this problematic text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35? Is the injunction culture specific or universally binding? How can Paul acknowledge women praying and prophesying in church assembly without one word of prohibition or condemnation in chapter 11 of 1 Corinthians and then command them to keep silent in chapter 14? Do these two statements contradict each other? Or can they be reconciled to each other? And if they can be reconciled, how?

Purpose of the Study

While much work has been done on the passage, it is the purpose of this study to offer a fresh exegesis on the passage in order to appreciate the full import of the implication of the text and to affirm the interpretation closest to the Bible. The present solutions offered on the problematic text have their own merits but are unconvincing and unsatisfying, hence this study. So our interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:34-45 must be shaped by a clear understanding of the background of the passage, the immediate context of the passage and then it must be tested against the larger context and the rest of the Scripture.

Significance of the Study

There has been a public discrimination against women within the church relegating them to the background, and this attitude is justified as being supported by the Scripture. Thus, this study would be of aid to those likely to use this work such as churches, women's groups, and people in positions of decision making and perhaps to an extent, help in clearing the negative notions held by both the church community and society at large against women speaking in the church.

Delimitation

While there is more than one text used in silencing women in church this study will focus primarily on the passage of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35. And while there is much work already done on the passage this work will support and expatiate further the interpretation closest to the Bible.

Methodology and Procedure of the Study

This study is an exegetical one which will attempt to interpret the meaning of the injunction to women in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. It will do syntactical analysis of the passage of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 thereby bringing out the intention of the writer. A lexical study on the two important words of the passage ἐκκλησία and *nomoj* will be carried out in order to appreciate their usage in the scripture.

Overview of the Paper

This study is divided into five chapters. First, we will introduce the context of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 thereby bringing out the purpose of the study. Second, how scholars and authors from the ancient time to the contemporary time have seen the text will be examined and evaluated in order to get closer to the meaning of the passage. Third, we will try to establish the historical background issues of the passage under study. Fourth, the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 shall be carefully and properly done and then the fifth the summary.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section of this study is aimed at providing a review of possible discussions on the meaning of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35, more specifically about the meaning of the injunction to women to be silent in the assembly. Review of thoughts on the text is been considered from the early church fathers, medieval period, reformation period and modern commentators. A historical perspective of this text will, perhaps, help us move closer to resolving the apparent absolute meaning of the injunction to women and its contradiction to 1 Corinthians 11.

The Early Church Fathers

Origen

Origen acknowledges the existence of female prophets like the daughters of Phillip and Deborah (Judges 4: 4). But he however said that there is no indication that these prophetesses ever corporately addressed the believers as did Jeremiah and Isaiah. Huldah, he claims, did not speak to people but only to a man who consulted her at home and Anna herself did not speak publicly. Origen goes ahead to say that even if a woman is to show any sign of prophecy, she is nevertheless not allowed or permitted to speak in an assembly.¹ While one might dispute Origen's comment about

¹Daniel Doriani, "A History of Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2: 9-15*, ed. Andreas J., Thomas R. Schreiner and Others (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 222-3; See also Origen, "Fragments on 1 Corinthians," in *The Ministry*

women it is very clear that he saw a distinction between the ministry of prophecy and the use of the gift in a public, corporate setting.²

Tertullian

Tertullian abhorred the notion of women expressing themselves in any shape or form in official church business. In his treatise, *On the Veiling of Virgins*, he makes this statement very clear and bases his belief on 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35. Tertullian argues that it is not permitted for a woman to speak in church, nor to teach, baptize, offer (*Eucharist*), nor to take upon herself any male function, least of all the priestly office.³ Although Tertullian made no comment regarding the seeming contradiction of 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14, he clearly opined that the participation of women in teaching and the administration of sacrament are inappropriate.⁴ But one wonders if at all Tertullian was aware of 1 Corinthians 11:5 where women were allowed to pray and prophecy in the assembly.

Cyprian

Quirinus, son of Cyprian asked his father to gather for him instruction from the Holy Scriptures bearing upon the religious teaching of their school. Cyprian went ahead and did what his son asked for. In his reply to his son, Cyprian writes, “I have collected certain precepts of the Lord, and divine teachings, which may be easy and

of Women in the Early Church, ed. Roger Gryson trans. Jean Laporte and Mary Louise Hall (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1976), 28.

²J. Carl Laney, “Gender Based Boundaries for Gathered Congregations: An Interpretative History of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35,” *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 7/1 (Spring 2002) 4. Accessed 30 March 2016. <http://cbmw.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/7-1.pdf>.

³Angelo Nicolaides, “Assessing Tertullian on the Status of Women in Third Century Church,” *Pharos Journal of Theology* ISSN 2414-3324 Vol. 97 2016 5. Accessed 30 March 2016. http://www.pharosjot.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/pharos_article_7_vol_97_2016.pdf

⁴J. Carl Laney, “Gender Based Boundaries for Gathered Congregations: An Interpretative History of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35,” 4.

useful to the readers, in that a few things digested into a short space are both quickly read through, and are frequently repeated.”⁵ On the role of women in public church life Cyprian wrote to his son concerning 1 Corinthians 14:34-35: “Let women be silent in the church. But if any wish to learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home.” Although Cyprian did not make reference to the law in verse 35 he did understand the text to mean absolute silence for women during worship.⁶

Chrysostom

Chrysostom makes it very clear and literal that silence is expected of a woman in the assembly. He interprets 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 quite literally. Chrysostom says that Paul represses the babbling of women and he sews up their mouth. He argues that Paul not only commands them to be silent but silence with fear and that they are not even to ask questions in the church. He further argues that Paul is so strict on women because a woman is in some sort a weaker being and easily carried away and light minded.⁷

Chrysostom states that Paul is not only exhorting or giving counsel in 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 but that he is laying his command on them vehemently, by the recitation of an ancient law on the subject. Where does the law say this? Chrysostom directs us to Genesis 3: 16 “Yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (NASN). In commenting on verse 35, Chrysostom points out that if the

⁵Cyprian, “The Treatises of Cyprian” in *Ante Nicene Fathers* vol. 5 ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1886), 528.

⁶ Cyprian, “The Treatises of Cyprian,” 546. Also to Timothy: “Let a woman learn with silence, in all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to be set over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not seduced, but the woman was seduced.”

⁷ Chrysostom, “Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, Homily 37,” ed. Philip Schaff, *NPNF*, First Series, 12:222

women are not to ask any question in the church, their speaking at pleasure is even contrary to the law.⁸ While appreciating Chrysostom for his contribution it should be noted that the context of the passage does not support this kind interpretation.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

On his lecture about exorcism, St. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote that during actual exorcism, while waiting for others, men should be with men, and women should be with women. Men should have some profitable book in their hands while they sit waiting, and one should read from it and another listen. He suggested further that if there is no book available, let one pray and another talk about useful thing.⁹ Cyril later wrote of virgins. “Let the virgins likewise form a separate band, singing hymns or reading; silently, however, so that, while their lips speak, no other’s ears may hear what they say. For, I suffer not woman to speak in church.” He continues on the married woman by saying “Let the married woman imitate them: let her pray, and her lips move, but her voice not be heard.” While St. Cyril may not have commented directly on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, he definitely understood the position of women in church as silence.¹⁰ His interpretation of the text in question is no different from the one of Chrysostom: not flowing from the context.

Apostolic Constitution

About eight books on church pastoral and liturgical practice constitute what is known as the constitutions of the Holy Apostles or Apostolic Constitutions. These

⁸Chrysostom, “Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians,” 12:222.

⁹Cyril, The works of Saints Cyril of Jerusalem, *in the Fathers of the Church* vol. 1, trans. Leo P. McCauley, S.J. and Anthony A. Stephenson (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1969) 80-81.

¹⁰Cyril, The works of Saints Cyril of Jerusalem, 81.

works are attributed to Clement of Rome (90-100), but were compiled a century or two later.¹¹ The author declared that they do not permit their women to teach in the church but only to pray and hear those that teach. He argues that Jesus sent out the Twelve for public preaching, He did nowhere send out women to preach because He did not want such. He goes to point out that of the many women who were associated with Jesus ministry none of them was commissioned to preach in the churches.¹² But one wonders if actually Priscilla did not preach in the public.

The Reformers

John Calvin

John Calvin was a French reformer, a prolific commentator and expositor. He wrote commentaries on the 23 books of the Old Testament and all the New Testament books except Revelation in addition to his most important work, *The Institutes of Christian Religion* (1536).¹³ Calvin commented on the role of women in the assembly. In his commentary on the 1 Corinthians 14:33, he writes “Paul accordingly forbids them to speak in public, either by way of teaching or prophesying.”¹⁴ Nevertheless Calvin believed there were also opportunities for women to minister publicly outside the meeting of the established church but didn’t specify the opportunities.¹⁵

¹¹J. Carl Laney, “Gender Based Boundaries for Gathered Congregations: An Interpretative History of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35,” 5.

¹²Ibid, 4-13. See also Apostolic Constitutions, Book III, section vi; *Ante Nicene Fathers*, vol. VII, 427.

¹³J. Carl Laney, “Gender Based Boundaries for Gathered Congregations: An Interpretative History of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35,” 5.

¹⁴John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Apostle Paul to the Corinthians*, trans. John W. Fraser (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 306.

¹⁵Ibid.

Calvin in his commentary on verse 34 argues that it is not compatible for women under subjection to teach in public. He writes “For how unsuitable it would be for a woman, who is in subjection to one of the members to be in an authoritative position over the whole body!” Calvin declares “It is therefore an argument based on incompatibilities; because, if the woman is under subjection, she is therefore debarred from having authority to teach in public.”¹⁶

Martin Luther

Martin Luther, the great German reformer did not write a commentary on 1 Corinthians but he did address the issue of women in ministry in one of his works. Luther acknowledged the fact that the Old Testament women (especially the prophetesses) had the right to teach and to rule and that God worked with them with signs and great deeds because He permitted them. Luther further writes, “But in the New Testament the Holy Spirit, speaking through St. Paul, ordained that women should be silent in the churches and assemblies (I Cor. 14:34), and said that this is the Lord’s commandment.”¹⁷

Although Luther noted that Paul knew according to (Joel 2:28.) that, God would pour out His Spirit also on handmaidens which is perhaps the reason why the four daughters of Phillip prophesied (Acts 21 [:9]), but he declares, “but in the congregations or churches where there is ministry women are to be silent and not preach (I Tim. 2:12).”

Although Luther did not make comment on the law of 1 Corinthians 14: 34, he nevertheless attributes the subjection of a woman to her husband to the original sin.

¹⁶Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Apostle Paul to the Corinthians*, 306.

¹⁷Martin Luther, *Church and Ministry II*, ed. Conrad Bergendoff vol. 40 (Philadelphia, PA: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 390.

