

Scripture and the Exclusion of Women from the Pastorate

Lutheran Theological Journal 29/2 (1995) 74-81 and 29/3 (1995) 123-129.

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All too quickly one denomination after another has overturned the traditional teaching on the exclusion of women from the apostolic ministry of the Word. In most cases this has happened with little theological debate. The scriptural texts which have in the past been taken to establish this teaching have been dismissed as obscure or secondary or irrelevant. The traditional theological rationale has been rejected as untenable and sexist. This momentous innovation has been embraced by whole denominations, even though it lacks any clear dominical mandate or even an agreed theological rationale. As in the early church, the traditional teaching has been assailed by modern Marcionites, operating with the gospel as a critical principle, modern gnostics denying the divinely created order, and modern Montanists basing their authority on spiritual giftedness.

In the face of these developments and the pressure to ordain women in the Lutheran Church of Australia I propose to examine the scriptural foundations for the traditional position. In the process I want to remove from the traditional position any unwarranted assumptions and over-inflated conclusions. My hope is that we will eventually decide the question of the ordination of women exegetically and theologically rather than culturally and politically.

1. PRESUPPOSITIONS

a. Hermeneutical Presuppositions

The case for an exclusively male pastorate rests on certain basic presuppositions about the authority of the Holy Scriptures and its interpretation, as well as about the institution and nature of the public ministry. Since Australian Lutherans, as far as I can gather, largely agree on these, I shall not spell them out in any detail; that has been done elsewhere (Prenter, Gärtner, Kleinig).

- (1) The Holy Scriptures are the inspired, authoritative word of the Triune God. As such they are normative for the church in its preaching and in its formulation of doctrine. Since they record God's final and complete revelation to us in Christ, there can be no new revelation to the church about the ordination of women either from history or from what appear to be prophetic movements in the church. Cultural movements such as feminism do not produce new doctrines, but they can lead the church, as guided by the Holy Spirit, to a fuller understanding of that doctrine already given by Christ in the Holy Scriptures.
- (2) The two passages which traditionally have been used to exclude women from the pastorate, 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-15, are apostolic and canonical. This has indeed been questioned, but, for want of space, I shall merely assert that I do not accept the arguments for the interpolation of 1 Cor 14:34-35 (see Fee: 699-705; Hauke: 365-372, 390-394; Wire: 149-152) and against the apostolic authority of 1 Timothy.
- (3) Doctrine is to be established from those passages in the Holy Scriptures which clearly and explicitly deal with the subject matter of that doctrine, that is, the *sedes doctrinae*. If we wish to resolve any controversy theologically, we must then first identify these foundational texts. They should be statements or directives by Christ and his apostles rather than scriptural precedents which can, however, be used to elucidate the sense of those foundational texts.
- (4) Deductions from general theological principles, such as the universality of

grace or the equality of the sexes before God or even the gospel itself (see Habel and Wurst), cannot be used to override and discount the content of a particular passage, such as 1 Cor 14:33^b-38. Thus, for example, we do not derive our teaching on the Lord's Supper from the doctrine of justification by grace but from the words of Christ which institute and interpret it.

(5) Even though all commandments in the Scriptures are the word of God, they are not all equally applicable. Christ's commands to his apostles, such as his instructions to celebrate the sacrament in remembrance of him (Luke 22:19), are universally applicable for the church. When an apostle gives a directive, he usually indicates by what authority he speaks and to whom it applies. In determining the weight of a command, such as the command for silence in 1 Cor 14:34, we must therefore establish by what authority the apostle is speaking as well as to whom that command extends. However, even this endeavour must presuppose a willingness to submit to the authority of Scripture.

b. Theological Presuppositions about the Ministry of Word and Sacrament

Before we can settle who may be ordained, we must first establish the origin, nature, and function of the ministry which is conferred by ordination. While it is true that some evangelicals exclude women from positions of leadership in the church on the principle of universal male leadership of men over women in the order of creation, the traditional orthodox position has rested on the following presuppositions about the public ministry of word and sacrament.

