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11:2-16*

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IMAGE AND GLORY OF GOD, GLORY OF MAN:  
EVANGELICALS AND PAUL'S HERMENEUTICS OF  
GENDER IN 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

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University Of Durham  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the controversy regarding gender roles in contemporary evangelicalism. The principal issue concerns the notion of male headship and the role of women. The conflict ranges across several theological disciplines, with a recent strand suggesting, on the basis of 1 Corinthians 11:3, that the subordination of the Second person of the Trinity to the First follows necessarily from the subordination of women to men. This argument presumes that the text speaks clearly about both human gender and also the essential Trinity. The hermeneutical axioms underlying this assumption are those of the Protestant tradition – authority, inspiration and perspicuity. However, I argue that in 1 Corinthians Paul has a different theological epistemology in which God is not perspicuous but eschatologically mysterious.

Nevertheless, the evangelical intuition that God and gender are related is basically correct. For Paul, in 1 Corinthians, the Church circumscribes that part of the cosmos that can express appropriately its relationship to God; it can be the microcosm of the ordered, beautiful and praiseworthy world-to-come. The argument of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 assumes ancient notions of the metaphysically secondary constitution of female bodies and veiling is a prophylactic response to the social risk they present. The language used to articulate this model of difference situates the sexes vis-à-vis each other as microcosms of God and Christ vis-à-vis the cosmos. For Paul, dressing according to nature is one of the ways in which Christian men and women can signify their cosmic roles as images of the one God and one Lord.

This reading of Paul complicates the present hermeneutical task of bringing these texts to bear upon present-day situations, since modern interpreters arguably are unable to share several of Paul's cosmological and anthropological assumptions. Although there are several potential interpretative strategies available, none is entirely successful in dealing with the specific difficulty that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 presents, namely how to interpret *as Christian Scripture* a text that invites its readers to assume a stance that is now problematic for many modern Christians. The conclusion of the thesis argues that a 'Christianly apt' solution to this hermeneutical problem is nevertheless attainable. The specific solution offered involves a reflexive reappraisal of specific hermeneutical principles and a reconsideration of certain more resilient features of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

## DECLARATION

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BAGD	Bauer, W., et al., ed., <i>A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CD	Barth, K., <i>Church Dogmatics</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
HistR	<i>History Of Religions</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JBL	<i>Journal Of Biblical Literature</i>
JBMW	<i>Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood</i>
JETS	<i>Journal Of The Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal For The Study Of The New Testament</i>
JTS	<i>Journal Of Theological Studies</i>
LitTh	<i>Literature And Theology</i>
LSL	Liddell, H.G., et al., <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> 9 <sup>th</sup> edn.
LXX	<i>Septuagint</i>
ModTh	<i>Modern Theology</i>
NA <sup>27</sup>	Nestle-Aland, <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> 27 <sup>th</sup> edn.
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PriscP	<i>Priscilla Papers</i>
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RS	<i>Religious Studies</i>
SBJT	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal Of Theology</i>
TDNT	Kittel, G., ed., <i>Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament</i>
TrinJ	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 The Focus Of This Study

In this thesis I investigate some of the ways in which one might develop a theological understanding of gender in the Christian community. This is very important, since questions of gender,<sup>1</sup> of division of ministerial labour, of familial roles and of authority have traditionally been very closely related in Christianity. As such, any theological or practical proposal in relation to ministry, church or family inevitably involves some consideration of the roles and statuses of the men or women who might be expected to enact it. In short, gender is implicated in nearly all of the ways in which Christians have organised themselves. What is more, a relationship between gender and the exercise of authority is hardly unique to the Christian community; not only do other religious traditions raise similar sets of questions, but the civic and political environments in which these traditions are embedded also necessarily exhibit some sort of stance towards the participation of males and females in their discourses and processes. This means that the study of the gender discourses of a particular religious tradition has a relevance beyond its internal point of reference, since it illuminates one of the key concepts that members of the tradition can use in order to (i) articulate their difference from or commonality with adherents of other religious traditions, and (ii) to signal acquiescence or resistance to the trends and values of wider society.