He writes, “Now there is also added to those sorrows of gestation and birth that Eve has been placed under the power of her husband, she who was very free and, as the sharer of all the gifts of God, was in no respect inferior to her husband.” He declares further, “The rule remains with the husband, and the wife is compelled to obey him by God’s command.”¹⁸

The Classic Commentators

Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer

This view claims that Paul's message is a universal prohibition of women against speaking in church. Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer interpret the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 that women are to keep silence in the public services and that they would join in the Amen (v. 16), but otherwise not be heard. They claim women had been claiming equality with men in the matter of the veil, by discarding this mark of subjection in Church, and apparently, they had also been attempting to preach, or at any rate had been asking questions during service.¹⁹

They expressed their uncertainty as to whether Paul really allowed women to prophesy but concluded that 11:5 may be hypothetical. They claim Paul forbids the women to teach which a rule that was taken over from the synagogue and maintained in the primitive Church (1 Tim. ii. 12). Discarding the veil was claiming equality with man; teaching in public was only for men, hence the command here.²⁰

They interpret the “law” to mean Genesis 3:16 like other scholars and assumed it was only married women that were asking questions which Paul disallowed. To

¹⁸Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 1-5*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan vol. 1 (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 1958) 202.

¹⁹Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1994) 324.

²⁰Ibid, 324-325.

them *αἰσχρὸν* is a strong word, used of women being clipped or shorn meaning it is a really a scandalous thing for a woman to address the congregation or disturb it by speaking.²¹

However, this view faces several difficulties. This view is contrary to Paul's instructions elsewhere within the same letter in which he speaks of women praying and prophesying (11:5) But some seek to defend this view by arguing that 14:33b-36 has a reference to the public assembly while 11:2-16 deals only with the home or with small group gatherings. In that case nothing in 1 Corinthians prevents the interpreter's from taking the prohibition of chapter 14 absolutely.²² But, if women were to prophesy in private (11:5) and then the church were to evaluate those prophecies to determine if they were truthful (14:32), would this not make all private prophecies public? Thus it is highly doubtful that Paul would have differentiated between private and public prophesying and praying.²³

Furthermore, however scholarly might be the argument of Robertson and Plummer, there is nothing in the text to show that the women were making attempt to teach in the assembly. Women teaching is what it is imported into the text which otherwise may not be what the Apostle had in mind.

John Wesley

John Wesley was the founder of Methodist Church. Although he did not write a commentary on 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 his comments about the role of women in

²¹Robertson and Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 325.

²²D. A. Carson, "Silent in the Churches: on the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem, 140-153. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 145.

²³Andrew B. Spurgeon, "Pauline Commands and Women in 1 Corinthians 14" In *Bibliotheca Sacra* 168 (July-September 2011): 320.

church's public life might have been derived from 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35. In his letter to Mrs Crosby on February 14, 1771, he writes, "The Methodists do not allow of women Preachers: Neither do I take upon me any such character."²⁴ In another letter written to the woman on March 18, 1769, he advised her, "Pray in private or public, as much as you can. Even in public, you may properly enough intermix short exhortations with prayer; but keep as far as from what is called preaching as you can: therefore, never take a text; never speak in a continued discourse, without some break, above four or five minutes."²⁵ However, the opinion of John Wesley on woman preaching does not really sound rigid for he had given some support to women whose work resulted into conversion.²⁶

The Modern Commentators

Gordon Fee

Gordon Fee sees no problem with the women of Corinth praying and prophesying as long as they followed Paul's instructions and not uncovered (ἀκατακαλύπτω). To him 1 Corinthians 11:5 is clear evidence that women participated in worship and ministering gifts in the Christian communities. While

²⁴John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley* Vol. 12 (Salem, OH: Schmuel, 1872) 353.

²⁵John Wesley, *Selections from the Writings of the Rev. John Wesley*, M.A. arrang. Herbert Welch rev ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1918) 370.

²⁶John Munsey Turner, *John Wesley: The Evangelical Revival and the Rise of Methodism in England* (Peterborough, England: Epworth Press, 2002)128. He could not deny the 'extraordinary providence of God' in Mary Bosanquet (1739-18150). She was involved in the London revival of 1761-2 with Sarah Crosby (1729-1804) and Sarah Ryan (1724-68). A Christian community was established at Leytonstone, later moving to Cross Hall, Morley, near Leeds. Mrs Bosanquet never became itinerant preacher in the technical sense, nor did any other woman, but she claimed a genuine if extraordinary 'call', trenchantly defending it in a letter to Wesley in 1771.

recognizing that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 appears in all known manuscripts he however declares the text as not authentic and goes ahead to argue his case.²⁷

First, Fee appeals to transcriptional probability. He argues that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 were not part of the original text, but were a very early marginal gloss that was subsequently placed in the text at two different places. Although many scholars assume that Paul wrote this text after v. 33 and that the text was deliberately transposed to a position after v. 40 but Fee rejects this as unhistorical on two grounds: (a) that such displacement do not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, (b) that no adequate reason can be found for such a displacement if the words were originally in the text after v. 33.²⁸

Second, Fee appeals to intrinsic probability. He argues that very little in the two verses of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 fits into the present argument of which has to do with the manifestations of the Spirit in the community.²⁹ Furthermore Fee is convinced that the verses stand in obvious contradiction to 11:2-6 where without reproof Paul speaks of women praying and prophesying and also that some usages in these two verses seem quite foreign to Paul.³⁰

Unfortunately, D.A. Carson dismisses his arguments as not weighty. On Fee's point first (a) above Carson claims that Fee himself already concedes in a footnote that the adulterous woman periscope (John 7:53-8:11) is a remarkable exemption because it found his way into no fewer than five locations in our manuscripts. On

²⁷J. Carl Laney, "Gender Based Boundaries for Gathered Congregations: An Interpretative History of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35," 7.

²⁸Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 699-700.

²⁹Ibid, 701.

³⁰Ibid, 702.

Fee's argument "that no adequate reason can be found for such a transposition," a transposition after verse 40 because it produces less strain in the flow of the passage than its location after verse 33, Fee finds this suggestion as "inauthentic" because to him the position after verse 40 is scarcely an improvement, and if there is no improvement there is no motive for transposition.³¹

Although a position after verse 40 is not without its difficulties, on a superficial reading it does have one marked advantage over that attested by the majority of the manuscripts evidence. The position after verse 33 (again, on a superficial reading) breaks up the flow of the argument. Verses 37-40 are still demonstrably talking about tongues, prophecy, spiritual gifts, and authority in the church-the very topics that have dominated chapter 14. True, to put verses 34-35 after verse 40 is still to leave some awkwardness, but at least the awkwardness of breaking up what appears to be a cohesive unit of thought is alleviated.³²

Thus, when verse 40 ends up by insisting that everything be done "in a fitting and orderly way," it is easy to imagine some copyist thinking that what appear to be regulations governing the conduct of women in the assembly could be subsumed fairly easily under that principle. The role of women is then nicely tucked in between two major topics: spiritual gifts (chapters 12-14) and the resurrection (chapter 15).³³

On the claim that 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 do not fit into the context of the passage Carson informs that since it can be demonstrated that scribes tended to smooth out perceived difficult passages, the most difficult reading has the greatest

³¹ D. A. Carson, "Silent in the Churches: on the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 142.

³²Ibid, 142-3.

³³Ibid, 143.

claim to authenticity.³⁴ More also because Fee claims the injunction in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is an absolute statement which cannot be reconciled with 11:2-16 so he rejects the text as being inauthentic.³⁵ Since it can be argued that the most difficult reading has the greater claim to authenticity then both 11: 2-16 and 14:34-35 cannot be seen to be in contradiction.

Finally, Fee rejects 14:34-35/14:33b-36 as not being authentic because of one or more *hapax legomena* (expressions that occur only once) in the passage. For example, Fee thinks the use of the ‘the Law’ in verse 34 is un-Pauline. Of course many passages that all agree are Pauline contain one or more *hapax legomena* whether once in the Pauline corpus, or once in the New Testament.³⁶ In brief neither Fee’s appeal to transcriptional probability nor his appeal to intrinsic probability is very convincing.

H. Wayne House

Wayne House sees the text of 1 Corinthians 14-34-35 as Paul’s emphasis on God’s intention for women in general, namely, subordination to men. He claims that the term *lalew* seems to be a general prohibition including all the alternatives that have been offered and that the instruction is enjoined by Paul for all churches and obviously was practiced by them; the Corinthian were commanded to get in line with the other people of God. Wayne opines that the transcultural nature of the apostolic teaching is that it is based on the Old Testament's view of female subordination. For

³⁴Ibid, 143. Clearly, on intrinsic grounds inclusion of verses 34-35 after verse 33 is the *lectio difficilior*, the ‘harder reading.’ Methodology, the only time the *lectio difficilior* should be overthrown by appealing to ‘intrinsic probability’ occurs when the external evidence is strongly against the *lectio difficilior*.

³⁵Ibid, 144.

³⁶Ibid, 144-5.

the Corinthian women to act in disharmony with God's revelation was shameful. Clearly the speaking is one that caused women to have an insubordinate role over men in the congregation.³⁷

On the seeming contradiction Wayne argues that in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, Paul allowed women to pray and prophesy if their heads were covered and that in that passage the women were speaking divine utterances, whereas in 14:33b-36 they were not. He opines that those who spoke under divine control were not expressing their own authority and so were not in violation of the Law.³⁸ In denying public address to women Paul denies also judging prophets and publicly disagreeing with their husbands. Therefore any public speaking other than a divine utterance would be in violation of Paul's prohibition in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36.³⁹

Though the interpretation of Wayne seems balance and persuasive, on his view that the injunction in 14:34-45 refers to “judging of prophets” one wonders if that is the case. Though the merit of this view is that the context does speak of “evaluating” prophecies (v. 29) but verses 34-35 make no reference to “evaluation.”

Anthony C. Thiselton

Anthony Thiselton argues that the verb *sigaw* depending on the context means either to **stop speaking** in a temporal sense as in v. 30 or to hold one's peace, or to refrain from using a particular speech or speech in a presupposed context. He declares that since in 11:5 Paul approves of women praying and prophesying *their silence* may either allude to **stop speaking** or more probably to the possibility of sitting in

³⁷H. Wayne House, “The Speaking of Women and the Prohibition of Women” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (579, 1988) 301.

³⁸Ibid, 301.

³⁹Ibid, 301.

judgment over prophetic speech which perhaps come from their husbands, or to a constant intervention of questions under the pretext of sifting what has been said.⁴⁰

Thiselton points out further that Paul's concern for 'order' is reflected in the requirement for women's submission (*upotassw*) as the 'law' *nomoj* directs. He argues against the majority opinion that the 'law' refers to Gen 3:16 and argues that Paul has in mind the patterns of order demonstrated in divine actions of creation which are integral to the Pentateuch.⁴¹

This view is no more different from Wayne. Furthermore, if in the immediate context of the passage women are allowed to prophesy 14:31 then Paul cannot forbid women to judge prophets or sifting what has been said.

