

# **To keep silent, ask husbands at home, and not to have authority over men. Part II (I Corinthians 14:33-36 and I Timothy 2:11-12) : The transition from gathering in private to meeting in public space in second generation christianity and the exclusion of...**

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## To Keep Silent, Ask Husbands at Home, and not to Have Authority over Men. Part II (I Corinthians 14:33-36 and I Timothy 2:11-12)

### The Transition from Gathering in Private to Meeting in Public Space in Second Generation Christianity and the Exclusion of Women from Leadership of the Public Assembly

*The transition of worship to public space and the exclusion of women from  
public leadership in late first generation or second generation Christianity.  
I Cor 14:34-35 and I Tim 2:11-12*

The elite rhetorical ideal that sought to restrict women's behaviour in public space is relevant to understanding both the contradiction within Paul's first letter to Corinth on the proper role of women in worship and the strict prohibition of women teachers in I Tim 2:11-12. While Paul expects women to take an active role in worship through prophetic speech (I Cor 11:5), he appears to contradict himself by enjoining silence on women in the assembly at I Cor 14:34-35:

The women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as 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.

Much ink has been spilt over this plainly worded prohibition. It appears in some manuscripts at the end of the chapter (i.e. after verse 40), raising doubts for many scholars about its authenticity. Nonetheless, it is present in all manuscripts, for other commentators reducing the likelihood of its being a non-Pauline interpolation.

Commentators are concerned, of course, both with the problem of internal coherence in Paul's instructions, and the question of relevance for the contemporary church. Unsuccessful solutions abound, characterised by avoidance of the plain meaning of the text. It has been proposed that poorly educated women were interrupting the worship of the Corinthian congregation, and that Paul is not forbidding all speech but the interruptions caused by such uneducated yet public questioning. After all, does Paul not follow his injunction to silence (verse 34) with specific reference to the asking of questions (verse 35)? While it is true that the ancient educational ideal was to give full attention to the speaker and not to interrupt, and that the statements of Plutarch on this theme thus deserve comparison with I Cor 14:34-35,<sup>1</sup> they are not so close as to suggest that this is the exact context for understanding this passage. This

proposed context cannot fully explain the bald injunction to silence, as if it meant «not to be rowdy and undisciplined». Moreover, while it will have been true that many women in Corinth had less education than was usual for men, there were probably both uneducated men and elite, educated women in the Corinthian congregation, yet the prohibition is addressed only to women, and to *all* women.<sup>2</sup>

It has been suggested that Paul was not forbidding women's articulate speech but the female practice of shrill ululation which Corinthian women had imported into Christian worship from previous experience in the local cults of Dionysus. After all, did not the common Bacchic cry *eleleu* involve the reduplicated «l» sound, thus being similar to the common, onomatopoeic word for speech *lalein* used in both verses 34 and 35?<sup>3</sup> Against this view it must be objected that although there is a good case that the general Corinthian disorder had to do with such previous experience in manticism,<sup>4</sup> verse 34 is clearly talking about articulate speech, for the utterance under discussion is deemed somehow to contradict a woman's proper subordination. Likewise, the continuation in verse 35 concerning asking questions at home strongly suggests articulate speech is the topic under discussion.

Another approach has proposed that women sat in a section separated from men in the early Christian assemblies, and that to discuss anything with their menfolk in the service would therefore inevitably involve disorderly and disturbingly loud speech across the worship space. On this view the continuation in verse 35 about asking husbands at home is the key to understanding the prohibition of verse 34, which applied only to such loud and disturbing conversation.<sup>5</sup> The picture proposed is a little comic and not a naturally plausible one, for a social context which imposed such segregation would naturally also rule out such attempts to circumvent it. It is a rather forced derivation

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *On Listening*, for whom «to speak whilst being spoken to» is condemned as «scandalous», and the listener is enjoined to acquire «the ability to listen in a self-controlled and respectful fashion» (4 [39C]). Those «who try to divert the speaker on to other topics and interrupt with questions and queries» are condemned as «disagreeable nuisances» (10 [42F]). Those who are so lazy as to «bother the speaker ... by asking the same questions over and over again» remind Plutarch of «young birds before they can fly, with their mouths constantly opened towards someone else's mouth, for whom acceptable fare is only what is ready-made and pre-processed by others» (18[48A]).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. further C. Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives*, Peabody 1992, 84.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. & C. Kroeger, *An Inquiry into the evidence of Maenadism in the Corinthian Congregation*, in: P.J. Achtemeier (ed.), *SBL 1978 Seminar Papers*, 331-338 (335) for the view that ululation is in view in I Cor 14:34-35.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. R. & C. Kroeger, *op. cit.*, and: *Pandemonium and Silence at Corinth*, *RefJ* 28 (June 1978) 6-11; T. Radcliffe, *Paul and Sexual Identity: I Cor 11:2-16*, in: J.M. Soskice (ed.), *After Eve*, London 1990, 62-72.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Sevenster, *Paul and Seneca (NT.S 4)*, Leiden 1961, 198 and F.F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians (NCB)*, London 1971, 135.

from older views of the ancient Jewish synagogue, which assumed women were segregated from men in the ancient synagogue, having their own seating section or gallery as has occurred in later Judaism. This view of the ancient synagogue has proved untenable;<sup>6</sup> the segregation of women from men in the synagogue appears to have arisen in the seventh century AD under the influence of Islamic practice. Since we have no evidence to suggest that women were segregated in either ancient synagogue worship or the worship of the Christian assemblies, the attempt to explain away the prohibition of I Cor 14:34-35 in this fashion must fail.

The prohibition has been held to relate exclusively to the earlier matter of testing («weighing» or «discerning») of prophecy (14:29).<sup>7</sup> To act in such ways might be thought to place women inappropriately in a position of having authority over men or of usurping a function of teaching reserved to men.<sup>8</sup> However, verse 29 is so distant from the prohibition of verse 34 and 35 that this reconstruction imposes a line of thought which cannot be thought to continue through the intervening material, and nothing within the passage suggests a connection between the two parts of the text. Moreover, the continuation of the prohibition of verse 34 with the instruction to ask husbands at home if there is any failure to understand in verse 35 barely allows the needed movement in thought away from judging to understanding.<sup>9</sup> The idea is of speaking in general and cannot be restricted to talk about prophecies.