Nevertheless, the ways in which Christian churches and families have organised themselves historically are too diverse to explore them comprehensively

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<sup>1</sup> Generally speaking, I use 'sex' or 'sexual differentiation' to describe the material, physical or bodily separation of humanity into males and females, whereas 'gender' is used to designate certain socially constructed and enforced norms and performances that are attached to these biological categories.

here. Accordingly, I have chosen to begin my investigation by considering a particular present-day dispute regarding gender roles. In terms of a basic situation, there are many such disputes to choose from. One could, for example consider the various denominational moves towards female ordination in the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the most interesting of these campaigns is the failed attempt to secure female ordination within the Church of England in the 1970s. However, pursuing such a course would be to confine the discussion here to a single aspect of female access to institutional Church power, and this would perhaps be a less than ideal starting question for a study seeking to develop a more general theological understanding of gender. There have also, in recent years, been several ethnographic and congregational studies, both in the United Kingdom and the United States, which are concerned with the ways in which religious communities negotiate gender through their discourses and practices.<sup>3</sup> However, although such studies are highly interesting, the methodology they pursue is, in the last analysis, concerned with a form of ‘thick description’<sup>4</sup> of cultures, whereas I am interested also in ‘thick’ *prescription*, that is, the formulation of a proposal of my own.

With these observations in mind, the specific situation with which this thesis is concerned is the relatively recent dispute regarding gender roles in the American evangelical scene. This dispute is not simply concerned with the question of whether official institutional roles within the Church ought to be open equally to males and females, although this is one of the principal questions of ecclesial policy with which

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<sup>2</sup> See further Chaves, *Ordaining Women* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Griffith, *God's Daughters: Evangelical Women And The Power Of Submission* (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1997); Aune, ‘The Significance Of Gender For Congregational Studies’ in *Congregational Studies In The UK*, ed. Guest *et al.* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 185-202.

<sup>4</sup> On ‘thick description’ see Clifford Geertz, who derives this notion from Gilbert Ryle. Geertz, ‘Thick Description: Towards An Interpretative Theory Of Culture’ in *The Interpretation Of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana, 1993), 1-30, p.6.

the debate is concerned. Rather, this movement roots practical questions of ecclesial and familial organisation in overlapping but fundamentally competing sets of gendered values and ideals. Whilst nearly all American evangelicals would argue that males and females are *intrinsically* equal in status, value and esteem – at least insofar as concerns their standing before God – they differ between themselves as to whether there remains any theological basis for the retention of certain uniquely male leadership roles. Traditionally, these roles have been described using the term ‘headship’ which derives from the biblical metaphor ‘head’ (κεφαλή 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:23). One of the key features of this investigation into this evangelical headship controversy concerns the way in which one of the most significant discussions of gender in the New Testament (1 Cor 11:2-16) has been brought to bear upon these roles.

## **1.2 Approach To The Topic**

Since the focus of this study principally concerns the ideas, values, discourses, biblical readings and theology that American evangelicals bring to bear upon the issue of gender roles, the methodologies pursued here are essentially those of the traditional theological and biblical-hermeneutical disciplines, namely, literature review combined with historical, literary and rhetorical exegesis of biblical texts and comparative literature. My overall approach to the topic is *heuristically* shaped around the fundamental contours of the dispute itself. Ultimately, the shape of this dispute derives from the evangelical bibliological claim to experience in the biblical text a particular type of authoritative propositional disclosure from God. Methodologically, this view of the Bible’s authority renders the exegesis of Scripture logically prior to the formulation of any constructive theological proposal. However, the priority of

exegesis over theology is formal; Roger Olson observes that in actual practice many evangelicals understand fidelity to Scripture in terms of reading the text in order to formulate proposals that conform to a set of outcomes defined by a 'received evangelical tradition'.<sup>5</sup>