Craig S. Keener

In his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 Craig S. Keener argues that women definitely were interrupting the *Scripture exposition* with questions which would have cause an affront to more conservative men or visitors to the church, and it would have also caused a disturbance to the service due to the nature of the questions.⁴² Keener argues that a prohibition of all speech by women here would keep us from taking 'all' of other verses in the context literally, for example 14:31 and would contradict 11:4-5. He is convinced that Paul is opposing only the irrelevant questions some women have been asking during the teaching section of the church service.

⁴⁰Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 1152-3.

⁴¹Ibid, 1153-4.

⁴²Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1992), 81.

He claims it was ‘*shameful*’ for a woman to interrupt the service with her questions.⁴³ And as to what the ‘law’ means Keener is not too sure. He declares “but whether Paul means the law in general, or the creation order in particular, he is probably calling upon the law to support the wife’s submission rather than her silence.”⁴⁴

The difficulty with this interpretation is that it fails to reckon with the categorical declaration that it is “shameful” for women to speak in church at all (v. 35b) and with an obvious statement that this rule is for “the churches” at large, not just for a local or particular problem at Corinth.

D. W. Odell-Scott

One of the chief defenders of the view that 1 Corinthians 14:3-35 is a quote is D.W. Odell-Scott. Odell-Scott regards the key particle η , (or), at the beginning of v. 36, as offering a resounding rhetorical rejoinder to the conservative patriarchal rule expressed by a group at Corinth in the words of vv.34-35: **Or was it from you that the word of God went out?** According to Odell-Scott, the passage authoritatively allows women to speak in public congregation since it can be understood as a strong rebuttal of vv. 34-35.⁴⁵

It is true that this interpretation has tried to avoid the seeming contradiction between 11 and 14 by reading the passage as Paul’s quotation of the Corinthians’ position but as Richard B. Hays observes there is no indication in the text that Paul is quoting anything (unlike 7:1) or that the Corinthians held such views about women.

⁴³Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, 85-86.

⁴⁴Ibid, 87.

⁴⁵David W Odell-Scott, “Let the Women Speak in Church: An Egalitarian Interpretation of 1 Cor 14:33b-36,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 13, no. 3 (July 1983): 90–93.

Moreover, the other Corinthian views cited by Paul are always short slogans, not extended didactic arguments.⁴⁶

Leon Morris

Leon Morris interprets 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 to mean that Christian women ought not to be forward and that they should not needlessly flout the accepted ideas of the day. Morris thinks the women of Corinth took over the role of instructors which to him would definitely discredit Christianity in the eyes of most people. He states that Paul called on women to observe the customs of the day for among the Greeks women were discouraged from saying anything in public. Morris concludes that as long as Paul allowed women to pray and prophesy in 11:5 the rule against their speaking cannot be absolute.⁴⁷

Morris also thinks that the first century women were uneducated which could be one of the reasons why Paul asked them to be silent in church. The Corinthians women should keep quiet in church if for no other reason than because they could have had little or nothing worthwhile to say. So women should ask their questions at home of their husband and not disturb the assembly.⁴⁸

While appreciating Morris for his contribution we can say that there is nothing in the passage which says the women were uneducated as to the reason why Paul asked them to be silent in the church. The argument that the women were uneducated is foreign to the context of the text.

⁴⁶Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians: Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997) 248.

⁴⁷Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1987) 197-8.

⁴⁸*Ibid*, 198.

Conclusion

The major interpretative issues of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and its seeming contradiction to 1 Corinthians 11 have been highlighted. In the past, most scholars and commentators, even the Church fathers, regarded 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 as authentic and genuine and that it prohibited women from public teaching and preaching during church meeting.

To accommodate women who are gifted to freely preach and teach in public 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 has been reinterpreted by most modern commentators. But unlike in the past, the modern interpretations of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 are numerous and diverse. This chapter has examined and evaluated the various ancient and modern views regarding 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35.

Many of the views evaluated so far do not really make sense of the injunction to women in 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35. However, this study will make effort to properly explain the meaning imbedded in the injunction to be silent to the women of Corinthian church.

CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND STUDY OF THE PASSAGE

Preparing to read and do a study on a specific passage in the book of 1 Corinthians might be a challenging task, because to truly comprehend what is going on in this ancient epistle one must understand a variety of background matters. Given the distance between the original readers of this letter and ours in 21st century, the question of who and why about the passage becomes important.

So before we analyse Paul's teaching on women in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, it is necessary in this chapter, to examine influences on his view of women. This chapter will examine Paul's geographical background as well as his Hellenistic and Cultural context and in addition the most profound influences on Paul's view of women: Jesus and the Holy Scriptures.

The Socio-Religious Worldview of Paul

Paul and His Geographical Background

The apostle Paul was born in Tarsus the capital of Cilicia in Asia Minor. Tarsus was on a well-traveled trade route connecting the Mediterranean Sea with the highlands of Asia Minor. It was a major commercial city. Trading ships stopped there from all over the world. After Alexander the Great saved Tarsus from being burned by the Persians in 333B.C, many Greeks made Cilicia there home.¹ The religious life of Tarsus was marked by broad-minded tolerance, paganism, and a multiplicity of

¹Douglass E. Wingeier, *Paul: His Life* (Nashville, TN: Graded Press, 1987) 5.

occult rituals. Gods were honored with public statues and the streets were often scenes of heathen parades at which time nudity, suggestive dances, and weird music were highlighted.²

The city of Tarsus became a largely Greek city in education and culture. The Stoic philosopher Athenodorus, former teacher of the Emperor Augustus, probably taught in the local university. Paul probably must have absorbed Greek culture growing up in this environment.³ Roman conquests brought the Greco-Roman culture to the cities of the Mediterranean and Greek was the common language of the cities in the time of Paul. A person could travel throughout the Roman Empire and communicate satisfactorily anywhere if he or she spoke Greek.⁴

The Greek *polis*, although accelerated its process of Hellenization in Tarsus especially at the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, never effaced its original character, and oriental customs still prevailed at the time of St. Paul. When Paul admonished the women of Corinth to wear veils on their heads in attending religious gatherings (1 Cor. 11:5), he was probably thinking of the custom of Tarsus.⁵

Paul's Family and Educational Background

That Paul was a Jew cannot be disputed. Both his letters and the other evidence that we have, including the book of Acts, makes it clear that Paul was a Jew.

²Mendell Taylor, *Every day with Paul* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press) 10.

³Douglass E. Wingeier, *Paul: His Life* (Nashville, TN: Graded Press, 1987) 5.

⁴J. Michael Miller, *Paul: His World* (Nashville, TN: Graded Press, 1987) 37. All the documents of the New Testament and virtually all other writings of the first two centuries of Christianity are in Greek. But the people of the country side and the villages often spoke local languages. For example, Aramaic was the dominant language in the villages of Galilee.

⁵Giuseppe Ricciotti, *Paul the Apostle* (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce, 1953) 6. For example, Dion Chrysostom describes the Tarsian women as walking with modest composure and covered with ample veils.

He himself states in Phil 3:5–6 that he was circumcised on the eighth day, the day prescribed for such an act (Lev 12:3); from the race of Israel, that is, ethnically an Israelite from birth; from the tribe of Benjamin, which means, he knew his tribe, the one from the one son of Jacob born in Palestine and the one that produced the first king, Saul; a Hebrew of Hebrews, which is probably a linguistic distinction for a Jew who knew Hebrew or at least Aramaic, or possibly a designation for one descended from Jews who spoke the language (though he clearly uses Greek); a Pharisee in his training and attentiveness to the law; one who persecuted the church, that is, he went beyond what was required and zealously protected his ethnic faith from those who threatened it; and one who followed the law prescribed by Torah.⁶

Now, if Paul's family had merely moved to Tarsus from Judaea some years before his birth, neither he nor his father would have been Tarsians, but merely residents. It is probable, but not certain, that the family had been planted in Tarsus with full rights as part of a colony settled there by one of the Seleucid kings in order to strengthen their hold on the city.⁷

Paul's parents desired to have their son have a proper education in the synagogue in Tarsus and one tradition reported that Paul also studied in Jerusalem under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Paul had a thorough and an excellent education in the law, an education that was appropriate for someone growing up in a household that

⁶Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman* vol.5 (Leiden, Netherlands: Boston, MA: Brill, 2008) 1.

⁷W.M. Ramsay, *St Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (London, England: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894) 32. Such a re-foundation took place at Tarsus, for the name Antiocheia was given it under Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.). The Seleucid kings seem to have had a preference for Jewish colonists in their foundations in Asia Minor. Citizenship in Tarsus might also have been presented to Paul's father or grandfather for distinguished services to the State; but that is much less probable.

held to traditions of the Pharisees. His grasp of the law was very strong and he was able to defend himself effectively to those who opposed him.⁸

The most popular of the upper-class schools in Paul's times were the schools of rhetoric. The sons of the upper classes were expected to be able to give speeches, to be able to defend themselves in court and to be able to influence audiences to their points of view. Although we have no record of Paul's attendance in such school, his ability to defend himself and to state his case pointed to a culture that exulted such skills. This skill in rhetoric is evident in Paul's speech to the Athenians on the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-31).⁹

All these factors combined to form the identity of Paul of Tarsus, an identity he had learned from his parents, his synagogue, and his mentor Gamaliel. Paul's understanding of self was so deeply rooted that it would require a cataclysmic event to change.¹⁰

The Sources of Paul's Ethical Teaching

That Paul actually depended upon Old Testament and Jewish Sources in his ethical teaching cannot be disputed. Near the close of his extended exhortations in Romans 12-15 he specifically says, after an Old Testament citation (Ps. 68:10, LXX), that whatever was written for the believers was written for our instruction (διδασκαλία), and that by steadfast and encouragement and the exhortation of the scriptures (parakhsij) we might have hope (15:4).¹¹

⁸Michael Miller, *Paul: His World* (Nashville, TN: Graded Press, 1987) 38.

⁹Ibid, 39-40.

¹⁰Douglass E. Wingeier, *Paul: His Life*, 13.

¹¹Victor Paul Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1968) 29-30.

This of course is one of the important presuppositions which guide Paul's use of the Old Testament, as seen also by other instances in which he specifically applies scriptural passages to the situation of his Christian readers (for example, Rom. 4:23-24; 1 Cor.10:6ff.). Romans 12:16, which is a caution against preoccupation with one's own wisdom, seem to be a direct echo of Prov. 3:7. The specific text in 12:19 is from Deut. 32:35; the exhortation to the needs of the hungry, thirsty enemy (12:20) is almost a verbatim quotation of Prov. 25:21-22; the Decalogue he cited in 13:9, and the commandment of neighbor-love which follows is drawn from Lev. 19:18. This example above is clear evidence that Paul's use of Old Testament in his ethical teaching is very clear.¹²

Paul's views on eschatology are also deeply rooted in Jewish apocalyptic thought. Such terms as "wrath" (*orge*), the "day" (*hemera*), "death" (*thanatos*), "righteousness" (*dikaioisune*), "judgment" (*krisis*), and the distinction between the two ages (aeon) are hardly intelligible apart from their Jewish background. Both share the link between Israel's past, and both hope for the imminent fruition of God's promises. Everything the apostle enjoins: instructions concerning marriage (1 Cor. 7:26), or for settling disputes in the church (Rom. 14:10-12), or for having the Eucharist celebrated (1 Cor.11:32)-as well as his own sense of mission, assumes a special urgency because of this belief that time is short.¹³

That Paul's ethical teaching is also indebted to Hellenistic "sources" in a general sense is a case worth mentioned. It has been pointed out that Pauline phrases, metaphors, and terms which are familiar and frequent in Hellenistic circles as represented by the broad and pervasive movement of Stoicism. These include the

¹²Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 29-30.