- (1) Christ did not just give his word and sacraments to the church through the apostles, but he also simultaneously instituted the ministry for their administration. The public ministry of word and sacrament is apostolic in origin and character. It has not been invented by the church nor arranged by it to suit its particular social and cultural context. If that were so, the question of its occupancy would be determined purely by sociological factors.
- (2) When Christ instituted the ministry of word and sacrament, he entrusted it to his apostles as his representatives and leaders in his church. They, in turn, conferred that ministry on those whom they had instructed, and appointed them as leaders in the congregations which they established (Acts 14:23; 20:17-21,27; 2 Tim 2:1-2; Tit 1:5). Through the apostles and their successors in the apostolic ministry, God the Father (1 Cor 12:28), the Son (Eph 4:11), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) gave the church its pastor-teachers. The public ministry of the church is therefore not derived from the priesthood of believers in the congregation. If that were so, all of the baptised would be eligible for it.
- (3) Christ calls people into the apostolic ministry of the word through the church and its leaders. He does not confer that ministry on them by endowing them with special spiritual gifts through his Holy Spirit. In fact, when the leaders of the church consider whether or not to ordain someone, they are urged to assess the character of the candidate and his faithfulness to the apostolic tradition rather than his giftedness (1 Tim 3:1-7; 2 Tim 2:1-2; Tit 1:5-9). If spiritual giftedness were the basic qualification for the ministry, women could not possibly be excluded from the pastorate.
- (4) Since Christ instituted the apostolic ministry of the word, he determines its nature and function. Just as he commissioned the apostles, so he commissions their successors to preach and teach (Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 9:1-2; 24:44-49), to baptise (Matt 29:16-20; cf. Mark 16:16), to celebrate the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-25), and to forgive sins (John 20:22-23; cf. Matt 16:19; 20:18-20). When they fulfil these tasks, they do not merely perform certain functions for Christ which have little or nothing to do with them as people, but they actually thereby represent him and his heavenly Father personally to the assembled congregation (Matt 10:40; Luke 10:16;

John 13:20). The function of the pastoral office cannot therefore be divorced from the character and presence of the pastor as a personal representative of the Son and his heavenly Father.

(5) The office of pastor which is clearly defined and readily assessed is to be distinguished from the gift of prophecy which is not generally exercised and immediately recognised in the church today. While some pastors, like some apostles, may indeed prophesy, they do not receive their message directly from God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but they derive it from the Old Testament and the apostolic tradition in the New Testament. If, as Habel and Wurst suppose (131), the public ministry of the church were based on the gift of prophecy or identified with it, women could not be excluded from the pastorate, since the gift of prophecy is equally available to women and men (Acts 21:9; 1 Cor 11:5; 14:31).

2. SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS

Traditionally 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-12 have provided the scriptural basis for the exclusion of women from the apostolic ministry. Despite recent efforts to discount the relevance of these texts to the question of ordination of women, they have, I believe, withstood the attacks on them. In fact, the scrutiny of them in their context has led to a clearer understanding of them and their significance.

a. 1 Corinthians 14:33b-38

(1) Translation and structure

Whereas commentators have in the past often despaired at making sense of 1 Cor 14:34-35, concentration on the structure of the passage in context and its pattern of rhetoric have established the unity of vv 33b-38 as a coherent argument (see Dautzenberg: 253-273, 291-298; Hauke: 364-396). Its argument is structured as follows:

- (a) *As in all the churches of the saints,
the women must remain silent in the churches,
for it is not permitted for them to speak,
but they must be subordinate, as the law says.*
- (b) *If they wish to learn something,
let them question their husbands at home,
for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church -
did the word of God really originate from you,
or has it reached you alone?*
- (c) *If any considers that he is a prophet or a spiritual person,
let him acknowledge that what I write is a command of the Lord.*
- (d) *If, on the other hand, anybody disregards it, he is disregarded (by God).*

Rhetorically speaking, the passage falls into two main parts. It begins with an unqualified directive for silence from women, with the reasons for it. Paul then treats three problems associated with this directive in three conditional sentences about wives challenging their husbands on some point of teaching, the need for compliance with this directive as a command from the Lord, and the consequence of non-compliance.

In keeping with the pattern established in vv 26-33b, the flow of the argument is determined by two categorical third person imperatives for silence and subordination in v 34 followed by two conditional imperatives about the questioning of husbands and the acknowledgement of Christ's authority in vv 35-36. This culminates in the conditional threat about the rejection of dissenters in v 37. Moreover, as Paul develops his argument, he gives six reasons for his instructions, in subordinate clauses: ecumenical practice (33^b), the prohibition of women speaking in church (34a), the content of the law (34b), the shamefulness of women speaking in church (35), the origin of the

apostolic teaching (36^a), and its reception (36^b).