Such solutions all avoid the similarity of I Cor 14:34-35 to the more elaborate but equally explicit prohibition of I Tim 2:9-12:

... women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion. Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent.

<sup>6</sup> The absence of segregation of women from men in the ancient synagogue was first argued by L. Loew in 1884, *Der Synagogale Ritus*, MGWJ 33 (1884) 364-374; this article was later reprinted in Loew's *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. I. Loew (1898), Vol. 4, 55-71. A seminal treatment in feminist discussion was B.J. Brooten, *Were Women and Men Segregated in Ancient Synagogues?*, *Moment* 14 (1989) 32-39. The practice of segregation probably arose in the seventh century AD under the influence of Islam. See for the continued refutation that segregation was a part of ancient practice Sh. Safrai, *Were Women Segregated in the Ancient Synagogue?*, *Jerusalem Perspective* 52 (1997) 24-36, presently available online at <http://shop.jerusalemerspective.com>.

<sup>7</sup> M.E. Thrall, *The First and Second Letters of Paul to the Corinthians*, Cambridge 1965, 102; cf. D. Hill, *New Testament Prophecy*, Atlanta 1979, 134-135.

<sup>8</sup> Ellis suggests that Paul had meant to defuse the awkward possibility of a wife testing what her husband had said in prophecy (E.E. Ellis, *Pauline Theology. Ministry and Society*, Exeter 1989, 70-71).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. G.D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians (NICNT)*, Grand Rapids MI 1987, 704.

The only successful explanation of the prohibition of I Cor 14:34-35 will be that which accepts its proximity to this text from the Pastoral Letters and offers a common explanation for both, referring to the same cultural and church-historical phenomena. It was precisely «shame» (14:35), a term which points to reputation and «honour» won or lost by observed behaviour in public space, which concerned the author of I Cor 14:34-35. *Aischron* meant sexual indiscretion when it was applied to women, as it usually was.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the prohibition of I Tim 2:9-12 is highly charged with the language of honour and shame – «modestly» (cf. «modesty», I Tim 2:15), «sensibly», «seemly», «silence». Both texts suggest the presence of Christian worship in space which was clearly regarded as public according to prevailing norms, and in which public expectations of decency applied. In view of the possible transition of worship from space which was perceived to be private into space which was perceived to be public towards the end of the first generation of Christianity or within the second generation as outlined above, the following discussion seeks to present a plausible understanding of the content of these texts and the textual issues which have been raised concerning I Cor 14:33-36 within this hypothetical context.

As noted above, some commentators have felt that the case that I Cor 14:34-35 is a later interpolation is strong. These scholars would apply Bengel's first principle of text-criticism: That form of the text is more likely which best explains the emergence of all the others. It is thought that the idea of transposition from one point in the chapter to another (in either direction) cannot make sense of the divergent textual tradition. If these words were an early marginal gloss, however, their incorporation in different positions is thought explicable.<sup>11</sup> Numerous interpreters have thus supported the origin of I Cor 14:34-35 (or 33b-35, or 33b-36<sup>12</sup>) as a non-Pauline interpolation.<sup>13</sup> Commentators have discerned un-Pauline features of the text to support this case. Nowhere else does Paul refer to the Jewish Law (no other can be intended) as if it were without qualification binding on Christians. The legal tone of the passage has appeared uncharacteristic of Paul, as is the term *epitreptai* («it is permitted»)<sup>14</sup> Some caution about these arguments has been expressed more re-

<sup>10</sup> Cf. K.J. Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests*, San Francisco 1993, 41.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Fee, *op. cit.*, 699.

<sup>12</sup> Verse 33b and even verse 36 have been included as part of the hypothetical interpolation (cf. H. Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* [KEK 5], Göttingen <sup>11</sup>1969) 289-290, though there is no textual variation with respect to these parts of the text.

<sup>13</sup> Very influential was the comprehensive treatment of G. Fitzner, *Das Weib schweige in der Gemeinde. Über den unpaulinischen Charakter der mulier-taceat-Verse in 1 Korinther 14* (TEH NF 110), München 1963; cf. Conzelmann, *op. cit.*, 289-290; W. Munro, *Authority in Paul and Peter. The Identification of a Pastoral Stratum in the Pauline Corpus and 1 Peter* (MSSNTS 45), Cambridge 1983, 67-69 and: *Women, Text and Canon. The Strange Case of 1 Corinthians 14.33-35*, BTB 18 (1988) 26-31.

cently by commentators who perceive in them a possible anti-Jewish slant.<sup>15</sup> It is true that the text reads well if the proposed interpolation is removed, but that is not certain evidence of an interpolation. Antoinette C. Wire weighs carefully the arguments for the interpolation case and decides against the theory.<sup>16</sup> Of course, the interpolation theory is attractive for interpreters who find the strictures of I Cor 14:34-35 surprisingly restrictive or unpalatable. However, the present author, while acknowledging the complexity of the discussion, would presently concur with Wire and judge with C.K. Barrett that the textual evidence for the interpolation theory «is not quite strong enough to make it compelling.»<sup>17</sup> While verses 34 and 35 appear in some manuscripts in another location, no manuscript omits them. This seems to demand that the hypothetical interpolation, if added first in a very early manuscript in the textual tradition, was soon copied into the only other manuscript to affect the textual tradition, though at the end of the chapter. While this sequence of events is just possible, it is not likely; it is certainly easier to believe that a scribe producing one manuscript accidentally omitted verses 34 and 35, but realized his error and added them where convenient at the end of the chapter, this error giving rise to the variant in all its descendants. That being said, the textual and other difficulties of the immediate context of I Cor 14:34-35 are only part of the problem for the interpreter. The question remains of the tension between this text and the apparent freedom granted to women in worship in I Cor 11:2-16, for which an explanation is required.

The key question to ask is: Why and under what circumstances would the strictures of verses 34 and 35 become necessary in the life of the Christian church? The answer to this question has been furnished above: At least in some sectors of early Christianity, most naturally the early urban centers where Christians were becoming numerous towards the close of the apostolic generation, the context of church assemblies underwent transition from the dining-rooms and courtyards of private houses to settings which were plainly public, and seemed to demand the restriction of women's roles according to prevailing cultural ideals. A closely comparable non-Christian text restricting women's speech in public is found in the second century AD moralist Plutarch's *Advice to Bride and Groom*:

<sup>14</sup> Cf. R. Edwards, *The Case for Women's Ministry*, London 1989, 67; Fee, *op. cit.*, 699-705.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. M. Crüsemann, *Unrettbar frauenfeindlich? Der Kampf um das Wort von Frauen in 1 Kor 14, (33b) 34-35 im Spiegel antijudaistischer Elemente der Auslegung*, in: L. Schottroff, M.-Th. Wacker (eds.), *Von der Wurzel getragen. Christlich-feministische Exegese in Auseinandersetzung mit Antijudaismus (BIS 17)*, Leiden 1996, 199-223.