¹³Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1970) 7.

metaphors of life as warfare (e.g. 2 Cor. 10:3 ff.; 1 Thess. 5:8) or as an athletic competition (1 Cor. 9:25); descriptions of God as “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28) etc. Moreover, it is impossible to deny the clear Hellenistic ring of Phil. 4:8. Paul commends two qualities there that are nowhere mentioned in the New Testament *prosfilhj* (RSV: “lovely”), *eufhmoj* (RSV: “gracious”), and *eufhmoj* is also absent from the LXX. It is true that Paul’s use of scriptural texts must be seen primarily against the background of rabbinic exegesis, at another point of form his indebtedness is first of all to the Greek world.¹⁴

In short, this combination of Hellenistic and Jewish elements was probably not original with Paul. It is more likely that it came prepackaged in the Jewish tradition Paul knew. In the Asia Minor of Paul’s youth, the Jews had already accommodated themselves to their Greek environment. They gave their children Greek or Latin names, they went to the theater, took part in sports, and decorated their tombs with Greek art. This accommodation was however made without assimilation.¹⁵

But the most profound influence on Paul’s ethical teaching is the message and attitudes of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. According to Paul, in Christ, Christians stand in a new relationship to the law. Paul makes statements that stand in stark contrast to anything from his Jewish contemporaries such as: “Christ is the end of the law” (Rom 10:4); “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law” (Gal 3:13); “we are no longer under the supervision of the law” (Gal. 3:25).¹⁶ Further, for example Paul’s exhortation to the married not to divorce each other (1 Cor.7: 10-17) is specifically

¹⁴Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 45-6.

¹⁵Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul*, 7.

¹⁶Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009) 41.

identified as coming from “the Lord” and reflects similar traditions incorporated in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10: 11-12; Like 16:18).¹⁷ This example is also clear evidence that Paul was also influenced by the messages of the risen Lord Jesus.

The Status of Women in First Century Judaism

Generally, the lot of women in Jewish home of Paul’s time was that of subservience to their husbands. Women were expected to perform the duties of the home given to the wives, such as cooking, cleaning, and raising the children. In the cities, husbands were involved in commercial enterprises or in a trade. In the countryside majority of people were peasants engaged in farming. A woman’s lifestyle depended on the wealth of her husband.¹⁸

In Judaism marriage was seen as a divine command, according to which the humans should be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:27-28). Getting a wife equaled having a stable base in life, and of course the responsibility of fulfilling the important task of being fruitful and multiplying. There were indeed characteristics for a good wife and a bad wife. A good wife was all the time beautiful, obedient, subordinated and silent. A bad wife on the other hand was characterized by, disobedience, scolding, adultery and talking loudly. In Proverbs we also find a characterization of a good wife: A good wife is hard working, provides for her husband and the household in a wise and

¹⁷Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul*, 51-2.

¹⁸J. Michael Miller, *Paul: His World*, 46.

respectful manner (Proverbs 31:10-31)¹. From these descriptions the wife is expected to be of mild nature and not be the cause of worry for her husband.¹⁹

It would appear from outside, if a wife was silent, subordinated and obedient, that the husband was in charge of his house and controlled the members of it. If a wife on the other hand was characterized by the bad actions, the household would be seen as uncontrolled. In a Jewish context, much like in the Greco-Roman context, the husband was supposed to be in charge of his wife, children and all other members of the household.²⁰

In general women in Judaism were legally the property of men. This is a condition characteristic of patriarchal societies. Before marriage the girl was the property of her father. After marriage a woman became the property of her husband. Widows were placed under the authority of their fathers; sons or brothers-in-law. Polygamy was common and women were considered as objects of property among the spoils of war.²¹

With few exceptions, such as matters of personal status and condition, women's testimony is regarded as unreliable, and therefore, like slaves (as well as children), they are not permitted to serve as witnesses in a court of law. One who cannot serve as a witness can also not serve as a judge. Thus women are excluded effectively from holding any juridical or governmental position in Jewish law,

¹⁹Anne Hammer Pors, "Sexuality and Gender Roles in First Century Greco-Roman –Jewish- and-Emerging Christian Cultures: A Comparative Study" *Religious Roots of Europe*, Feb 2013 32.

²⁰Ibid, 33.

²¹Elizabeth M. Tetlow, *Women and Ministry in the New Testament* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1980), 5-29.

despite such exceptional women as Deborah and Queen Salome who did hold positions of authority.²²

It is presumably this categorization of women with children and slaves for legal purposes that precludes their being included in the *minyan*, the quorum of ten adult (free) males required for various public assemblies such as the reading of the Torah. We are told that the rationale behind this categorization of women is to exempt them from any obligations which would interfere with their primary responsibilities to their families in the home.²³

In the Judaism of Paul's time, education was reserved for the young. Girls were trained from birth onward for the work of the home. Women were in most cases not involved in any of the affairs of life outside the home. Women were completely under their husband's dominance. A woman spent her life drawing water at the local well discussing the news of the community with the other women.²⁴

Preserving women's chastity was very important and so Jewish women did not participate in public life in line with men. However, the public sphere was not free of women, as women were active at market places selling their goods and maybe even owning a shop with their husbands. It is argued that some women also took active part

²²Raphael Jospe, "The Status of Women in Judaism: From Exemption to Exclusion," in *Lliff Review*, 35 no 2 Spr 1978, p 33. Though in some respects women were regarded as men's equals. "Honor your father and your mother' is the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12, Dt. 5:16)." Any person who curses his father or his mother must surely be put to death (Lev. 20:9). A person must revere his mother and his father" (Lev. 19:3). When a man and woman committed adultery, they were equally liable to the death penalty (Lev. 20:10). The owner of an ox is responsible for it, and no distinction is drawn between a male or female victim of goring (Ex. 21:28).

²³Ibid, 33

²⁴J. Michael Miller, *Paul: His World*, 47.

in religious movements, some, mostly wealthy and upper class Jewish women, functioned as patronesses or leaders of synagogues.²⁵

Some young women also studied philosophy. But since women were part of public life in some degree, restrictions on relations between males and females in public were thought to be necessary. It was not allowed for a man to speak with a woman in public because it might give a wrong impression of the relationship between the two. As well, talking to a woman might cause attraction among the two, and result in the woman's seduction of the man. Looking at a woman in public was also prohibited. This could cause the same actions and the man could be lured by the woman's wiles.²⁶

Because preserving women's chastity was important, the Jewish male population was perceived to be stronger in resisting sexual desires than women, and therefore it was their responsibility to create distance between females at the market place, in town, and so on. In some rabbinic law it is even stated that women should be secluded in their homes. The idea of women being more likely to succumb to their sexual desires is in accordance with the theory of the one-sex model. A female characteristic is sexual desire, and most importantly, not being able to control this desire. This characteristic is placed at the bottom of the scale.²⁷

²⁵Anne Hammer Pors, "Sexuality and Gender Roles in First Century Greco-Roman –Jewish- and-Emerging Christian Cultures: A Comparative Study" 34.

²⁶Ibid, 34.

²⁷Ibid, 35.

The Social-religious Worldview of the Corinthians

The City of Corinth

Corinth was one of the major urban centres of the ancient Mediterranean and one of the most culturally diverse cities in the empire. Corinth, a Greek City by location, the capital of Achaia (which made up Ancient Greece), has been a Roman Colony for nearly a century, officially resettled by Romans long after its destruction, and Greek and Latin cultures existed side by side.²⁸

Corinth roughly had eighty thousand people with an additional twenty thousand in nearby rural areas. Because it was strategically located near an isthmus, which enabled sailors to drag boats across a small strip of land rather than sailing a considerable extra distance around the dangerous coastline of southern Greece, it regained its prominence very fast. In Paul's day, it was probably the wealthiest city in Greece and a major, multicultural urban centre. Every two years Corinth played host in its massive stadium to the Isthmian games, competition which was second only to Olympics in prominence.²⁹

The Romans were dominant in Corinth: they brought with them not only their laws but also their religions and culture. But the Roman world had been thoroughly Hellenized; and since Corinth was a historically Greek city, it maintained many of those ties--religion, philosophy, and the arts. And from the East came the mystery

²⁸ Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014). 456.

²⁹ Graig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994) 19 See also Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987) 1.

cults of Egypt and Asia and the Jews with their synagogue and “peculiar” belief in a single God.³⁰

As the residents of the city that was undergoing continual rebuilding and that was increasing in fame, the people of Corinth had both growing civic pride and individual pride. All sorts of Corinthians, even slaves are mentioned in inscriptions, often paid for and erected by and for themselves that describe their contributions to building projects or their statues in clubs (*collegia*). The number of such inscriptions is staggering. The City of Corinth was a city where public boasting and self-promotion had become an art form.³¹

The city to which Paul then preached was a cosmopolitan place, an important city; it was intellectually alert, materially prosperous, but was morally corrupt. There was a pronounced tendency for its inhabitants to indulge their desires of whatever sort.³² The account of Strabo and of Pausanias, the second century writer, indicate that the city supported numerous sites of pagan worship and was adorned by magnificent statues of gods and goddesses in public places, including a large statue of Athena in the middle of the *agora* (marketplace). This was very usual because every city in the Greco-Roman world displayed similar temples and statuary. Athens, for example is described in Acts 17:6 as being “full of idols.”³³

³⁰Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 2.

³¹Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Social-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995) 8 The Corinthian people thus lived within an honor-shame cultural orientation, where public recognition was often more important than facts and where the worst thing that could happen was for the one’s reputation to be publicly tarnished. In such a culture a person’s sense of worth is based on recognition by others of one’s accomplishments, hence the self-promoting public inscriptions.

³²Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985) 19.

³³ Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians: Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997) 4.

Although, Corinth had a reputation for commercial prosperity, she was also a byword for evil living. The very word *korinthianzesthai*, to live like a Corinthian, has become a part of the Greek language, and meant to live with drunken and immoral debauchery. The word actually penetrated into the English language, and, in Regency times, “a Corinthian was one of the wealthy young bucks who lived in reckless and riotous living.”³⁴

In fact, if ever a Corinthian was shown upon the stage in a Greek play he was shown drunk. The very name Corinth was synonymous with debauchery and there was one source of evil in the city which was known all over the civilized world.³⁵ Corinth was dedicated and devoted to the principal deity worshipped in city, Venus. The temple of Venus was erected on the north side or slope of the Acrocorinthus, a mountain about half a mile in height on the south of the city.³⁶ To that temple there were attached one thousand priestesses who were sacred prostitutes, and in the evenings they descended from the hill and plied their trade with people, until it became a Greek proverb, “It is not every man who can afford a journey to Corinth.”³⁷

Ethnic and Religious Background of the Corinthian Church

This community had a few Jewish members, including Crispus (1:14), which is described in Acts 18:8 as a leader of the Corinthian synagogue. Furthermore, if the Sosthenes named in the salutation of Paul’s letters (1:1) is the same person mentioned in the Acts 18:7, then it can be inferred that at least two prominent Jewish leaders in

³⁴William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, rev ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1975) 2.