On account of this, evangelical pastoral and organisational disagreements, such as that over gender, do not generally arise out of the process of Scriptural reading, but rather the reverse; practical and pastoral disputes force evangelicals to return to their sources. In the first instance, this involves a return to the default stances of one's own doctrinal tradition, which are presumed to be continuous with or at least faithful to Scripture. However, these default positions, in turn, require justification from the biblical text; hence, there is a consistent movement backwards, from situation through theological tradition to a biblical 'foundation'. There is, at the same time, a recognition within evangelical circles that the process of resolving competing interpretations of contested texts entails some reflection upon how to take this material forward, that is, the question of how to decode and apply these texts in the present – hermeneutics. Consequently, the overall shape of an evangelical dispute could be described as a basic narrative of enquiry, proceeding from a practical situation to a practical proposal. The sequence is as follows: Situation → Theology → Exegesis → Hermeneutics → [Theology] → Proposal. So as to facilitate my own analysis of the dispute, I have followed the same basic scheme.

This is not to claim that this is the best, the only, or even the only *evangelical*, way of doing a theology of gender. Christians of other traditions necessarily relate practical, pastoral and organisational issues such as church order to those elements of their distinctive pattern of life that most characterise their tradition. Generally

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<sup>5</sup> Olson, 'Tensions In Evangelical Theology', *Dialog* 42:1 (2003), 76-85, pp.82-83.



speaking, Roman Catholics are likely to relate such issues to their experience of Christ in the Mass, whereas Pentecostals will relate them to the immediacy of the Spirit in worship. What is more, the nature of such approaches to theological topics will also depend upon whether one understands the basis of one's proposal as constraining interpretation to certain predefined paths and positions or not. In each case, the way of reasoning theologically in relation to the biblical materials would necessitate a different shape to the argument.

### 1.3 The Significance Of The Study

In view of the preceding comments, it follows that the significance of this research is not limited to the socio-cultural observations such as that gender is a central consideration in any model of Christian organisation, and that patterns of gendered behaviour are important identity markers that enable religious traditions to assert, defend and contest their various identities. Neither, as will be seen, is it primarily concerned with delineating a *particular* pattern of gendered performance; indeed, whilst I will formulate a proposal that states that Scripture can be used to warrant certain ways of reflecting upon gender, I remain to be convinced that these ways of theologising lead necessarily to a monolithic approach to the practical question of how to live as male or female Christians. Also significant is the fact that the focus here is upon the way in which *evangelicals* bring the biblical materials to bear theologically upon the practical question of gender roles. This implicates this research in discussions considered to be of central importance within evangelicalism, such as the doctrine of Scripture and the question of how one might judge whether a theological proposal has been authorised by Scripture.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, since a

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<sup>6</sup> David Kelsey offers a good discussion of these issues. Kelsey, *The Uses Of Scripture In Recent Theology* (London: SCM, 1975).

substantial section of this thesis is devoted to situating Paul's gender discourses in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 within an appropriate conceptual and epistolary context – in this case Paul's eschatological cosmology – the ensuing discussion also bears directly upon scholarly discussions of ancient models of gender, of Pauline theology and of the history of ideas within early Christianity.<sup>7</sup>

#### **1.4 The Development Of The Argument**

The argument of this thesis is as follows. In chapter 2, I begin by analysing the evangelical headship controversy in its historical and theological context. As will be seen, disputes regarding gender are inherent to Protestant thought. However, gender is also a specific and significant identity marker for present-day American evangelicals, whose discursive proclivity for theological disagreement is shaped by divisions between those who are reformist (in this case egalitarian or feminist) by inclination and others who are more conservative (those who advocate some form of gender hierarchy). The practical and pastoral conflict over the place of women in the Church and home will be seen to be a function of competing sets of values, which are justified by competing theological understandings of the basic salvation-historical narrative of Scripture, and this, in turn, has generated a proliferation of technical philological literature designed to settle the contested exegesis of certain biblical texts.