<sup>16</sup> A.C. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets*, Minneapolis 1990, 149-153.

<sup>17</sup> C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, London <sup>2</sup>1971, 132.

«Theano, in putting her cloak about her, exposed her arm. Somebody exclaimed, «A lovely arm.» «But not for the public», said she. Not only the arm of the virtuous woman, but her speech as well, ought to be not for the public, and she ought to be modest and guarded about saying anything in the hearing of outsiders, since it is an exposure of herself; for in her talk can be seen her feelings, character, and disposition. Pheidias made the Aphrodite of the Eleans with one foot on a tortoise, to typify for womankind keeping at home and keeping silence. For a woman ought to do her talking either to her husband or through her husband, and she should not feel aggrieved if, like the flute-player, she makes a more impressive sound through a tongue not her own.»<sup>18</sup>

Theano was the wife of Pythagoras, but the story from the sixth century BC proves a good introduction to Plutarch's views about the modesty appropriate for a woman in public space. A woman's speech exposes that aspect of her character which belongs only to her husband, her sexuality. Her voice belongs to him alone as much as the sight of her body. The author of I Cor 14:34-35 demands that women keep silence in public but allows them to ask questions of their husbands in the domestic context. Plutarch's judgement is much the same: in public, only the voice of a virtuous woman's husband may be heard, not her own. Of all the ancient materials thought to parallel the strictures of I Cor 14:34-35, this section of Plutarch is the closest in thought. The two texts can in fact be perfectly synthesised, suggesting that it is specifically the issue of restraint of speech in the service of perfect sexual decorum that guided the thinking of the author of I Cor 14:34-35.

The Church Fathers were aware that I Cor 14:34-35 had to do with concerns about female modesty in public space. In commenting on the text, Origen attacked the Montanist women prophetesses, who sought precedent in the four prophesying daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9). He responded: «if the daughters of Philip prophesied, at least they did not speak in the assemblies; for we do not find this fact in the Acts of the Apostles.»<sup>19</sup> Jerome, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Primasius and Ambrose all make a distinction between the public and private ministry of women.<sup>20</sup> The public-private ideology bears quite differently on the context of worship in the early Corinthian house-churches, in which for Paul proper clothing and headgear or hairstyle sufficiently conform prophesying women to the demands of modesty in worship (I Cor 11:2-16). As has been noted above, the dining-room of the house represented the margin between public and private space, corresponding to Paul's position that women may speak there before strange men, but must retain modest demeanour. While some women at Corinth expected full freedom in this marginal space, probably influenced by the liberation of Dionysiac revels, Paul de-

<sup>18</sup> Advice to Bride and Groom, 142C-D (31-32).

<sup>19</sup> Origen, Fragments on 1 Corinthians 74, *JThS* 10 (1909) 41-42.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. H. Van der Meer, *Women Priests in the Catholic Church?*, Philadelphia 1973, 16, 60, cf. Edwards, *op. cit.*, 99, 102-103.

manded certain restrictions for the sake of propriety, but accorded women the right to speak.

We have in effect argued above that the universal incorporation of verses 34 and 35 of I Cor 14 (in one position or the other) indicates that this must have been present in the manuscript tradition of I Cor at the point of its publication. Thus the explanation for the content of these verses and their apparent contradiction of I Cor 11:2-16 cannot be found in an interpolation theory applying to the later manuscript tradition. This leaves open the possibility, however, of a satisfactory explanation being found not in later textual variation but in terms of a process of editing which preceded the publication of the letter in the form from which all the manuscript tradition descends. As we have discovered, the explanation offered for these verses should also account for their proximity to the different social world of the Pastoral Letters and should allow I Cor 14:34-35 to be dated to the same era. The hypothesis that both I Cor 14:34-35 and I Tim 2:11-12 originate in a different context from I Cor 11:2-16, at a later time in which the Pastoral Letters were composed, close to the time when the collection and publication of the Pauline corpus occurred, can account for these twin requirements. To pursue this explanation we must choose from amongst the options for understanding the mode of collection of the Pauline letters. There are in essence two possibilities: the theory of a progressive circulation and collection of letters attributed to Paul in many centres of early Christianity, and the theory of a deliberate and complete edition of letters attributed to Paul, from which all manuscripts of the collection of letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament descend.

If we assume that the manuscript tradition of the Pauline correspondence developed from the progressive copying and distribution of each of his letters within the recipient churches, then in neighbouring churches and beyond, what C.F.D. Moule termed the «snowball theory»,<sup>21</sup> no explanation is available which accounts for the tension apparent in I Cor (between 11:2-16 and 14:34-35) and the appearance that I Cor 14:34-35 seems to breathe the atmosphere of a different era and phase in the development of the churches.<sup>22</sup> While this multi-local «accumulation» view has seemed plausible to many scholars,<sup>23</sup> many others have suggested that there is evidence pointing to an

<sup>21</sup> C.F.D. Moule, *The Birth of the New Testament*, New York 1962, 203.

<sup>22</sup> H. Conzelmann, who rejected I Cor 14:33b-36 as a post-Pauline interpolation, judged that «in this regulation we have a reflection of the bourgeois consolidation of the Church, roughly on the level with the Pastoral epistles» observant of its proximity to I Tim 2:11-12, *1 Corinthians* (English translation: Philadelphia 1975), 246.