³⁵Ibid, 2-3.

³⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1980) 669.

³⁷William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, 3.

Corinthian had joined the Christian Faith.³⁸ Paul also refers to circumcised believers in Corinth (1 cor. 7:18). His reference to the exodus generation in 1 Corinthians 10: 1-13 seems to suggest that some of his audience would be conversant with especially Jewish ways of interpreting and applying Scripture.³⁹

But the majority of the members of the church, like the majority of the community, would have come from Gentile and pagan backgrounds of numerous cultures.⁴⁰ The urgent warnings in 1 Corinthians 10 against partaking in feasts in pagan temples would not have been needed with a complete Jewish audience.⁴¹ Some of these, like the Titius Justus mentioned in Acts 18:7, may have been attracted to Judaism before Paul came to preach. They could have been “Godfearers,” Gentile adherents of the synagogue who had not taken the step of becoming full Jewish proselytes by undergoing circumcision.⁴² Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that Jews and Gentiles were the members of the Corinthian Church (Acts 18).⁴³

The Status of Women in Greco-Roman World

Women were seen to be nonpersons on the Greek side and respectable Greek women did not appear in public alone. Women could be seen alone in public only in

³⁸Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997) 6.

³⁹Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans) 24-25.

⁴⁰Graig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: The NIV Application Commentary*, 19.

⁴¹ Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, 24.

⁴²Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians: Interpretation, A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 6.

⁴³Daniel Berchie, *Silence in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 14, Making Case for the Study* (Accra, Ghana: Valley View University) Slide 13.

places like Ephesus where they were prostitutes for the goddess Diana. People were said to be bound into a certain station. It was a belief that the gods had created things that way. Women were things and had no rights and there existed the notion that the man is intended by nature to rule as husband, father, and master, and that failure to adhere to this proper hierarch is detrimental not only to the household but also to the life of the state. This proper order was a serious matter of crucial social and political concern. This great concern for proper management of the household was based on the idea that the security and unity of the state depended on it.⁴⁴

Furthermore, a Greek girl was taught very little beyond the domestic arts (except in Sparta, where she was trained in athletics). She was likely married off at fourteen or fifteen to a man twice her age, by arrangement between her father and the groom's father. Thereafter she was mistress of the house, managed the household, the slaves, if any, and the children and even the woman who had slaves do spun wool⁴⁵

Compared to Greek women, Roman women were freer. They did not have to go veiled. They could spend time with their husbands. They could go out alone and could even talk to other men. Unlike Greek women, Roman women were educated. Wealthy women had tutors in the home and poorer women went to school. Even some female slaves were educated. Among Romans it was possible to find emancipated, respected upper-class women.⁴⁶

⁴⁴“The Social Status of First Century Women in Relationship to Scriptural Household Codes,” accessed 28 November 2016, http://r.bz.net/i/u/10117543/f/THE_SOCIAL_STATUS_OF_FIRST_CENTURY.WOMEN.pdf.

⁴⁵Julia Nueffer, “First-Century Cultural Backgrounds in the Greco-Roman Empire: Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church” In *Symposium on the role of women in the church*, Biblical Research Institute Committee (eds.). (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1984), 54.

⁴⁶“The Social Status of First Century Women in Relationship to Scriptural Household Codes,” 2-3.

However, legally, Roman women were seen as suffering from weakness and light-mindedness and in need of the *pater familias* to provide guardianship. This was usually a woman's father or someone who received guardianship from her father. Guardianship did not pass automatically to a woman's husband. There were some advantages to women being under their fathers, since women lived in the home of a husband who had no authority over her. This also helped protect her from abuse.⁴⁷

Women were required to conform themselves to their husbands and a man could kill his wife for merely drinking wine. Furthermore, under first century Roman law, only the husband could initiate a divorce. Until late in Roman history, women lacked names and were called by family names with feminine endings. Sisters had the same name and were identified as “elder” “younger”, “first”, “third”, etc. Girl children were not listed as survivors on their mother's tombstones, as were boys. The *pater familias* had absolute control.

As women gained freedom, men's fear grew. It was believed that religious groups that attracted women and slaves were particularly likely to be subversive of societal stability. For example, when a woman became a Christian, she was, for the very first time in her life regarded fully as a human being. The household was a major feature of the Jewish world, and the *oikos* likewise in the Greco-Roman world. When women became Christians without their husbands, there was a “disruption of the family.”⁴⁸ Thus for the most women in Greco-Roman culture, their husbands still controlled their lives.⁴⁹

⁴⁷“The Social Status of First Century Women in Relationship to Scriptural Household Codes,” 3.

⁴⁸Ibid, 3-4.

⁴⁹Julia Nueffer, “First-Century Cultural Backgrounds in the Greco-Roman Empire: Symposium on the Role of Women in the Church” 54.

Shame, Honor and Gender Roles in the Greco-Roman World

The values of honor and shame have indeed played a prominent role in anthropological studies of Mediterranean regions. It is argued that the relationship of honor and shame had a direct impact on what we call gender distinctions and expectations. In general, anthropological studies have identified honor as a value that was embodied by males and shame as embodied by women.⁵⁰ Shame is intimately connected with woman's variant of honor. It also determines her reputation, claim to pride and status in the community. Unlike male honor, female honor (sometimes referred to as shame in a specialized sense) is a passive quality focused primarily on preservation of virginity prior to marriage and faithfulness to one's husband thereafter.⁵¹

Furthermore, the perceived embodiment of honor by men and shame by women directly impacted the manner in which families and households were either respected or disrespected. Therefore, a woman who was believed to embody shame directly brought dishonor to her family while a woman who lived according to gender standards did not dishonor the male members of her household.⁵²

In the Greco-Roman world men believed that women were unable to "demonstrate an appropriate sense of shame", to guard their chastity and to act in an appropriate manner. As such, it was perceived as necessary to protect women from themselves and men as well as forcefully maintain the division and separation of

⁵⁰Angela Brkich-Sutherland "The Relationship between Apocalypticism and the Status of Women in Early Christian Communities" (MA thesis, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 2007), 28.

⁵¹Joahanna Stiebet "The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution" (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland 1998) 16.

⁵²Angela Brkich-Sutherland, "The Relationship between Apocalypticism and the Status of Women in Early Christian Communities," 28.

women from the public world in order to defend the honor or reputation of the male members of their families.⁵³

Of particular importance was the fact that Mediterranean women were valued especially for their chastity. A violation of a woman's chastity was not only seen as an attack on the woman, but more importantly upon the household to which she belonged. Once lost, a woman's honor is irrecoverable. Thus, a man's honor is described as being closely tied to the sexual purity of his mother, wife, sisters and daughters.⁵⁴ By controlling women, men believed that they could control their own honor.⁵⁵

The Greco-Roman belief that female behavior must be monitored and controlled by men in order to secure honor and household integrity has been linked with the dichotomous division of society into public and private spheres. Men and women became associated with separate spheres and were expected to act within the realm or limitations of such spheres in order to maintain and preserve traditional order. The ideal seclusion of women within the private/domestic realm was believed to guarantee men with the security and maintenance of their honor.⁵⁶

The separation of women from men and the man's public sphere within this protected domain is the chief means by which sexual purity is both guarded and demonstrated to the community. The Greco-Roman household unit was concerned not

⁵³Angela Brkich-Sutherland, "The Relationship between Apocalypticism and the Status of Women in Early Christian Communities," 28-9.

⁵⁴Joahanna Stiebet, "The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution" 16. A woman's lost honour occasions shame, which has a powerfully defiling property and affects not only the woman herself but her kindred too.

⁵⁵Angela Brkich-Sutherland, "The Relationship between Apocalypticism and the Status of Women in Early Christian Communities," 29.

⁵⁶Ibid, 29.

only with the actual activities of the female members of their family, but also with outward appearances and criticism. As a rule, women took no part in public life and did not participate in activities deemed appropriate for men.⁵⁷

Though women were not granted access to the highly valued and honored roles found within public life, this does not suggest that they were not given an important domestic role. The main role and function of women in society was to “bear legitimate offspring”. Men could not biologically fulfill this role and as such women were perceived as necessary for the maintenance of the household and family unit. Procreation not only served personal goals, but was also perceived as a civic duty. The birth of children was necessary in order to maintain the population. Women were thus identified by their roles as mothers and their ability to reproduce legitimate heirs. A woman who did neither was perceived in a negative fashion by both family and society.⁵⁸

The life and identity of women in this period are defined by their sexual and family roles, whereas men are defined by their roles in citizenship, landownership, and client systems, so that success and failure cannot be gauged on one scale for both. Because women were ideally restricted to the household domain they were generally not given the opportunity to participate in public life fully or assert themselves in public. If such activity was attempted by women, they were perceived in a negative manner because “in popular belief, not only was self-assertion on a woman’s part regarded as self-indulgence and licentious; crowds of women were considered a

⁵⁷Angela Brkich-Sutherland, “The Relationship between Apocalypticism and the Status of Women in Early Christian Communities,” 28-9.

⁵⁸Ibid, 31.

public menace.” The involvement of women in the public realm was perceived by men as threatening social order and therefore needed to be restricted.⁵⁹

Occasion of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

Exactly what occasioned the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 may not be easy to come by with. But one could somewhat agree with Baumert:

In any case Paul is not here intending to set limits to a basic movement for emancipation, but rather to take the position that currently certain women, on the basis of their newfound freedom, have gone too far—and this is even perceived by other women. He is thus not anticipating a universal protest by women, but, as with 11:16, from “some contentious people” (men and women). Here, however, they should first subordinate themselves to the community assembly. This implies subordination to the men only indirectly; and it applies also to unmarried women and to widows.⁶⁰

Conclusion

In order to better understand the injunction to women in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, we have seen a few things about the background of our problematic text. Paul’s injunction to women in 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 was probably influenced by his both Judaistic, Hellenistic background as well as Jesus influence on him. We cannot, of course, know as much as we would like; numerous details about the background are unknown to us. In reading or studying any passage in 1 Corinthians we see at best, through a glass darkly. Nonetheless, we have sketched in some information that provides a helpful context for the study of our passage.

⁵⁹Angela Brkich-Sutherland, “The Relationship between Apocalypticism and the Status of Women in Early Christian Communities,” 31, 32.

⁶⁰Norbert Baumert, *Woman and Man in Paul: Overcoming a Misunderstanding* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) 197.