Chapter 3 takes this discussion forward by examining and responding to a recent theological-hermeneutical proposal designed to resolve the deadlock regarding these theological and philological issues. Both feminist and non-feminist evangelicals have argued that since in 1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul applies the same 'head' metaphor to

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<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Lloyd, *The Man Of Reason: Male And Female In Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993); Økland, *Women In Their Place: Paul And The Corinthian Discourse Of Gender And Sanctuary Space* (London: T.&T. Clark, 2004).

both God vis-à-vis Christ and man vis-à-vis woman, the mutual relations between the Persons in the classic Trinitarian formulations constitute an appropriate theological analogy to bring to bear upon Paul's teachings regarding male and female relations. One of the principal questions, however, is whether the Trinitarian doctrine itself warrants an egalitarian model of mutual relations, or whether it, in fact, evinces some form of hierarchy-in-mutuality. Another question relates to the type of hermeneutical assumptions entailed in invoking the doctrine of God in this manner – is this application of Paul's argument commensurate with Paul's own theology and epistemology? I shall argue that it is not, and that, since evangelicals regard themselves as constrained by the theology of the text, this constitutes a significant obstacle to this type of reading.

None of this is to suggest that evangelicals are incorrect in perceiving there to be a relationship between the doctrine of God and gender in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; the question is, *how* did Paul bring these issues to bear upon one another? Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis offer an exegesis of this passage in its epistolary and theological context. To posit a relationship between God and gender entails some consideration of God's relationship to human beings as materially embodied, and this is to ask how God might relate to, and what God's purposes might be for, the created order itself, and especially for the Church. Accordingly, the first of these two chapters explores Paul's cosmological, theological and eschatological ideas in 1 Corinthians, so as to set the scene for the subsequent chapter in which I provide an exposition of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. As will become apparent, the rich interaction in this passage of notions of gendered propriety, of honour, and of created, indeed metaphysical, differences between the sexes, demonstrates the validity of Clifford Geertz's observation that

symbolic and metaphysical ideas exist in a mutually informing relationship.<sup>8</sup> I will argue that, for Paul, the gendered symbol of female veiling is related to a specific Pauline metaphysic of sexual differentiation. Insofar as they are metaphysically differentiated vis-à-vis one another, Paul regards the sexes as microcosms of God and Christ vis-à-vis the cosmos. As such, although Paul regards God and gender as related, he does not understand this relationship in the way proposed by modern evangelicals. For Paul, dressing according to nature is not simply a way of acknowledging the created differences between the sexes; it is in fact a way of performing their cosmic roles as images of the one God and one Lord.

Having examined the situation that evangelicals seek to address, and the theology by which they address it, and having offered an exegesis of one of the central texts they use to warrant their proposals, chapters 6 and 7 turn to the question of *how* to bring my exegesis to bear upon the question of gender in the present-day. First, there is the hermeneutical question of how a text that was written as an occasional epistle to 1<sup>st</sup> century Pauline Christians living in a Roman colony might inform the circumstances and practices of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century American participants in a transdenominational, globalised Protestant Christian movement? However, the hermeneutical distance that must be travelled relates not simply to the question of determining a suitable interpretative context. There is also the problem that, if my understanding of Paul's argument is correct, then Paul effectively proposes a stance that cannot easily be adopted with integrity by his present-day readers. The problem is not whether one can observe Paul's patterns of gendered behaviour; it is that one cannot concur with his model of sexual differentiation, or with the centrality it has in

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<sup>8</sup> 'Religious symbols formulate a basic congruence between a particular style of life and a specific...metaphysic, and in so doing sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other'. See Geertz, 'Religion As A Cultural System' in *A Reader In The Anthropology Of Religion*, ed. Lambek (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 61-82, p.62.

his gendered view of creation. Since this, in effect, divorces the symbolic and metaphysical systems encoded in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, it generates serious hermeneutical difficulties, which, as shall be seen, a range of hermeneutical strategies fail adequately to address.