<sup>23</sup> The theory that small and partial collections of Paul's letters came into existence at various centers prior to the generation of the type of large accumulation that appears in the New Testament has historically won the support of many scholars. For discussion see K. Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of Paul*, London 1911; L. Mowry, *The Early Circulation of Paul's Letters*, *JBL* 63 (1944) 73-86; C.L. Mitton, *The Formation of the Pauline Corpus of*

authoritative edition of Paul's letters behind the collection attributed to him in the New Testament. The fact that there are, apart from the Pastorals, seven congregations addressed in the letters attributed to Paul has appeared to many scholars to point to their editing and publication as an ideal correspondence (cf. the seven letters to the churches in Rev. 1:4-3:22).<sup>24</sup> We know that the secretaries of ancient letter-writers retained copies of correspondence, such as those from which Cicero's letters were published,<sup>25</sup> providing a natural starting point from which edited collections could arise.<sup>26</sup> It has been suggested on the basis of their affinities with Luke-Acts that the Pastorals stem from the pen of Luke, acting as Paul's post-mortem admirer rather than just as his secretary. At II Tim 4:11 Luke appears as Paul's last loyal companion.<sup>27</sup> Those who regard the Pastoral letters as from the pen of Paul usually date them to very late in his life, while those who regard them as non-Pauline or based only on Pauline fragments date them to the generation after his death, at some time prior to the close of the first century. The Pastoral letters' concentration on offices in the church, and the regularity of their terminology for office – «elders», «bishop», «deacons» and «widows» – points to a more highly developed organisation than that revealed in the main Pauline correspondence. The Pastorals have often been thought of as a testament<sup>28</sup> to Paul, perhaps containing authentic fragments of Pauline material<sup>29</sup> or having a more extensive basis in materials deriving from him, composed in the appropriate genre of letters addressed to his younger colleagues and successors.

Analyses worked out in considerable detail, though varying in precise approach, have been advanced which suggest that the collection of letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament derive from a deliberate edition. G.

Letters, London 1955, 16; N. Dahl, *The Origin of the Earliest Prologues to the Pauline Letters*, *Semeia* 12 (1978) 233-277 (269); A. Lindemann, *Die Sammlung der Paulusbriefe im 1. und 2. Jahrhundert*, in: J.-M. Auwers, H.J. de Jonge (eds.), *The Biblical Canons (BETHL 163)*, Leuven 2003, 321-351; W. Schmithals, *Die Briefe des Paulus in ihrer ursprünglichen Form (ZWKB)*, Zürich 1984.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. especially E.J. Goodspeed, *The Key to Ephesians*, Chicago 1926, and: *The Formation of the New Testament*, Chicago 1926.

<sup>25</sup> Cicero, *To Atticus*, 16.5, cf. *To Friends*, 7.25.1; cf. Ellis, *op. cit.*, 67.

<sup>26</sup> It seems clear that various figures who appear alongside Paul in the greetings which open his letters may have been acting as his secretaries, e.g. Sosthenes (I Cor 1:1) and Timothy (II Cor 1:1); Tertius appears at Rom 16:22 in the role of secretary. Cf. O. Roller, *Das Formular der Paulinischen Briefe*, Stuttgart 1933.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. C.F.D. Moule, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles: a Reappraisal*, *BJRL* 47 (1965) 430-452; S.G. Wilson, *Luke and the Pastorals*, London 1979.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. R.L. Archer, *The Epistolary Form of the New Testament*, *ET* 63 (1951-1952) 296ff.; D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, Downers Grove IL 1961 (reprinted 1970), 655-657.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. the very personal sections I Tim 1:1-20; II Tim 1:11, 12; 1:15-18; 3:10, 11; 4:6-21; Tit 3:12, 13; P.N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles*, Oxford 1921.

Zuntz argued that textual and other evidence points to the publication of the Pauline correspondence around the end of the first century. He argued that the corpus was subject to scholarly «Alexandrian» methods of editing, judging that the correct way to account for a textual tradition which varies in many minor respects, but shows very few major divergences indeed, is to posit the publication of a «variorum edition» which proved definitive. After the production of this edition, early scribes working to produce from it and its descendants numerous copies for use in the churches did not take account of the recorded variants but made selections that seemed appropriate to them, being also subject to the influence of the texts they had heard read in the churches.<sup>30</sup> Walter Schmithals envisaged an early seven letter collection produced at Corinth in the 80's which did not include Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and the Pastorals, these further letters constituting perhaps two independent three-letter collections which were finally added to the original.<sup>31</sup> Winsome Munro has argued that the collection of letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament descend from a single text archetype which reveals interpolations reflecting the pious quietism of a later age than Paul and a move away from the radicalism of his original sectarian, apocalyptic and egalitarian stance.<sup>32</sup> The most important treatment, because of its basis in an analysis of ancient practice, to support an edited single edition behind the collection of letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament is that of David Trobisch. Trobisch investigates the collection and publication of letters in the Graeco-Roman world and discovers that editions follow three typical phases, which he relates to the shape of the letter-collection attributed to Paul in the New Testament. These phases are 1) an «authorised recension», being a selection made and published by the author himself, which Trobisch finds in the sequence of New Testament letters from Romans to Galatians; 2) posthumous additional collections, which might be appended to the initial collection in an «expanded collection» – for Trobisch the run from Ephesians on, but excluding the Pastorals; and 3) the final publication of an «expanded collection» once the author's reputation is so well established that enthusiastic scribes seek to incorporate all available materials, for Trobisch represented by the full collection (i.e. expanded with the Pastorals) found in the New Testament.<sup>33</sup>

For the purposes of the present argument it is not necessary to analyse comparatively and choose between these slightly varying approaches,<sup>34</sup> all of

<sup>30</sup> G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles. A Disquisition on the Corpus Paulinum* (SchL 1946), Oxford 1953, 214ff., 276-279.

<sup>31</sup> W. Schmithals, *Paulus und die Gnostiker. Untersuchungen zu den kleinen Paulusbriefen* (ThF 35), Hamburg 1965.

<sup>32</sup> W. Munro, *Authority in Paul and Peter. The Identification of a Pastoral Stratum in the Pauline Corpus and 1 Peter*, Cambridge 1983.