CHAPTER 4

AN INTERPRETATION OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14:34-35

This section of study tends to apply various exegetical tools in unravelling the meaning of the injunction to women embedded in the argument of Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. This paper studies the context of the exegetical text and finds ways to understand the environment and circumstances upon which the text can be understood. This study provides an avenue for a syntactical understanding of the structures evident within the context of the passage in focus and understanding this will provide an in-depth to the intent of the author and the impression it conveys.

A careful exegetical analysis of the problem passage will be done. The larger and the immediate contexts of the passage as well as the clear understanding of the background of the problem passage will be the key in understanding the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. Also, a word study of two important words in 1 Corinthians 14-34 “ἐκκλησίᾳ and νόμοι” is done with the aim of finding an interpretative understanding of the basis of the injunction to women. This study however concludes by discovering the theological implication (embedded in the conclusion) such an understanding of the text will have upon believers.

In this section I will argue as follows: that the injunction to women in 14:34-35 makes sense when it is seen in its literary and sociohistorical context as (a) directed to women in particular, but (b) not addressed to the exercise of any particular spiritual gift or the carrying out of any sacred function; (c) intended to deal, not with sacred speech (prophecy, tongues, etc.), but with ordinary talk that was (d) carried on

by women in public (e). Paul's concern was behavior that threatened the honor of the women and implicitly called into question their relationship to their husbands, guardians and men (f) Paul's motive was that "orderly management of the existing social codes ensure an orderly society."

Context of Study

There are various indicators that can help in determining the beginning of a new unit or paragraph or how to limit a particular textual passage to a desirable unit and such indicators will help in highlighting the context – larger and immediate contexts of the passage.

Larger Context

The Corinthian believers had asked Paul several questions that he answered in 1 Corinthians. He introduced each answer or section with *περί δέ*¹ which means "and concerning" in 7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12. Each *περί δέ* clearly and effectively demarcates the argument of Paul from the other and it appears six times in the book of 1 Corinthians. However, the passage for this study finds its place in the fourth *περί δέ* which discussed questions about spiritual gifts (chaps. 12-14).

In discussing spiritual gifts Paul explains who a spiritual person is in 12:1-3, points out different kinds of spiritual abilities, how they operate and how they are to be used in the assembly 12:4-14-25, and in 14:26-40 Paul explains the need for controlled speech and orderliness in worshipping assembly.

¹Andrew B. Spurgeon, "Pauline Commands and Women in 1 Corinthians 14" In *Bibliotheca Sacra* 168 (July-September 2011): 317.

The Immediate Context

In order to pinpoint on the boundaries that will provide us the immediate context for the study, some clear-cut signal remain obvious.

1. In 1 Corinthians 14: 26; Τί οὖν appears as rhetorical question and Τί οὖν ἐστίν, ἀδελφοί; which is a vocative form of address also appears here. These two serve in introducing a new theme.
2. Still in this verse the word οἰκοδομήν or οικοδομέω which has appeared in 14 vv. 3, 4, 5, 12, 17 also appears here which suggests what the section is all about.
3. Change of subject to tongue speaker in v. 27.
4. Change of subject to προφηται in v. 29
5. Change of subject to γυναῖκες in v. 33b
6. From 1 Cor. 14:26 to verse 1 Cor. 14: 39 the words *glwssa*, *lalew*, *gunaikej*, *sigaw* and *ekklhsiaj* frequently appear. The point is that, how to speak, how to act and how to use tongues decently in the church for edification dominates the theme of this section.
7. The chapter concludes with a complementary principle, “Let all things be done properly and with order” v. 40.
8. However, at the end of the discourses, there appears the use of the transitional adverb *de* in verse 15:1 which signals the beginning of a new argument, which remains directly unrelated to the discussion about οἰκοδομήν or οικοδομέω; rather, this opened up the discussion about resurrection.
9. From the above analysis, it can be suggested that the issue of the “injunction to women” in 14:34-35 falls within the immediate context of 14:26-40.
10. It should be noted that not everything in the context has to do with the use of spiritual gifts; orderliness in the assembly is also in focus.
11. It is in light of this context that we must view Paul's words about women talking “in the assembly.”

The smallest unit. However, in order to locate the smallest unit in which the problem text of this study is located, it will be proper to identify a salient point. The injunction to women should probably be seen to start from Ὡς² ἐν πάσαις ταῖς

² Analysis of “Ὡς” BibleWorks 8. “Ὡς” introduces the characteristic quality of a person, thing, action, etc., as Lk 16:1; 23:14; J 1:14; Ro 1:21; 3:7; 9:32; 1 Cor 3:10; 4:7; Col 3:23; 2 Th 2:2.

ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἁγίων 33b. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza notes that “the rule for wives³ is different insofar as it has introduction (v.33a) and end with a double rhetorical question (v.36).”⁴ Hence, verses 33b-36 can be suggested to be the unit of the immediate context of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

What did Paul say in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36? ... As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak but they should be subordinate as even the law says. 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. What! Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?

The first part of the injunction (vv. 33b-35) is an authoritarian, essentially apodictic decree concerning the conduct of women in church. It is composed of two interrelated and parallel articles introduced by a universalizing phrase (“as in all the churches of the saints”) which serves to validate the decree. The second article of the decree anticipates a condition under which it might be objected that women ought to be permitted to speak. Accordingly, it is introduced by the conditional clause, “If there is anything they desire to know.” This conditional clause loosely (structurally) parallels the introductory universalizing phrase preceding the first article.⁵

Both articles of the decree are validated by clauses introduced by the word γάρ (“for”). The first article is validated by an appeal to (ο νόμος, “the law”). The second article is validated by appeal to the prevailing understanding of what was “shameful” for women. Shame, often the female counterpart of (male) honor, arises from violation of social values and means rejection of the transgressor by her society. It is

³Though she uses wives to translate γυναῖκες this study will still argue against this later.

⁴Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, “Women in Pauline Churches,” accessed 15 December 2016, www.tonyburke.ca/wp-content/uploads/1978-fiorenza-womeninpaulinechurch.pdf

⁵Robert W. Allison, Let Women Be Silent in The Churches (1 Cor. 14:33b-36): What Did Paul Really Say, And What Did It Mean? *In Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 32 (1988) 44-45.

evident, then, that the second article in this decree is in fact promoting a socially desirable pattern of behavior in opposition to another ideal—that women ought to participate in the understanding of what was said in the church service.⁶ For the rhetorical questions in v. 36, it appears the Corinthian are trying to make up their own rules independent of other churches, hence this rebuke.

However, the repetition and emphasis place upon the injunction to women implies the importance of paying close attention to the statement and taking out time for a close study and comprehension.

Literary and Socio-Historical Analysis of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36

Paul started 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36⁷ with a reference to the universal practice of the Christian church concerning the proper function of women in the Christian assembly.⁸ He then issues an order for women⁹ to be silent, which is added with

⁶Ibid., 45

⁷D.A. Carson “Silent in the Churches”: On the Role of Women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 140-1. The demarcation of the passage to be studied deserves some comment, since the precise link between verse 33a and verse 33b, and therefore between verses 33b and verse 34, is disputed. Do we read, “For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the congregation of the saints”; or “As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches”? The latter is stylistically inelegant, for in Greek the words rendered “congregations” and “churches” by the NIV are the same word: i.e., “As in all the churches of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches.” But what some see as stylistic inelegance, others see as powerful emphasis achieved by repetition. Moreover, if verse 33b is linked with what precedes, it is uncertain just what the line of thought is. In the sentence, “For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the congregations of the saints,” what is being compared? God and the congregations of the saints? God’s peaceful order with what is in all the congregations of the saints? The sentence can be salvaged only by understanding an additional phrase, such as: “and this principle must be operative in your church, as in all the congregations of the saints.” On the whole, it seems best to take verse 33b with what follows. But even if someone prefers the other option, little is changed in the interpretation of verses 34-36, since the phrase “in the churches” (in the plural) is found in verse 34.

⁸H. Wayne House, “The Speaking of Women and the Prohibition of the Law” 301.

⁹ Andrew Spurgeon argues that αἱ γυναῖκες in 1 Cor. 14:34 should not be read as “wives” only as some scholars argue. Paul seems not to have differentiated between “wives” and “women” in this passage as he did elsewhere in 7:25, 28, 34, 36-38 (“virgins,” παρθένοι); 7:8 (“widows,” χήρα); and 7:8, 11, 32, 34 (“unmarried,” ἄγαμοι). Most likely Paul was addressing all women, and the phrase τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας (lit., “their own men”) in 14:35 means their husbands, fathers, or brothers.

several qualifying statements: (1) negating the opposite: talking is not allowed; (2a) a positive action as alternative behavior: they are to “be in submission”; (2b) a rationale for the submission: the law says it; (3) such talking in the church is said to be “shameful” (v. 35b). Paul also takes up a hypothetical objection to the rule: what if such women wish to “learn” something (v. 35a)? Answer: they are to ask their husbands at home (v. 35a). A final justification for the norm is given, which echoes the reference to the precedent of other churches in v. 33b and reminds the Corinthians that it is not their place to be innovators in regard to how the gospel is to be lived out; they are not its authors or its sole recipients (v. 36).¹⁰ Philip Payne notes that the apparent absolute meaning of these verses is repeated three times for maximum emphasis.¹¹ In analysing this problematic text one should note some crucial items:

Paul’s injunction to women appears to be too absolute. On the surface this apostolic dictum appears to be too absolute. It is important to note Paul’s unqualified use of *λαλέω* in vv. 34-35. In all the contexts, the smallest unit, the immediate context and the larger context, in all but one instance other than verses 34-35 (i.e., 13:11¹²), the word *λαλέω* is qualified so as to make it refer to spiritual speaking (12:3), tongues (12:30; 13:1; 14:2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11¹³, 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27, 28, 39), revelation,

¹⁰Terence Paige, “The Social Matrix of Women’s Speech at Corinth: The Context and Meaning of the Command to Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36” in *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 12.2 (2002) 221.

¹¹Philip B. Payne, “The Bible teaches the Equal Standing of Man and Woman” in *Priscilla Papers* Vol. 29, No 1. Winter 7. Though he argues that the prohibition is against all kinds of speech in order to arrive as his view of “interpolation” it should be noted that this is contrary to the argument of Paul in the context of the injunction to women.

¹²This is the first place in chapters 12, 13 and 14 where *λαλέω* is not qualified. It appears spiritual talk is not in focus specifically in this verse. This is also one of the clues in interpreting the unqualified use of *λαλέω* in 14: 34-35.

¹³This is the only place where *λαλέω* is indirectly qualified to refer to speaking in tongues. The context shows this.

knowledge, prophecy, word of instruction (14: 3, 6, 29). The unqualified use of λαλέω is distinctive.¹⁴

Paul does not censure sacred speech, in fact; he even encourages the ἀδελφοί¹⁵ to use their spiritual gifts in the church assembly (14:39). He never forbids glossolalia, prophecy, or any spiritual gifts mentioned in the context. Though there are commands to “silence” when such sacred speech is not edifying the church (14:26, 30), it should be noted those ones are qualified: glossolalia and prophecy. Paul seems to prohibit women speaking generally.¹⁶ This counts heavily against theories that Paul is here banning women from leading, or providing false teaching, or even from being merely disruptive or from even using any of the spiritual gifts when used in the right

¹⁴L. Ann Jervis, “1 Corinthians 14.34-35 A Reconsideration of Paul’s Limitation of the Free Speech of Some Corinthian Women” in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 58 (1995) 61.