The key question is this: how can 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 in its capacity as *Scripture* act to anchor theological proposals, when there are such problems with the argument it presents? Chapter 7, the conclusion of this thesis, attempts to address this theologically and hermeneutically, by bringing two observations to bear upon the question. On the one hand, it is arguable that some recognition of the temporal nature of hermeneutical understanding is intrinsic to Christian theology. As such, a distinctively Christian hermeneutical practice will depend upon a patient commitment to work out difficulties such as this over time, whilst resisting the urge to arrive at pre-determined conclusions that effectively 'rescue' Scripture by silencing it. On the other hand, I observe that ruptures, paradoxes and inconsistencies in symbolic systems, such as language or doctrine, are occasionally generative, causing such systems to proliferate beyond their initial boundaries. When these observations are applied to Paul's model of human beings as representations of the Divine in 1 Corinthians 11:7-12, what becomes apparent is that, for Paul, men and women have the capacity to represent a reality that he elsewhere describes as an eschatological mystery (cf. 1 Cor 13). This implies that all comprehensive descriptions of the relationship between human gender and God (including Paul's own description) will be at best provisional, and this resolves some of the difficulties in relation to this passage. However, that men and women embody a mystery means that the significance of gender, including *particular* patterns of gendered performance, can only be discerned by the same patient attendance one applies to the biblical text.

## 2. A SURVEY OF THE HEADSHIP CONTROVERSY AND ITS BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Introduction

#### 2.1.1 The Headship Dispute

As has already been noted,<sup>9</sup> a fundamental question for adherents of any religion is the exercise of authority. In evangelical Christianity, one of the ways in which authority has traditionally been organised is along lines of gender. The biblical metaphor of ‘head’ has been used to encapsulate a particular mode of authority – ‘headship’ – in which certain opportunities for the exercise of leadership are limited to males. Nevertheless, this model of gendered organisation has become increasingly contested among American evangelicals, and this coincides with several religious, cultural and economic changes in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the one hand, evangelical feminists<sup>10</sup> claim that authority roles within the church and family ought to be open to both men and women. On the other hand, evangelical traditionalists<sup>11</sup> argue that men and women have different yet complementary roles, and that the male status as ‘head’ necessarily entails that some leadership roles should be reserved exclusively for men.

The disagreement between these two evangelical groups is not principally oriented around the question of whether men and women are of ‘intrinsically’ different status; both evangelical traditionalists and feminists concur that both men and women alike (i) are in the image of God, (ii) are sinners, (iii) are loved by God, (iv) are redeemed by Christ, (v) are possessed of the Spirit, and thus have equal

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<sup>9</sup> See ch.1.

<sup>10</sup> This group tends to self-designate as ‘egalitarian’.

<sup>11</sup> This group tends to self-designate as ‘complementarian’.

dignity. What differentiates these camps from one another is the question of whether the existence of uniquely male leadership roles within the church or family belies this notion of 'spiritual' equality. Evangelical feminists tend to argue that differences in 'extrinsic' status, or role, on the basis of gender are inconsistent with the notion that the sexes are equal in 'intrinsic' status, or essence. Evangelical traditionalists generally take the opposite view.

### **2.1.2 The Argument Of This Chapter**

The purpose of this chapter is to present an initial survey of the headship controversy and to establish the topic of the hermeneutical case study with which the remainder of the thesis is concerned. To this end, it comprises two sections. (i) In the first section I examine the various contexts of the dispute, namely the theological, discursive, historical and sociological factors and circumstances that helped to make gender a contested topic among evangelical Protestants. (ii) The subsequent section introduces several significant strands of the debate, specifically the pastoral, theological, exegetical and philological issues it raises. In the conclusion of the section, I offer a preliminary overview of one particular dispute within this controversy – the 'gender and Trinity dispute'.<sup>12</sup> This conflict turns chiefly upon the theological interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3, and concerns the question of whether or not gendered subordination necessarily entails the subordination of the Second person of the Trinity to the First. This aspect of the controversy will be the topic of the next chapter.