Thus the passage is a coherent piece of Pauline rhetoric which is presented in the form of regulations for the operation of the church as a liturgical community (Hauke: 267, 370-371).

(2) The place of the passage in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

Paul's directives on the silence of women are part of his larger discussion in 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14 about the use of spiritual gifts in the church of Corinth, as well as the place of tongues and prophecy in public worship. More immediately, it comes as the culmination of Paul's liturgical regulations in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. In this section Paul deals with three problems: the demand by some charismatics for the right to 'speak' in tongues in the church; the demand by some prophets for the right to 'speak' their words of prophecy; and the demand by female prophets for recognition as 'speakers in the church'. Paul counters these demands for the right to speak with the demand for appropriate silence in vv 28, 30, and 34.

In keeping with this theme, the material in 1 Cor 14:26-40 is arranged as follows:

(a) Introduction (26)

- General problem: involvement of charismatics in public worship.
- General directive: edification of the congregation.

(b) Speaking in tongues (27-28)

- Permissible *speaking*, if there is an interpreter.
- **Silence**, with private speaking to God, if there is no interpreter.

(c) Speaking of prophecy (29-33^a)

- Permissible *speaking* with assessment of prophecies.
- **Silence**, if another prophet receives a revelation.

(d) Speaking of women (33^b-38)

- **Silence** of women in the church.
- Prohibition of *speaking* except for questioning at home.

(e) Conclusion (39-40)

- Encouragement of prophecy without prohibition of tongues.
- Need for ordered worship.

It is evident from this that in vv 33^b-38 Paul reverses the previous pattern of permission for speaking with the need for appropriate silence in vv 27-33^a by his categorical demand for silence and his prohibition of speaking.

There is growing recognition among scholars that the link between 14:27-33^a and 14:33^b-38 is provided by Paul's requirement in 14:29 that all prophecies must be duly weighed and assessed to discover their significance and proper application (Clark: 186; Hurley: 188-192; Grudem: 250-251; Bacchiocchi: 167; Hauke: 376; Carson: 151). Paul does not state exactly how this is to be done. He does, however, indicate that the whole congregation ('the others') should somehow be involved in this (cf. 1 John 4:6). It probably involved a general discussion (cf. 1 Thess 5:19-22) which resulted in an authoritative judgment on its sense and application by the leaders of the congregation in the light of the apostolic tradition (Rev 19:10; cf. Matt 7:15-27), the confession of Jesus as Lord (1 Cor 12:3), and the analogy of faith (Rom 12:6).

As Johansson (57-71) has shown from Acts 20:7-12, this kind of discussion was not restricted to the weighing of prophecies; it seems also to have been associated with the homilies given by teachers in the early church. While all members could share their insights into the meaning and application of a text from the Old Testament, they could not challenge the final teaching given by the leaders of the congregation, as some women seem to have done in Corinth (cf.14:35).

Paul's argument seems to run as follows in 1 Cor 14:20-40. Speaking in tongues is allowed in worship provided that it is properly interpreted, so that it thereby becomes an edifying prophecy for the congregation. Prophecies may also be given in the church provided that they are weighed by the apostolic community in the light of the apostolic teaching. Just as speaking in tongues is subordinated to prophecy, so prophecy is subordinated to the apostolic tradition. So, even if women speak in tongues and prophesy, they are not allowed to speak in assessing prophecy, since this involves the teaching of the Scriptures according to the apostolic tradition. This prohibition is based on Christ's command to the apostles. The word of God therefore is not only meant to order the public worship of the congregation but must be spoken in it by those who have been authorised to do so.

(3) The nature of the demand for silence from women

Paul's demand for the silence of women is explained in two ways. On the one hand, they are not permitted by God to be 'speakers' in the liturgical assembly. While the verb *lalein* is used in many different ways in the New Testament, it is never used in the sense of chattering. Here, as is often the case, it is a synonym for authoritative teaching (eg. Matt 9:18; 28:18; John 18:19-20; Acts 4:1; 18:25; 1 Cor 2:6-7; 2 Cor 2:17; Heb 13:7). On the other hand, the silence of the women involves subordination. Remarkably, Paul does not mention the object of their subordination. While it has been taken as the general subordination of women to men or the subordination of husbands to wives, the context suggests that they are to be subordinate to the male teachers of the word and so to the word itself. Women are therefore not allowed to be speakers in the liturgical assembly but must be subordinate to those who have been appointed to fulfil that role.