¹⁵Scott Munger educates that Many NT books are letters written to or about people called adelphoi, a word historically translated in English as “brothers.” The meaning and translation of this term is important, a fact supported by public and scholarly discussion about it. Many people claim that, since the Greek says “brothers,” it should be translated by the same word in English. In fact, the Greek does not say “brothers.” Ancient Greeks did not speak English. The Greek says adelphoi. In these passages, the ESV includes an accurate footnote to its rendering “brothers”: “The plural Greek word adelphoi . . . refers to siblings in a family. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, adelphoi may refer either to men or to both men and women who are siblings (brothers and sisters) in God’s family, the church.” The central question for translators is: What does adelphoi mean in this or that context? Some translations render the term as “brothers” (ESV, KJV, NASB, NIV 1984, RSV). Others say “brothers and sisters” (GW, NCV, NET, NIV 2011, NLT, NRSV). A few, similar to the latter in terms of gender, read “friends” (CEV, REB, TEV) or “fellow believers” (TFT). Translators cannot skirt the issue. We must determine if the NT documents in view were written equally to male and female believers. If not, then the rendering should be simply “brothers.” But if women were included, then which is more precise in modern English—“brothers” or “brothers and sisters”? As any dictionary proves, many words have multiple definitions. So the key question is the same with adelphoi as with other Greek or Hebrew terms and expressions: Which meaning best fits the context? Put another way, which meaning did the author intend to convey? Whatever choice is made, translators interpret. See Scott Munger, “Women, the Church, and Bible Translation: Key Passages, Issues, and Interpretive Options” *Priscilla Papers* Vol. 29, No. 2 Spring 2015

¹⁶Antoinette Clark Wire concludes that Paul’s regulation refers to women generally. The Greek term with which the sentence begins, “the women,” could mean ‘wives’ in a conjugal context, but there is no indication of that here. In a separate sentence six clauses later he does refer to “their own men” of whom they should ask questions, and this is often read “husbands.” Yet the phrase is appropriate not only for wives, since daughters, widows, and women slaves are just as subordinate to the man of the house. See Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Corinthians Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul’s Rhetoric* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990) 15

direction 14: 26.¹⁷ It will be incorrect to restrict λαλέω in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36.

The more immediate context is τάξις (order) in the assembly.

Justification for the injunction. The clue in interpreting this passage should be seen in the justification given for the injunction to women. The justification is what we see in 1 Corinthians 14: 35c. “αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ for it is shameful for a woman to speak **in church** 1Cor. 14:35c.”

The word **ekkleesia** comes from the adjective ekkleetos, meaning “called out,” and refers in ordinary Greek usage to a gathering of citizens in a town or city called out from their homes into some public place, a lawful assembly of citizens. Compare the use of ekkleesia in Acts 19:39 as designating an assembly convened for the sake of deliberating and deciding an issue. In the Septuagint ekkleesia is used often as an equivalent to the Hebrew qahal, the assembly of the Israelites, especially when gathered for sacred purposes. In the koine, the word can also designate a gathering or throng of persons assembled by chance or tumultuously, as in Acts 19:32 and 41.¹⁸

In a Christian sense, the word refers to a local congregation as in 1 Corinthians 14:23, which speaks of the whole (local) ekkleesia coming together in one place for worship; or to the worshipping assembly itself, as in 1 Corinthians 14:19 and 35, where the reference is to the speaking, respectively, of Paul and of a woman to the church at worship.¹⁹

In all these references to ekkleesia it appears it simply refers to public gathering of people whether for secular or religious purpose. From this analysis it can

¹⁷Terence Paige, “The Social Matrix of Women's Speech at Corinth: The Context and Meaning of the Command to Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36” 221.

¹⁸Walter A. Maier, “An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-38” in *Concordia Theological Quarterly* Volume 55: Numbers 2-3 (April-July 1991) 81-2.

¹⁹Ibid, 82.

be suggested that Paul is saying “It is shameful for a woman to talk in public gathering of people.” It is possible because of their newfound freedom in Christ the women were freely talking and asking question in the assembly 14:35a. Paul reminded them “It is shameful for a woman to talk in public gathering of people.”

Paul’s command to silence versus Paul’s permission to pray and prophesy. Paul’s injunction to women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 must not be seen as conflicting with his earlier permission to women to pray and prophesy in 1 Corinthians 11:5 for some reasons. If Paul gave this command it is a reasonable assumption that he has not changed his mind for what he allowed in 11:5.²⁰

Secondly, there has been no proof that NT prophecy has been discontinued with. The LXX uses προφητη to translate aybln, the commonly used Hebrew word for an Old Testament prophet. By exclusively applying the same term (προφητη) to inspired spokesmen under the new covenant, the NT authors were consciously acknowledging their continuity with OT prophets. Moreover, in his sermon at Pentecost, Peter identifies the events of Acts 2:1–13 with Joel’s prediction that, under the new covenant, believers would prophesy (Joel 2:28–32). Joel thus anticipates a continuity between the two forms of prophecy, and Peter’s declaration confirms their unity (Acts 2:17–21).²¹

It is clear that, in the early church, this important group of men and women known as prophets are regularly listed immediately after the apostles (1 Corinthians 12: 28-29; Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; 4:11), while the tasks of evangelist, pastor and teacher, to which later Christians have always given a high priority, are regularly

²⁰Terence Paige, “The Social Matrix of Women's Speech at Corinth: The Context and Meaning of the Command to Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36” 222.

²¹James Greenbury, “1 Corinthians 14:34–35: Evaluation of Prophecy Revisited” in *Journal of Evangelical Theological Seminary* 51/4 (December 2008) 724.

placed after the prophets in order of importance (1 Corinthians 12:28-29; Ephesians 4:11; Acts 13:1; Romans 12:6-8).²² Thus, in Paul's mind, the prophet held a position in the church second only to the apostles, and ahead of teachers.

Furthermore, to suppress prophecy was to "quench the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19), because prophecy was a "manifestation of the Spirit" (1 Cor 14:12). That is why the NT prophet could proclaim "Thus says the Holy Spirit" (Acts 21:11), reflecting the OT prophetic formula "Thus says the Lord." In fact, Paul classed prophets alongside apostles as the foundation on which the church was erected (Eph. 2:20; 3:5). Thus, there is no compelling evidence to suggest that, throughout the NT, prophecy is anything other than uniformly revelatory, inspired, and authoritative.²³

In addition, Paul exhorts and encourages the entire Christian community that comprises of both male and female to "seek to prophesy" both prior to and immediately following this injunction to women (14:1, 5, 26, 29, 39; implied at 14:12). In none of these places does he explicitly delimit this, as if it were for men only.²⁴

The women's speech is labelled as "shameful" 14: 35. This strong term is an important clue in Greco-Roman culture that is highly concerned about shame and

²²John Drane, *Introducing the New Testament*, rev and updated (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001) 288. These prophets seem to have been people with particularly close access to God's will, which enabled them not only to forecast certain specific events in the future (as Agabus did, Acts 11:28; 21:10-11; see also Revelation 22:6), but also to deliver other authoritative guidance for situations that arose within the church. In Acts 13:1-4 the prophets of the church at Antioch, inspired by the Holy Spirit, gave directions that Paul and Barnabas should be 'Set apart for...the work to which I have called them,' while the four daughters of Phillip the evangelist regularly acted as prophets in the church at Caesarea (Acts 21:8-9). The deliverance of prophecy was also involved in the appointments of Timothy (1 Timothy 1:18; 4:14), while at other times prophets could be found rebuking Christians who were lazy, or encouraging those whose faith was under attack (see for example Acts 15: 32; 1 Corinthians 14:3).

²³James Greenbury, "1 Corinthians 14:34-35: Evaluation of Prophecy Revisited" 724.

²⁴ Terence Paige, "The Social Matrix of Women's Speech at Corinth: The Context and Meaning of the Command to Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36," 222.

honor. What is it about women speaking that is “shameful” here?²⁵ A person born into the Mediterranean world, whether Gentile or Jewish was trained from childhood to seek honor and to avoid shame²⁶ meaning that they would be sensitive to public recognition or reproach.²⁷

In the Greco-Roman world men believed that women were unable to “demonstrate an appropriate sense of shame,” to guard their chastity and to act in an appropriate manner. As such, it was perceived as necessary to protect women from themselves and men as well as forcefully maintain the division and separation of women from the public world in order to defend the honour or reputation of the male members of their families. Of particular importance was the fact that Mediterranean women were valued especially for their chastity. A violation of a woman's chastity was not only seen as an attack on the woman, but more importantly upon the household to which she belonged. By controlling women, men believed that they could control their own honour.²⁸

The ideal seclusion of women within the private/domestic realm was believed to guarantee men with the security and maintenance of their honour. “The separation of women from men and the man’s public sphere within this protected domain is the chief means by which sexual purity is both guarded and demonstrated to the community.” The Greco-Roman household unit was concerned not only with the

²⁵Terence Paige, “The Social Matrix of Women's Speech at Corinth: The Context and Meaning of the Command to Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36,” 223.

²⁶ Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (DNTB), (2000), s.v. “Honor and Shame.”

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Angela Brkich-Sutherland “The Relationship between Apocalypticism and the Status of Women in Early Christian Communities,” 28, 29.

actual activities of the female members of their family, but also with outward appearances and criticism.

“As a rule, women took no part in public life” and did not participate in activities deemed appropriate for men.²⁹ Any access that women had to the public realm was done through the back door: “women exercised their influence through men and not over them.”³⁰ Thus, a woman talking in public was perceived as exposing herself to sexual advances by men.³¹ This kind of behavior was only not tolerated but was also deemed socially inappropriate; hence, it was a “shame” for woman to talk in public.³²

Paul obviously never uses the term “shameful” to describe the abuse of glossolalia or prophecy in 14:1-33a. As a matter of fact, he never calls false teaching “shameful.” Neither would the word “shameful” fit the situation if the problem were simply disruptive chatter. This could be dealt with by a simple call to order and quiet, as in the case of multiple prophecies or glossolalia when they occur simultaneously (14:27-31).³³

David Garland also opines that “it is crucial to note that Paul does not label the disallowed behavior as disorderly (1 Cor. 14:33a) but as “shameful” or “disgraceful”

²⁹Ibid, 29.

³⁰ Angela Brkich-Sutherland “The Relationship between Apocalypticism and the Status of Women in Early Christian Communities” 30.

³¹Antoinette Clark Wire also notes that the further explanation for the women not being permitted to speak in church is the shame involved, apparently through the dishonoring of their husbands/fathers/masters through the sexual implications of public display. 154.

³²Nobert Baumert opines that, given the Hellenistic environment, it would have been a “progressive” step even to allow women to be present during discussions. This certainly is to be attributed to the new brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ. 196.