## **2.2 The Context Of The Headship Dispute**

Prior to presenting an account of some significant strands of the headship dispute, it is necessary to offer a brief analysis of the factors influencing it. The conflict has a

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<sup>12</sup> I analyse and respond to this conflict in ch.3.

fourfold background. (i) It is principally an evangelical phenomenon, hence some account of the basic characteristics of evangelical Christianity is necessary. (ii) Its tone is shaped by the discursive tendencies of post-war American evangelicalism; hence it is also necessary to explain this particular community's combative mode of discourse. (iii) Also significant is the variegated and occasionally conflicting tradition of conservative Protestant reflection upon women's roles in marriage, family, church and society. (iv) Finally, there is the cultural-hermeneutical background; as several recent pieces of ethnographic research have demonstrated, practices of headship are somewhat emblematic of the way in which some evangelical Christians negotiate changing gender roles in American society.

### **2.2.1 The Ecclesial Context: Defining Evangelicalism**

One of the difficulties associated with any discussion of evangelicalism is the question of what the epithet evangelical denotes. In Protestant history the term has held at least four overlapping senses. (i) It is a synonym for 'Protestant' in churches of the Lutheran tradition, although this is not the usage considered here. (ii) Within the Anglican tradition it has designated the tendency commonly referred to as 'low-church'. (iii) Elsewhere, it has designated the churches that developed from the various revivalist movements of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the predominantly Anglophone world.<sup>13</sup> (iv) It is a shorthand designation for the post-fundamentalist movement, initially termed neo-evangelicalism, which emerged in the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The communities involved in the evangelical headship dispute have their heritage in the final three of these usages, and as predominantly American evangelicals particularly the fourth. Despite this, it is difficult to associate the epithet

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<sup>13</sup> See Olson, 'Tensions', pp.76-78.



‘evangelical’ exclusively with any one confessional stance, theory of Church governance, or organisational affiliation.

This is not, however, to despair of a working definition. Evangelicalism is a popularist and pietistic form of conservative Protestantism<sup>14</sup> and, as such, evangelicals share common pastoral and theological concerns. David Bebbington<sup>15</sup> identifies four such characteristics, all of which apply to the protagonists in the current headship dispute: (i) Evangelicals are *biblicists*, that is, they are committed to the supremacy of the bible as revelatory authority. This is not to minimise evangelical disagreements regarding the doctrine of Scripture, with some describing its authority in terms of its precision and freedom from error,<sup>16</sup> and others in terms of its fidelity and ability to accomplish its purpose.<sup>17</sup> (ii) Evangelical piety is *cruciocentric*, that is, the atonement rather than the incarnation or Christ’s teaching constitutes the focus of devotion. As Alistair McGrath notes, ‘the cross is treated as the starting-point of authentically Christian theology...[and]...as the centre of all Christian thought’.<sup>18</sup> (iii) The evangelical movement is *conversionist*, that is, it regards authentic Christian initiation as involving a spiritual experience of regeneration or ‘new birth’, although this may be immediate or gradual.<sup>19</sup> (iv) In terms of wider society, evangelicalism is an *activist*

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<sup>14</sup> So McGrath, ‘Theology And The Futures Of Evangelicalism’ in *The Futures Of Evangelicalism*, ed. Bartholomew *et al.* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 15-39, p.27ff.

<sup>15</sup> See Bebbington, *Evangelicalism In Modern Britain: A History From The 1730s To The 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp.2-17; Bebbington, ‘Evangelicalism In Its Settings: The British And American Movements Since 1940’ in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies Of Popular Protestantism In North America, The British Isles, And Beyond 1700-1990*, ed. Noll *et al.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 365-89, p.366; also McGrath, *A Passion For Truth: The Intellectual Coherence Of Evangelicalism* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), p.22.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. Lindsell, *The Battle For The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. Bloesch, *The Future Of Evangelical Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p.120.