The context shows that Paul insists on relative rather than absolute silence (cf. also Luke 9:36; 20:26; Acts 12:17; 15:12; 21:40). It is clear that women may speak in tongues (1 Cor 14:5,23), prophesy in worship (1 Cor 11:5; 14:5,23,31) and engage in liturgical prayer (1 Cor 11:5; cf. 1 Tim 2:1-10). The kind of speaking which Paul prohibits is defined in three ways. First, a woman may not act as a speaker in a liturgical 'assembly' (14:35; cf. v 34). The unusual absolute form for 'speaking' indicates that Paul may be using it as a technical term for someone authorised to speak in an official capacity (Johansson: 53f). This prohibition, however, does not apply at home and would therefore seem to have nothing to do with the subordination of a wife to her husband.

Secondly, the forbidden speaking is associated with God's word which has come to Corinth via its apostolic emissaries from Jerusalem (14:36; cf. Acts 1:8; 1 Thess 2:13). We may therefore conclude that its content was the application of the apostolic teaching entrusted to the leaders of the congregation.

Thirdly, while the 'speaking' which Paul has in mind here is related to prophecy and the questioning is connected with the weighing of prophecy in the congregation, it is nevertheless distinguished from prophecy and is more authoritative than prophecy, since it transmits the commands of Christ and demands the acquiescence of prophets to it (14:37-38). I therefore conclude that when Paul forbids women to act as speakers in a liturgical assembly of the church, he excludes them from the apostolic ministry of the word.

(4) The basis and authority for the prohibition

Paul bases his case on four sets of authority which he marshals in ascending order of importance.

First, he appeals to ecumenical practice (14:33^b). Some scholars claim that, since Paul uses a similar ecumenical formula in 1 Cor 4:17; 7:17 and 11:16 to conclude a section of argument, this phrase must belong to v.33^b. Yet that is most unlikely, since it is not used as a conclusion in 7:17 and it functions elsewhere to assert the catholicity of Paul's teaching rather than the catholicity of God's character (Witherington: 96; Carson: 140-141). In any case 14:34 makes it clear that Paul's ruling does not just apply to the church in Corinth but to all churches everywhere.

Secondly, he appeals to the law in the Old Testament. The absence of the far more common citation formula: 'it is written' makes it unlikely that he refers to Gen 3:16 or any other specific passage. Rather the use here of the summary formula: 'as the law says' (cf. 1 Cor 9:8), argues that Paul has in mind the whole teaching of the Pentateuch about the role of the firstborn male in a Hebrew family, or else about the legislation for the role of the male priesthood in the public worship of Israel.

Thirdly, he appeals to the sense of shame of his hearers in 14:35. For Paul, shame did not arise just from failure to meet the social expectations of peers according to customary norms, as in 1 Cor 11:6, but also from loss of face with God (Phil 1:20; 2 Tim 1:12), and at the failure to meet his expectations (Rom 6:21; 2 Cor 4:2; Eph 5:4,12; Col 3:8; Phil 3:19). In fact, in Eph 5:12, the only other place apart from 1 Cor 11:6 where Paul uses the formula: 'it is shameful', that formula covers what is unacceptable to God as well as what is socially unacceptable. In 14:35-36 the appeal to shame is closely allied with Paul's challenge to the presumptuousness of certain women prophets in questioning their teachers and in regarding themselves as either the originators or exclusive recipients of God's word. Since such claims could not be sustained, they would result in public disgrace.

Lastly and most significantly, Paul appeals to a specific command of the Lord in 14:37 which he has received together with the other sayings of Jesus. It, like 1 Thessalonians 4:15, is not recorded in any of the gospels (see Johansson: 90-98 and Hauke: 385-390). As last in the list, this most weighty authority is meant to clinch the argument. When Paul speaks about the Lord's command, he most likely refers to the prohibition in v.34 with its passive formulation to denote that it comes from God himself (Aalen). Only its divine origin provides an adequate basis for his unequivocal warning in 14:38 that those who reject Paul's ruling on the silence of women in the church are either not recognised by God as prophets and Spirit-filled people, or else will be rejected by him in his final judgment (Hauke: 383-385; cf. Matt 7:23). That threat gains its sense and weight from its specific connection to Christ's prohibition of women as speakers in the church.