³³Terence Paige, “The Social Matrix of Women's Speech at Corinth: The Context and Meaning of the Command to Silence in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36” 223.

(αἰσχρὸν, *aischron*, 14:35). Shame, in this context, pertains to what society views as inappropriate behavior and is relative to a given culture.”³⁴

Paul’s appeal to ὁ νόμος “the law” 14:34. *The use of νόμος (nomos) in NT and LXX.* The word *nomos* appears more than 100 times in the NT. In the NT νόμος is used (1) of the “law” in general, (1a) e.g., Rom 2:12,13, expressing a general principle relating to “law”; (1b) 5:13, referring to the period between Adam’s sin and the given of the Law. (2) Of a force or influence impelling to action, Rom 7:21, 23, “a different law”. (3) Of the Mosaic Law, the “Law” of Sinai, (3a) with the definite article, e.g., Matt. 5:18; John 1:17; Rom. 2:15, 18, 20, 26, 27; 3:19; 4:15; 7:4, 7, 14, 16, 22; 8:3, 4, 7; Gal. 3:10, 12; 1 Cor. 14:34, (3b) without the definite article, thus stressing the Mosaic Law in its quality as “law” e.g., Rom. 2:14; 5:20; 7:9, where the stress in the quality lies in this, that “the commandment which was unto (i.e., which he thought would be a means of) life,” he found to be “unto (i.e., to have the effect of revealing his actual state of) death. (4) Of the books which contain the “law”, (4a) of the Pentateuch e.g., Matt. 5: 17; 12:5; Luke 16:16. (4b) of the Psalms, John 10:34; 15:25, (4c) of Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, John 12; 34, (4d) of Psalms and Isaiah, Rom 3:19.

From all this it may be inferred that in the most comprehensive sense was an alternative title to “The Scriptures.” (6) The following phrases specify the law of various kinds; (6a) the law of Christ, Gal 6:2 it may mean a principle by which Christ Himself lived in the days of His flesh. (6b) Law of Faith (Rom 3:27) i.e., a principle which demand only faith on one’s part, (6c) the law of mind (Rom 7:23) the principle which governs the new nature, (6d) the law of sin (Rom 7:23) the influence to do evil,

³⁴David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003) 668.

(6e) law of liberty (James 1:25) the term for all the Scriptures, (6f) the royal law (Jas. 2:8) the law of love, (6g) the law of the spirit of life (Rom 8:2) the animating principle by which the Holy Spirit acts as the imparter of life. In the LXX *nomos* could refer to a specific regulation (Ex. 12:43), and also an entire regulation from God (Ex. 16:28).

Greco-Roman Usage of νόμος (nomos). The Greek word rendered “law” by the translators of the NT is *nomos*. This word meant both “law” and “custom” and so could refer to laws of a society and to that society’s habits and custom. Custom was one of the cornerstones of law in Greco-Roman World: “The commonwealth of Rome is founded firm on ancient customs and of men of might.”³⁵

What “Law” Paul refers to in 14:34? There is a great debate as to which “Law” is Paul referring to in 1 Corinthians 14:34. Chrysostom,³⁶ Robertson and Plummer³⁷ see the “Law” as referring to Genesis 3:16, the “subordination of Eve” like other scholars. Wayne House argues that the “Law” is referring to the Old Testament’s view of female subordination³⁸ while Adam D. Hensley opines the “Law” is a reference to Genesis 2.³⁹ Furthermore, Walter A. Maier believes Paul has Genesis 2 and 3 in mind.⁴⁰

³⁵Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (DNTB), (2000), s.v. “Law/Nomos in Greco-Roman World”

³⁶Chrysostom, “Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, Homily 37,” NPNF, First Series, 12:222.

³⁷ Robertson and Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 325.

³⁸H. Wayne House, “The Speaking of Women and the Prohibition of Women” 301.

³⁹Adam D. Hensley, “sigaw, lalew, AND upotassw” in 1 Corinthians 14:34 in their Literary and Rhetorical Context” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Seminary* 55/2 (2012) 355.

⁴⁰ Walter A. Maier, “An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-38” in *Concordia Theological Quarterly* Volume 55: Numbers 2-3 87.

Since no text is specifically mentioned one must be very careful as to what “Law” Paul is referring to in 1 Corinthians 14: 34. Ann Jervis puts it correctly when he writes that:

Here it is necessary to state the obvious: 1 Cor. 14:34 does not give a specific reference for the ‘law’, and any candidates for the reference will make sense only in the context of a particular reading of the passage. As women's speaking or silence does not figure in Gen. 3.16, this ‘law’ is a sensible choice only with an a priori understanding that the agenda of 1 Cor. 14.34-35 concerns the promotion of gender hierarchy. The circular nature of the argument is clear.⁴¹

Daniel Berchie quoting Josephus: “The woman, says the Law, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be submissive.”⁴² And as established in the chapter three of this work, the Greeks also discouraged women from speaking in public. Since Jews and Gentiles constituted the church Paul probably appeals to a common cultural values shared by both ethnic groups as *the Law*.

Therefore, the only “law” that probably fits this context of Paul generally prohibiting women speech can be seen to refer to the “social customs and rules of the first century Judaism and Greco-Roman world.” Since no text is specified in 14:34 and Paul’s concern was orderliness in the assembly and that the culture he wrote to was the one that was highly concerned about “honor and shame” it appears this is the case. Pheme Perkins correctly observes when he states that:

These rules address the general case of a well-ordered worshipping assembly that applies in all the churches (1 Cor. 14:33b, 34). As in the situation of how women praying and prophesying should dress, the accepted social code of honor and disgrace determines the decision: it is a disgrace for a woman to speak in an assembly (14:35b). Clearly that same social code does not apply today, as women have public roles as leaders of nations, corporations,

⁴¹ L. Ann Jervis, 1 Corinthians 14.34-35: A Reconsideration of Paul's Limitation of the Free Speech of Some Corinthian Women, 58.

⁴²Daniel Berchie, *Silence in Corinth: 1 Corinthians 14, Making Case for the Study*, Slide 12.

educational institutions, and so forth.⁴³

Paul's expression in 14:36. The sharp tone of 14:36 is puzzling: Has the word of God gone out from you or has it reached only you? Is Paul picking on women prophets whom he expects to be opposed to his authority in particular? Or is this simply a rhetorical way of insisting on Paul's authority to implement rules in Corinth that will bring their communal worship into line with the practice in churches generally? Because the adjective only is masculine plural, a direct challenge to women prophets seems unlikely.⁴⁴

Also unlikely is the counterproposal that treats 14:36 as a challenge to men who wish to deny women the right to speak in the assembly. Therefore, the expression is best considered a general reinforcement of Paul's authority to introduce rules. The masculine plural adjective indirectly may indicate that the apostle envisage male leaders as responsible for administering church affairs.⁴⁵

Integration of 14:33b-36 with 11:2-16. One might argue that 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 cannot be harmonized with 11:2-16. In 11:2-16 Paul had allowed women to pray and prophesy if they were covered. In this passage women who spoke under the influence of the Spirit in the church assembly were allowed provided they did it to edify the assembly 14:26. They cannot be seen as violating "the law" since they were not expressing their own authority. It is possible one may be speaking under the influence of the Spirit and the assembly is not edified 14:2; 27-28. Whereas in 14:33b-36 Paul censured the unspiritual talk of women. This was a general speech by

⁴³Pheme Perkins, *First Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012) 165.

⁴⁴Ibid., 165.

⁴⁵Ibid, 165.

women that were perceived as not being under divine control. This speech would be seen as violating “the Law” since it was not under the control of the Spirit.⁴⁶

Conclusion

It was the accepted social code of honor and shame that determines the injunction to women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36. The “speech” that is branded “shameful” by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 was not sacred speech at all; it was ordinary speech carried on by women in public gathering. What the content of this speech was we do not know, for it is not Paul's main concern. The main point is clear from the fact that Paul turns them away from speaking publicly in the assembly, directing them to speak with their own men at home because of the sexual implication of public display. Women's leadership is not the issue; rather, Paul's motive was that “orderly management of the existing social codes ensures an orderly society.” Today that same cultural social code does not apply, as women freely have public roles in one capacity or the other.

⁴⁶A no of scholars has conclusion that is similar to this. L. Ann Jervis concludes it is best to understand Paul censoring a type of speaking which he regards as unspiritual and uninspired. The women's speaking appears to be a type that Paul wishes clearly to distinguish from the spiritual speaking to which he has referred throughout ch. 14. 61; H. Wayne House opines that one might think that the injunction would be in contradiction to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, where Paul allowed women to pray and prophesy if their heads were covered. But in that passage the women were speaking divine utterances, whereas in 14:33b-36 they were not. Those who spoke under divine control were not expressing their own authority and so were not in violation of the Law. In denying public address to women Paul a fortiori denies also judging prophets and publicly disagreeing with their husbands. So then any public speaking other than a divine utterance would be in violation of Paul's prohibition in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36. 310; Nobert Baumert points out that in 11:2-16, praying out loud and prophetic discourse by women are presupposed as a contribution to the worship service, while in 14:33b-36 the woman seeks “to learn something.” This is doubtless just the first step to having a participation in council deliberations; however, even the idea of a woman asking questions in “public” is (still) frowned upon, not only in Jewish circles, but also within the Greek sphere. This is what is meant in v. 35b by “talking in the assembly” (*en ekklesia*).

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The text of 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 is being generated a great deal of debate as to what is actually its place and meaning in its both immediate and larger contexts. And because it appears from the surface to have contradicted Paul's earlier permission for women to pray and prophesy in 11:2-16 many scholars have tried to offer their solutions. From the ancient time to the modern time scholars have tried to interpret 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and also to show its relationship to 11:2-26.

In order to make sense of the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 the possible influences on the text were examined especially Paul's influences on women. Paul's geographical background as well as his Hellenistic and Cultural context and in addition Jesus influences on him was developed as his worldview on the problematic passage.

Once again, the socio-historical context of the passage was looked at and then added to it was its literary analysis. These two combined together to determine what Paul actually had in mind in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. More also, lexical study on some important words of the passage was done. All these combined to make sense of the interpretation of the passage.

Conclusion

From the various ancient and modern views regarding 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 that were examined and evaluated it was concluded that many of the views evaluated

so far do not really make sense of the injunction to women in 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35. However, this study has made effort to properly explain the meaning imbedded in the injunction to be silent to the women of Corinthian church.

This injunction however was in no doubt influenced by Paul's both Judaistic, Hellenistic background. Based on this it was concluded that it was the accepted social code of honor and shame that determines the injunction to women in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36. The "speech" that is branded "shameful" by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14 was ordinary speech carried on by women in public gathering.

The main point is clear from the fact that Paul turns women away from speaking publicly in the assembly. He directed them to speak with their own men at home because of the sexual implication of public display. Paul's motive was that "orderly management of the existing social codes ensures an orderly society." Today that same cultural social code does not apply, as women in many places freely have public roles in one capacity or the other.

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