<sup>33</sup> D. Trobisch, *Die Entstehung der Paulusbriefsammlung. Studien zu den Anfängen christlicher Publizistik* (NTOA 10), Freiburg(CH)/Göttingen 1989.

which assemble weighty evidence for the view that a single archetypal collection of Paul's letters, within which the Pastorals play an important concluding role, lies behind the collection of letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament. This general understanding of the publication of the Pauline corpus accounts well for the composition and universal incorporation of I Cor 14:34-35, as the collection of Paul's letters reached its conclusion and consistency on the role of women in public worship was sought. I Cor 14:34-35 appears to have been composed at this stage (or to have been drawn from unknown, very late Pauline material) in order to include a summary of the types of prohibition found in I Tim 2:9-12 in the lengthy treatment of worship in the Christian assembly in chapter 14 of I Cor. Without this material I Cor and I Tim appeared too divergent in their view of the appropriate role of women in Christian worship. While the section was added here for the sake of consistency across the whole collection, the editing was only partially successful, for the addition introduced a potentially awkward tension with I Cor 11:2-16. It may be that the editor understood that the prayer and prophecy of I Cor 11:2-16 would continue in domestic space, but thought of the activities described in I Cor 14 as worship in the public context. While the material regarding worship in I Cor all originally related to the domestic context of the private household worship of the smaller, early churches founded in the early decades of Paul's mission, a transition of Christian worship to a public context had occurred before the time of the publication of the full collection of the Pauline letters, and is reflected in I Cor 14:34-35 and the content of the Pastoral letters.

The early second century writer and martyr Ignatius «connects the monarchical bishop with the preservation of the orthodox faith in such a way as to suggest that a principal aim of moniscopacy was to preserve right doctrine». <sup>35</sup> The unity of the Church against false teaching such as docetic Christology, possibly arising within an opposed proto-Gnostic system (cf. Trall. 10; Smyrn. 1-5), is expressed in the union of the congregation and the ministering orders around the Bishop. <sup>36</sup> The concern for church order in the Pastorals is

<sup>34</sup> R.M. Price offers an assessment of these and other theories of the editing of Paul's letters in his «The Evolution of the Pauline Canon», a paper issued without further date reference within the website of The Journal of Higher Criticism, see <http://www.depts.drew.edu/jhc/Rpcanon.html>. The present author acknowledges his indebtedness to the wide survey offered by this treatment.

<sup>35</sup> W. Telfer, *The Office of a Bishop*, London 1962, 69; cf. J.A. Fischer, *Schriften des Urchristentums*, Vol. 1, Darmstadt 1976, 111-225.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Magn. 6:1; Eph. 6:1; Trall. 2:1, 3:1; Smyrn. 8:1. Cf. W.R. Schoedel, *Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochien. Ein Kommentar*, München 1990, ad loc.; R. Hübner, *Die Anfänge von Diakonat, Presbyterat und Episkopat in der frühen Kirche*, in: A. Rauch, P. Imhof (eds.), *Das Priestertum in der einen Kirche. Diakonat, Presbyterat und Episkopat (Koinonia. Schriftenreihe des ostkirchlichen Instituts Regensburg 4)*, Aschaffenburg 1987, 45-89.

similarly linked with an intense concern to oppose heterodox teaching. The establishment of a strong, local, professional teaching office is well underway in the Pastorals, and is in fact their strongest uniting theme. This process included a hitherto unobserved shift from private to public space, resulting in the exclusion of women from the public teaching office of the church, and leadership of Christian public assemblies.

While church and household are strongly connected in the Pastorals, church and household are linked by analogy rather than being factually present in the same space, as in the earlier context of worship within private space. The church is now the «household of God» (I Tim 3:5), the «great house» (2:20). The person who oversees this greater house, the «bishop», is «God's steward» (Tit 1:7). The complexities of the terms «elder» and «bishop» in these letters may be solved along the convergent lines indicated in R. Alastair Campbell's monograph on *The Elders* and Frances Young's treatment of the *Theology of the Pastoral Letters*.<sup>37</sup> From the group of senior householders who led the church within each city, referred to collectively as «elders», a single figure, the «bishop», is emerging as the principal teacher. While the bishop (*episkopos*, literally «overseer») comes from the elder class, and is therefore always an elder, the terms «bishop» and «elder» are not synonymous as in Acts 20:17, 28, I Petr 5:1-2 (where «elder» is linked with the verb «oversee»), and I Clement 44:1-5. All bishops are elders, but not all elders are bishops. Episcopal office is something to which an elder may aspire (cf. I Tim 3:1) rather than something an elder factually possessed as overseer and patron of a household congregation.<sup>38</sup>

Bishops are the «elders who rule well» over the congregation of a particular city and receive for this service an honorarium (I Tim 5:17-18).<sup>39</sup> This payment is a clear indication that the worship of these congregations has moved out of the oversight of the class of householder patrons, and out of private space into public space. Whereas patrons used their resources in the service of the congregations, but otherwise spent much of their time running the estates or businesses which were the basis of their wealth, «ruling elders» have to be paid since they are devoting their time fully to the congregation. These professional local teachers and leaders replace the authority of the passing apostolic class, and acquire the apostolic right to payment for labour full-time for the Gospel.<sup>40</sup> Highly skilled teachers are required to supply successful op-

<sup>37</sup> R.A. Campbell, *The Elders. Seniority within Earliest Christianity*, Edinburgh 1994, 176-205; F. Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters*, Cambridge 1994, 97-111.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Campbell, *op. cit.*, 183. Campbell offers a new reading of Tit 1:5-9 to the effect that bishop and elder are not identical in this text, as usually thought; rather, single city overseers are being appointed from the elder class, 196-197.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Campbell, *op. cit.*, 184-185, 202; Young, *op. cit.*, 105-106.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. how the maxims of the ox and the labourer (I Tim 5:18) refer to the apostolic class in other New Testament contexts (Mt 10:10; Lk 10:7; I Cor 9:9, 14).

position to heterodox, proto-gnostic teaching which claims that the resurrection is past already and embraces myths, genealogies, speculations, ascetic food-laws and prohibition of marriage demands<sup>41</sup> – and is much given to argument.<sup>42</sup> The new professional bishop requires rhetorical skills and theological acumen to master the complex threat which these systems represent. He must «be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it» (Tit 1:9). The Pastorals are replete with the fixed formulae which are part of his stock in trade.<sup>43</sup>

This demanding teaching task was best promoted by gathering the Christians of the city in one public location for worship, in which the united city congregation is steered in the right doctrinal path by the bishop's «public reading of scripture, preaching and teaching» (I Tim 4:13).<sup>44</sup> The older pattern of a mobile ministry of peripatetics entertained within households was closed down. Suspicion of the peripatetics is apparent in other late first century writings. Diotrephes refuses to entertain visiting teachers in III John 9-10. The *Didache* prefers a settled ministry and pronounces harsh rules for testing the integrity of peripatetics.<sup>45</sup> The Pastorals reveal the complementary evidence that the pattern of household meeting has fallen under suspicion, and is no longer considered the proper locus of teaching. Now it is false teachers who visit private homes, and upset «whole households» (Tit 1:11). In what may seem overstated resistance to teaching in the household context, women become subject to the standard elite Graeco-Roman rhetoric about «public» and «private» roles. There were pagan arguments around about women's supposedly limited intellectual and moral capacities, which could be drawn upon to prohibit women's engagement with the political activity of theological debate. On the basis of such rhetoric, it would be easy to argue that women should not draw intellectual discussion illegitimately into their own, private sphere of influence by entertaining peripatetic teachers in the home. Proto-gnostic peripatetics are charged with stereotypical invasion of privacy and lasciviousness: «For among them are those who make their way into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and swayed by various impulses, who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth» (II Tim 3:6-7).