The appeal of Paul to such a full range of authorities discloses the gravity of the matter under discussion. If he were dealing with culturally inappropriate behaviour or disruptive chatter by women, he would have had no need to employ all these authorities. Indeed, its force would be totally disproportionate to the alleged offence, much like the use of a steamroller to squash a bull ant. The only other place where he operates in a similar fashion is in 1 Cor 9:3-14 where he defends his rights as an apostle. This provides an instructive parallel which, incidentally, also supports the unity of 14:33^b-38. There he also works with four sets of authority: the precedent of apostolic practice (9:4-6), custom (9:7), the law (9:8-13) and the Lord's command (9:14). There he also arranges his authorities in ascending order of importance with the command of Christ as the capstone of his argument.

To conclude: Paul's appeal to such a wide range of authorities, his mention of

Christ's command, his reference to the apostolic tradition and his responsibility for it, and his threat of divine rejection for those who reject his teaching, make sense only if he is engaged in the defence of the divinely instituted apostolic ministry of the word and the exclusion of women from it by Christ himself.

b. 1 Timothy 2:11-15

It is generally agreed that this passage, more clearly than 1 Cor 14:33b-38, excludes women from the apostolic ministry of the word. Whereas that text deals with a specific situation in Corinth, Paul here gives far more general instructions to his pastoral protégé Timothy about the organisation of the church in Ephesus.

(1) Translation and structure

Since 1 Tim 2:11-15 forms a single literary unit with 2:8-10,1 give the following translation of that unit which is set out to indicate its basic structure:

(a) *I therefore (as the teacher of the gentiles) require*

- *that in every place (of worship) men should pray, lifting consecrated hands without anger and quarrelling,*
- *and that women too (should pray), decorating themselves with modesty and chastity by means of respectable deportment, not by means of gold-braided hair or pearls or expensive dress, but through good works, as is suitable for women who profess reverence for God.*

(b)

- *Let a woman learn in quietness with entire subordination.*
- *On the other hand, I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man,*
- *but she must remain in quietness; for Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, came into transgression. Nevertheless a woman will be saved even as she bears children (Greek: through child bearing), provided that she remains with chastity in faith and love and sanctification.*

Three things are worth noting in this. First, the repetition of 'chastity' in 2:9 and 2:15 acts as a bracket which introduces and closes the teaching on the role of women in public worship. Secondly, the use of *dia* in a circumstantial sense both in 2:10 and 2:15 serves to define child bearing as a good work for a Christian woman. Thirdly, the repetition of 'quietness' in 2:11,12 creates a chiastic construction which is highlighted by the contrast between woman and man in verse 12a. This is how it is structured:

- a Let a woman learn in **quietness** with entire subordination.
- b Teaching, on the other hand, for a woman I do not permit,
- b' nor having authority over a man,
- a' but being in **quietness**.

It follows from this that Paul's main concern here is with discipleship, that is learning rather than with teaching, and that 'teaching' and 'having authority' are to be regarded as complementary activities.

(2) The place of 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in its context

This passage is part of Paul's written pastoral 'charge' to Timothy on the

arrangement of the church in Ephesus and the need to combat the teachers of false doctrine in the church (1 Tim 1:3,18; 4:11; 5:7; 6:17). The heart of this charge is the congregational code in 2:1-3:16. This code gives instruction on how the household of God, the church of the living God, is to be organised (1 Tim 3:14,15).

The congregational code covers the following matters:

- (a) The nature and basis of congregational prayer (2:1-7).
- (b) The involvement of both sexes in congregational prayer.
 - Praying by men without anger and quarrelling (2:8).
 - Praying by modest chaste women who do good works (2:9,10).
- (c) The involvement of women in learning rather than in teaching (2:11-15).
- (d) Qualifications for leaders in public worship.
 - The bishop as teacher in God's household (3:1-7).
 - The deacons as his assistants (3:8-13).
- (e) The purpose of Paul's charge (3:14-16).

This part of Paul's letter, then, is not a household code (contra Towner, 210) but rather a congregational code (Witherington, 118), since he does not speak of conduct in general but about conduct in worship.

(3) The authority of Paul in 1 Timothy 2:11-15

Even though Paul uses 'T' in addressing Timothy in 1 Tim 2:1,8,12, he does not give his personal opinions on congregational worship. Rather, he emphasises in 1 Tim 2:7 that he has been appointed by God both as an 'apostle' (cf. 1:1) and as a 'teacher of the faith and its truth to the gentiles'. He therefore writes about what 'must' (*dei*) be done not just in Ephesus but in the whole church which is God's household (1 Tim 3:14,15; Hurley: 196; Bacchiocchi: 145-148,151-152). He invokes his authority as an apostle for his teaching in the congregational code which must then transcend the particular local circumstances faced by Timothy in Ephesus.

(4) The meaning of 'teaching' in the Pastoral Letters

Since 'teaching' is the key term in our text, its exact sense needs to be established before we can examine Paul's argument. Like the New Testament in general, Paul uses the terms for 'teaching' in a much narrower and more technical sense than we do in modern English (eg. 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11). It usually refers to the teaching and application of God's word by Jesus and his apostles. A teacher therefore teaches the apostolic tradition and uses it to build up the church as a liturgical community.

As the teacher of the gentiles (1 Tim 2:7), the apostle Paul is also a teacher of the gospel (2 Tim 1:11) which God has entrusted to him (1 Tim 1:11). He has been Timothy's teacher (1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 2:2) and has passed on to him what he himself has received from Christ (2 Tim 1:13,14). He therefore urges Timothy to teach what he has received from Paul (1 Tim 4:11; 6:2; 2 Tim 4:2) and to live a life consistent with that teaching (1 Tim 4:16). Timothy is to use the Old Testament (2 Tim 3:16) and the words of Jesus (1 Tim 4:6; 6:3) in his teaching which is usually associated with the public reading of the Scriptures (1 Tim 4:13) and the preaching of the word to the congregation (2 Tim 4:2).

By teaching he convinces and encourages his hearers (2 Tim 4:2); he rebukes and corrects those who teach what is contrary to the apostolic tradition (1 Tim 1:3). Ultimately, he himself is required to hand on to other faithful men what he has been taught by Paul, and to appoint them as teachers in the church (2 Tim 2:2).

Paul uses a number of terms to describe the role of the teachers in the church. As 'bishops' they supervise the worship and life of the congregation (1 Tim 3:2). As 'elders' they arrange the worship of the congregation and manage its operation (1 Tim 5:17). As 'servants' of the risen Lord they represent him in their teaching and work with him (2 Tim 2:24). Their basic qualification is that they are teachable and skilled in teaching (1 Tim 3:2; 2 Tim 2:24). Such teachers teach God's word in the congregation (1 Tim 5:17) and use the healing doctrine of Christ to encourage the faithful and to refute those who contradict it (Tit 1:9).

So then, for Paul a teacher is one who has been authorised to teach the apostolic doctrine and engage in the apostolic ministry of the word.

(5) The argument of 1 Timothy 2:11-15

Paul makes it quite clear that, unlike Jewish women who were excluded from direct involvement in the public prayers of the synagogue as well as from becoming students of the law, Christian women were able to join in the intercession of the church for the world and to 'learn' God's word as disciples of Jesus Christ. In fact, he commands them to be disciples. The unusual absolute form of the verb (cf. 1 Cor 14:31; 2 Tim 3:7) suggests that this command has to do with being disciples rather than with learning a particular lesson. Like all the men, they too are to be recipients of the apostolic tradition (cf. 2 Tim 3:14). They should learn to pray and do good works. These, rather than teaching, are the marks of a disciple.

Their disposition as disciples is characterised by two terms. First, they are to learn in quietness. This is not just described as an attitude but also as a state of being. Such quietness involves stillness and harmony, receptivity and teachability, respectful listening and readiness to receive direction (see Acts 11:18; 21:14; 22:2; 1 Thess 4:11; 2 Thess 3:12; 1 Tim 2:2). It is the mark of a wise learner and a sage who never ceases to be student. Secondly, women are to be in a state of entire subordination. As in 1 Cor 14:34, Paul does not mention the object of their subordination. Since it is linked with being a disciple who is concerned with learning well and living harmoniously in the church, Paul probably means submission to Christ's word and to those who teach it rather than to men in general (Moo: 183).