The fact that the church of the Pastorals operates in the public rather than the private sphere leads to an intense concern for propriety before the outside world. Large gatherings for public Christian worship now raised for city offici-

<sup>41</sup> I Tim 1:3-11; 4:1-5; 4:7; 6:4-5; II Tim 2:14-16; 2:18; 4:2; Tit 1:10; 1:14.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. I Tim 6:4-5; Tit 2:10.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. I Tim 1:15; 3:16; 4:9; II Tim 1:13-14; 2:11-13; Tit 3:8.

<sup>44</sup> *Anagnosis*, «public reading» (RSV), is the term used for the public reading (of scripture) in the Jewish synagogues, cf. Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker, op. cit., 52-53.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Didache* 11:4-5, 9, 12; 15:1.

als the disturbing question of political loyalty. Hence the Church makes overt efforts to display itself loyal to the existing social order. Submission to «rulers and authorities» and «perfect courtesy» to all outside are the order of the day (Tit 3:1, 3). Prayers for «kings» and «all who are in high positions» (i.e. those who run the city) publicly demonstrate loyalty and ensure that a «quiet and peaceable life» is led by the congregation which shows itself «godly and respectful in every way» (I Tim 2:1-2). Slaves attracted and converted by the public worship must honour their unconverted masters so that «the teaching may not be defamed» (I Tim 6:1).

It seems to have been thought that the participation of women in such worship would give the impression of subversion of the public order. We may compare how the bishop, who administers public worship and becomes caretaker of a public building, must be «well thought of by outsiders» (I Tim 3:7), a criterion which was irrelevant in the earlier context of worship within the private space of the household, where meetings were invisible to the outside world. It was thought that women should not fulfil this role in the public eye. Women are probably numbered still amongst the staff of deacons, referred to as «the women» (I Tim 3:11) between two texts explicitly concerned with deacons (3:8-10, 12-13). However, they probably do not have a vocal role. It is the men who are to make public prayer (I Tim 2:8). In the public context, norms of honour and shame demand that only the male voice is heard. Women must observe silence and accept their exclusion from any role which implies that they have authority over men (I Tim 2:11-12). The church in the public eye must even be careful in its distribution of charity to women. Younger women are not to be enrolled in the order of widows, who undertake works of charity on behalf of the community in return for their upkeep (I Tim 5:9-11). Works such as visiting the sick involved movement through the city. If the church were seen to engage women of child-bearing age in such tasks, rather than encouraging them to bear children and run households, it might be seen as a threat to the social order. It appears that the ideological rhetoric which sees the woman engaged in business outside the home as potentially a mere public nuisance is applied: «they learn to be idlers, gadding about from house to house, and not only idlers but gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, rule their households, and give the enemy no occasion to revile us» (I Tim 5:13-14).

The system of larger, gathered public congregations was suited to the promulgation of orthodoxy and convergence of doctrine. Where the pattern of peripatetics entertained within households persisted, there was greater chance of deviation beyond norms which the wider Church found acceptable. The interest in doctrinal uniformity worked against the possibility of women fully using their talents in public service. It is possible that prejudices against women's natural capacities were readily used to stereotype independent household congregations where women had greater roles as teaching false

doctrine. Conventions concerning public space and male stereotypes about women may have led to something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The women of the growing «Great Church» were excluded from public teaching, but women in those parts of the Church which did not submit to the control of the city-bishops retained leading teaching roles and developed greater influence. This would account for the prominence of women in second century heretical movements,<sup>46</sup> most notably the Montanist prophetesses Prisca and Maximilla.<sup>47</sup>

### *Conclusion: trends of separation*

Thus the «public» worship of the Pastorals excludes women from the emerging leadership role of monarchical bishop, and may be open to the accusation of employing the sexist rhetoric of shame to coerce women's silence in public space. Greater numbers of conversions amongst the city elite in this era, as are indicated by the Lucan interest in the salvation of the rich as well as the poor,<sup>48</sup> probably contributed to the formal expression of the ideal of women's silence. The Pastorals show the movement to worship in public space which became common in major sectors of the Church by about the last third of the first century. This probably occurred in those urban locations where Christians were already numerous by this time. One factor that determined the timing of the transition to public worship is the depth of evangelism and size of congregation in the location concerned. Here we should most naturally think of the many urban centres where there were already several or more household congregations by the 50's of the first century (e.g. Rome, Corinth, Philippi, Antioch, etc.) By the time of the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70), such urban centers probably contained so many Christians and house congregations that the resources available and number of interested worshippers led

<sup>46</sup> Cf. E. Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, New York 1979, 61-63; A. Jensen, *Gottes selbstbewußte Töchter*, Freiburg 1992, esp. 263-264.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Torjesen, *op. cit.*, 29-30.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. H.-J. Degenhardt, *Lukas – Evangelist der Armen*, Stuttgart 1965, 180-181, 221-223; R.J. Karris, *Poor and Rich. The Lukan Sitz im Leben*, in: C.H. Talbert (ed.), *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, Edinburgh 1978, 112-125 (114-115). The perspective of the author of Acts reveals an interest in emphasizing the high social status of Paul, consonant with the deduction that conversions amongst the city elites were desired and were becoming more numerous in his day, cf. V. Robbins, *The Social Location of the Implied Author of Luke-Acts*, in: *The Social World of Luke-Acts. Models for Interpretation*, ed. J.H. Neyrey, Peabody MA 1991, 305-332; J.C. Lentz, *Luke's Portrait of Paul*, Cambridge 1993; R.L. Rohrbaugh, *Methodological Considerations in the Debate over the Social Class of the Early Christians*, *JAAR* 52 (1984) 519-546; J.H. Neyrey, *Luke's Social Location of Paul. Cultural Anthropology and the Status of Paul in Acts*, in: B. Witherington III (ed.), *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts*, Cambridge 1996, 251-279.