Even though women must be disciples, they are not permitted to teach in the liturgical assembly. The use of *de* introduces a contrast between learning which is commanded and teaching which is forbidden (Bacchiocchi: 149; Moo: 184). In other words, 2:12 explains the concept of subordination in negative terms. The responsibility for teaching in public worship is associated with the 'exercise of authority' over a man (see Panning, Knight, Köstenberger, and Leske 3-5, for this translation of *authentein*). The sense of 'a man' is not immediately clear. It could refer to men in general or a husband or, most likely, the male leader of the congregation. The relationship between teaching and exercising authority can be taken in three ways. Paul could be prescribing two separate activities or two identical activities or, most likely, from the syntax, two related activities (Kostenberger). Whatever the case, it is clear that Paul does not allow women to be teachers in the church.

Paul bases the subordination of women to male teachers on God's will as revealed in the priority of Adam's creation. The priority of Adam established his divinely-instituted role as the head of the human family; it also established the firstborn male as the head of an Israelite family. As such they were the

teachers of their families. In worship they represented their families before God and represented him to their families. This role of Adam as the liturgical head of the human family was fulfilled by Christ (see Col 1:15-23); it is now exercised by him through the male teachers in the church.

While Paul's mention of Adam's priority over Eve establishes the exclusion of women from the position of a teacher in the congregation, his subsequent reference in 1 Tim 2:14 to Eve's deception seems to be a warning against the possible refusal of women in Ephesus to remain students of God's word. The point of comparison is between Eve as an insubordinate student and all Christian women as receptive disciples. Paul does not therefore assert that women are to be excluded from the ministry of the word because they are more responsible for the fall than Adam, or because they are somehow more susceptible to deception by Satan than men. That is obviously not so. Rather, he warns against women ceasing to be disciples of Christ, subordinate to him and his word and to those who teach that word.

Indeed, Christian women who remain faithful to Christ and God's love, participate fully in the gift of salvation through their faithful involvement in public worship. Through their faith in Christ they are sanctified by him and share fully in his holiness together with all the saints. Unlike their Jewish sisters who were rendered ritually unclean by menstruation and childbirth, and their 'gnostic' sisters who had their spirituality tarnished by the carnality associated with marriage and motherhood (cf. 1 Tim 4:1-3), Christian women are not disqualified from divine worship by child-bearing. On the contrary, by bearing children (cf. 5:14) and by their chaste behaviour (cf. Tit 2:4-5) they perform those good works which are the mark of women who engage in the priestly work of intercession together with Christ, the heavenly mediator (cf. 2:1-10), and so display true reverence for God (cf. 2:8-10).

Thus, while Paul teaches the full involvement of all women in the public worship of the church as intercessors, as disciples of their risen Lord, and as holy people together with the angels, he forbids them to be teachers in the church.

3. CONCLUSION

The scriptural warrant for the exclusion of women from the apostolic ministry of the word is much stronger than most advocates for the ordination of women allow. Contrary to their assertions, the sense of 1 Cor 14:33^b-38 and 1 Tim 2:11-15 is neither uncertain nor obscure. Both texts presuppose a liturgical setting and both prohibit the speaking of women in that setting. We may disagree about the reasons for that prohibition and its exact extent, but that does not obscure the clarity of that prohibition. Its force can, I believe, only be dissipated by declaring that, since Paul addresses the particular circumstances of the church in Corinth and Ephesus, the prohibition is irrelevant to the life of the church today. However, using this logic we could also argue that, since Paul's teaching in Galatians on the freedom of the gospel arose out of the demand for the circumcision of gentile believers, it does not apply to us today.

Much more can be said to supply a more developed adequate theological justification for this position, such as has been done in a preliminary way by Brunner, Weinrich, and Wollenberg. Nevertheless, these two texts suffice to base and uphold the historical case against the ordination of women. They are, in fact, its main obstacle. This is so especially if, as has been argued, Paul's mention of the Lord's command in 1 Cor 14:37 does, or even could, refer to the prohibition in 1 Cor 14:34. In that case the stern warning in 1 Cor 14:38 could apply to those who champion the ordination of women in the church. What's more, I would maintain that, only if we had an explicit dominical or apostolic mandate for the ordination of women, could we rightly overturn the universal teaching of the church on this matter. But we have no such authorisation. Even if it could be shown that these two texts do not exclude women from the pastorate, that would not yet give the church any authority to ordain women. In short, while the church has no mandate to ordain women, it does have an unequivocal mandate to ordain men

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