to frequent or regular use of larger facilities which assumed in common perception a «public» character. The tendency to unite these congregations into regular weekly «public» worship was enhanced by a further factor, the substantial problems of doctrinal divergence evidenced by the Pastorals, perhaps at some time in the last forty years of the first century, and by the Johannine literature, perhaps towards its close. It may have been influenced by the synagogue model (witness the designation «elders» in Acts 14:23), due to a large influx of Jews into the Church around the time of the first Jewish war against Rome, since a teaching tradition and religious message based in the Jewish scriptures but containing an express distance from Jewish nationalism would provide a natural refuge for many Jews of the western diaspora embarrassed by the revolt against Rome in the Jewish homeland. In these congregations worship in an «official» form of public congregation led by a monarchical bishop was established by the early second century, as the writings of Ignatius show.

In many sectors of the Church, however, worship will have continued within private space in later periods. Worship within households was most natural where the Gospel continued to take root in new locations by the establishment of small household congregations under private patronage. Thus while Torjesen has skilfully pointed to the correct socio-cultural stricture for understanding the limitation of women's roles within early Christianity, the gender ideology of public and private, it is probably wrong to look for a single turning point for the transition of worship to public space, common to all locations. Torjesen is particularly influenced by the archaeological remains which show the remodelling of a house into a larger worship space in the mid to late third century at Dura-Europos, and hence finds a general point of transition around the middle of the second century.<sup>49</sup> However, as we should expect, the Pastorals, which probably reflect the common practice of the urban centres where Christianity was well established by the 60's of the first century, reveal the creation of public spaces for worship and the transition of Christian worship to these spaces much earlier than the remote church of Dura-Europos. Torjesen appears to have «homogenised» social realities across all locations on the basis of the evidence of the Dura-Europos house-church. Evidence after the New Testament period for women in leadership roles<sup>50</sup> may often re-

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Part I, ThZ 61/2 (2005) 127, note 55 on the archaeology of the Dura-Europos house-church, and Torjesen, *op. cit.*, 37, 127 and 132 notes 36 and 37, and *Reconstruction of Women's Early Christian History* (see Part I, ThZ 61/2 [2005] 116, note 9) 305 for her emphasis on this evidence.

<sup>50</sup> Torjesen points to the inscription Theodora Episcopa under her picture in a mosaic of the Roman basilica dedicated to Prudentiana and Praxedis; the epitaph to the *presbytis* Epiktas from the Greek island of Thera; the two slave women who were *ministrae* mentioned by Pliny, Ep. 96; the woman presbyter in Cappadocia mentioned by Cyprian, Epistle 75.10.5; and the Christian teacher Kyria mentioned in a papyrus, *op. cit.*, 9-10, 115; the wo-

late, as Torjesen's own thesis in the view of the present author quite correctly suggests, to worship in household contexts where women officiated without objection. One reason for the limited nature of this evidence, however, is that public worship was established in many locations much earlier than Torjesen allows.

The transition to public worship evidenced by the Pastorals was an important mode by which that doctrinal pattern which came to be accepted as orthodox was progressively established. Where resistance to this pattern of doctrine existed, we might expect to find a conservative preference for the older structure of worship within households linked by peripatetics. Within the New Testament, the Johannine texts, which seem to evidence the greatest debate with proto-gnostic beliefs, evidence insistence on the older peripatetic pattern. Interestingly, they also suggest the continuing importance of women in ministry, and worship within the household context. Raymond Brown has expounded the strong implications of the presentation of the Samaritan woman and Mary Magdalene in the Fourth Gospel for roles of women in ministry in the Johannine community.<sup>51</sup> Sandra M. Schneiders has suggested that the strong characterisation of women in the Fourth Gospel confirms the roles of women in ministry.<sup>52</sup> II John apparently addresses a female patron and leader of a household congregation as the «elect lady» (1, cf. 4, 13). In III John, it is the author and respected teacher in the Johannine community who resists the latent monarchical bishop Diotrephes' action against peripatetics (9-10). The «many antichrists» who have «gone out» in I John 2:18-19 are probably peripatetics; the letter sets up tests for assessing the correctness of their teaching. Beyond the New Testament, certain texts of the Gnostic Gospel of Mary give Mary Magdalene the title «apostle of the apostles» (*apostola apostolorum*).<sup>53</sup> The present author's student Timothy Ling has drawn attention to how Raymond Brown leaves unanswered the question: How are the prominent roles of women in the Fourth Gospel to be reconciled with the presentation of female roles in the Pastorals?<sup>54</sup> Where was the Church in which these

man presiding at the eucharist in an early third century fresco (52, cf. the catacomb painting 155) seems to minister in a domestic context (at a real meal). Cf. D. Irvin, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church. The Archaeological Evidence*, Duke Divinity School Review 2 (1980) 76-86. R.S. Kraemer finds epigraphic evidence for two Christian women elders (one possibly montanist) and four Christian women deacons (and two deaconesses), *Maenads, Martyrs, Matrons, Monastics*, Philadelphia 1988, 221-223.

<sup>51</sup> John 4:1-45; 20:1-18; R.E. Brown, *Community of the Beloved Disciple*, New York 1979, 183-192.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. S.M. Schneiders, *Women in the Fourth Gospel and the Role of Women in the Contemporary Church*, in: M.W.G. Stibbe, *The Gospel of John as Literature*, Leiden 1993, 123-143.

<sup>53</sup> E. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Mary Magdalene. Apostle to the Apostles*, *Union Theological Seminary Journal* (April 1975) 22ff.

«Johannine women» could so prominently minister? Ling has made the acute observation that the undeveloped ecclesiology of John suggests that the answer to Brown's question lies with the realisation that the church of the Fourth Gospel operated within households, where women were exercising important ministries, rather than the public sphere.<sup>55</sup>

The observations of this piece concerning the ideology of public and private space and its consequences for the roles of women must, however, end on a negative note. Although the ideal of extreme moderation in public space here depicted was only fully realisable for the elite woman, and perhaps rarely describes actual practice, the Church, perhaps eager to appear the very model of propriety, seems to have accepted it as the appropriate norm for all women in public space, and to have accordingly ruled against the possibility for women to lead or contribute to worship in public space. The literature of the New Testament period itself shows that the socially acceptable activities of a woman in public space were extremely curtailed, indeed greatly enough to prohibit an independent woman entering alone into the highest level of Christian service, the apostolate. At Rom 16:7 both Andronicus and the woman Junia are denoted apostles. Despite those translations which prefer to construe a masculine form Junias, this is not attested in ancient sources and must be postulated to exclude the memory of the apostle Junia.<sup>56</sup> The comments of the fourth century preacher John Chrysostom, a speaker of *koine* Greek, are decisive:

«To be apostles is something great. But to be outstanding among them – just think what a wonderful encomium that is! How great this woman's devotion to philosophy must have been that she is worthy of the title apostle.»<sup>57</sup>

Bernadette Brooten has observed that Origen, Jerome, Theophylact and Abelard all understood the name as feminine, and that it was not until Aegidius of Rome (1245-1316) that it was taken as masculine.<sup>58</sup> In regard to Chrysostom's enthusiasm we must observe, however, that he himself shared in the ideology that public affairs (politics) belonged to men, private matters (such as household management) to women.<sup>59</sup> Hence while Chrysostom accepted Junia's apostolic role, he probably assumed that this was exercised within the

<sup>54</sup> R.E. Brown, *The Church the Apostles Left Behind*, London 1984.

<sup>55</sup> T. Ling, *Martha: John 11:1-46. A source for community history?* (Unpublished dissertation, Canterbury Christ Church College) 1996, 33; see also his recent PhD dissertation *Transcending Johannine Sectarianism* (University of Kent at Canterbury) 2004.

<sup>56</sup> Edwards, *op. cit.*, 58; cf. C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Edinburgh 1975-1979, 788-789; see also above.

<sup>57</sup> *Hom. in Rom.*, ad loc.

<sup>58</sup> Brooten, *op. cit.*, 141-144; cf. M. Gielen, *Frauen in den Gemeinden des Paulus. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 1. Jahrhunderts*, *SaThZ* 6 (2002) 182-191 (183-186).

<sup>59</sup> The kind of women who ought to be taken as wives, 3.4, see E.A. Clark, *Women in the Early Church*, Wilmington DA 1983, 36-37.

household sphere. Generally the Church Fathers make a distinction between public and private ministry, restricting the ministry of women to the domestic sphere, and assuming that it was in the semi-private sphere of the public rooms within the household that women preached, taught, and exercised leadership in the New Testament period.<sup>60</sup>

The limited possibilities for women's roles in public space are singularly illustrated by Junia. She only appears in conjunction with a man, Andronicus, who is most likely her husband. This couple seems to have functioned as a traveling evangelistic team. It lay in the nature of the apostolic task to preach in public to attract new converts as well as in the context of private homes. It is difficult to imagine Junia preaching alone in public space, an important part of apostolic mission. She probably taught within households, and may have assumed only a supporting role to Andronicus' formal speaking in public space. In informal contacts in public space, an apostolic couple had an important function. «Unchaperoned» conversations between individuals of opposite sex could be avoided, avoiding any appearance of impropriety. It may be an accident of the occasional nature of the New Testament documents that we do not have a similar reference to the well-known missionary couple Prisca and Aquila (Acts 18:24-26; Rom 16:3-5) as «apostles». But no record is left of a woman who functioned independently in the New Testament period in the role of apostle. This implies that the New Testament church accepted, within the framework of the expressed morals and preferred social conventions of the elite moralists of its time, that for a woman to move too freely in public space, to address strange men alone, or to speak independently to gathered crowds which included men might properly be interpreted as immodest. It is therefore important, in the modern debate concerning women's leadership in the church, not to take an anachronistic view of New Testament texts which affirm women's independent leadership roles in domestic or private space as if they refer to public leadership. Similarly, those texts which prohibit women's leadership in public space may not be simply explained away. Rather, discussion must be raised on the theological level to assess whether a bolder *Sachkritik* should be applied which simply overrules such scriptural and traditional restrictions on women's leadership in public space by regarding them as culturally relative and inapplicable in the modern context. Such debate should perhaps bear in mind that the situation of many non-western Christian churches today is analogous to that of I Cor 14:34-35 and I Tim 2:11-12, in that the expressed morals and preferred social conventions of those non-Christians surrounding the church and potentially hostile to it do not permit all too free roles for women within public space, and indeed regard such freedom for women as a mark of western cultural decadence and decay. This debate me-

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Edwards, op. cit., 98-100; Van der Meer, op. cit., 16, 60.

rits subtle reflection. Should, for example, in such contexts, Christian churches acknowledge that the strictures expressed in I Cor 14:34-35 and II Tim 2:11-12 may legitimate voluntary or canonically enforced restraint and a stand against the forced importation of foreign socio-cultural norms, or should the changes allowing the public leadership of women typical of many European and American denominations be regarded as a necessary Christian liberation of women which expresses the preaching of the liberating Gospel of Christ and must accompany it in all contexts?

### *Abstract*

I Corinthians 14:33-36 and I Timothy 2:11-12 impose silence upon women in Christian worship and prohibit their activity as Christian teachers; these restrictions stand in contrast to women's missionary activity, leadership of congregations and vocal role in Christian worship as attested in other New Testament texts. This paper argues that these restrictive texts applied to the context of public worship, since women's modesty and silence in public space were valued aspects of social convention and morality as promulgated by elite theorists. The contrasting indications of active roles for women in the early Christian congregations, it is argued, relate to the domestic context of worship in private homes, where conventional behaviour allowed more active and vocal roles for women. Social norms allowed the leadership of wealthy women patrons over the congregations which met in their homes. Women missionaries in the early church probably did not teach and preach in public space independently of men or speak alone with strange men. It is argued that a transition of much Christian worship from the private space of domestic dining rooms to larger spaces perceived to be public occurred in the major urban centres where Christianity first flourished as early as the late first generation or early second generation (i.e. by the 60's or 70's), and that I Corinthians 14:33-36 reflects the impact of this transition on the editing of the Pauline corpus prior to its publication as a single unit. Worship in private space, and consequently also women's prominent leadership roles within the domestic context, continued for at least two centuries in many locations; these were probably always especially characteristic of newly evangelised areas. Ultimately, however, the conventional location of Christian worship in public space excluded women from leadership roles which applied to the whole Christian congregation.

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