<sup>18</sup> McGrath, *Passion For Truth*, p.41; also Forsyth, *The Cruciality Of The Cross* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1909).

<sup>19</sup> Bebbington, ‘Evangelicalism In Its Settings’, p.366.

faith, that is, its adherents regard their mission to involve the reformation of social structures by a combination of civic action and proselytism.<sup>20</sup>

### 2.2.2 The Discursive Context: Neo-Evangelical Disputes

To understand the recent American neo-evangelical preoccupation with gender, it is necessary to understand the factors that cause this movement to be periodically seized by controversy. To do this, it is necessary to begin with an analysis of neo-evangelicalism's history in relation to its parent tradition – fundamentalist Protestantism. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Anglophone evangelicals were critical apologists for traditional Christian doctrines, arguing against both Modernity and rival religious movements.<sup>21</sup> Since they constituted the dominant groups within the American Protestant denominations, American evangelicals initially pursued their struggle from within these traditions, their object being to persuade their respective communities to eschew what they regarded as the excesses of liberal accommodationism. John Fea terms this initial phase of engagement 'Irenic Fundamentalism',<sup>22</sup> although reformatory or apologetic fundamentalism perhaps more accurately sums up its aims. An apposite example of this phase is the publication of an apology for conservative Protestantism in the form of a multi-volume series of essays and articles, edited by R. A. Torrey (*The Fundamentals: A Testimony To The Truth*). This was in the first instance aimed at ministers and missionaries.

However, by the 1920s the relationship between anti-Modernist evangelicals and liberal Christians had become extremely hostile, with many anti-Modernists

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<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals In The Church Of England* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1988), p.311ff.

<sup>21</sup> See the relevant chapters of Torrey and Dixon, ed., *The Fundamentals: A Testimony To The Truth* (Los Angeles: Bible Institute Of Los Angeles, 1917).

<sup>22</sup> Fea, 'Understanding The Changing Facade Of Twentieth-Century American Protestant Fundamentalism: Toward A Historical Definition', *TrinJ* 15:2 (1994), 181–99, pp.184-86.

congregating around the epithet fundamentalist.<sup>23</sup> During this phase of conflict, the principal objective of the fundamentalists remained ascendancy within their denominations, but an increasingly hard-line was adopted towards communion with Modernists in the meantime. Indeed, as Harry Emerson Fosdick lamented, the aim of the fundamentalists appeared to be ‘to drive out of the evangelical churches men and women of liberal opinions’.<sup>24</sup> Within American civic society the now-notorious Scopes trial in Tennessee in 1925 is emblematic of the conflicts of this period,<sup>25</sup> and characterises the failure of American fundamentalists to purge Modernism from either the churches or the schools. This failure, combined with dispensationalist notions of eschatological apostasy, led subsequently to an ethos of separation from the mainline denominations.

The separatist ethos began to fragment in the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with some fundamentalists coming to regard disengagement as a counterproductive response to Modern challenges. Chief among these were Harold Ockenga, Carl Henry and Edward Carnell.<sup>26</sup> Broadly speaking, these first neo-evangelicals held to the fundamentalist doctrinal basics, but eschewed social separation, being in favour of participation in both culture and politics. However, since this essentially defines neo-evangelicalism negatively – as *anti-Modernist*, *anti-separatist* Protestantism – the new movement was constituted on inherently contestable territory. Some neo-evangelicals within the coalition naturally gravitated towards the fundamentalist end of the spectrum more than others, with the result

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<sup>23</sup> The earliest known use of this epithet is attributed to Curtis Lee Laws in 1920. See Fea, *Ibid.*, p.187.

<sup>24</sup> Fosdick, ‘Shall The Fundamentalists Win?’ *Christian Work* 102 (1922), 716-22, reproduced in: <http://www.ilstu.edu/~rrpearc/HistoricalFoundations/Religion/Readings/Fosdeck1922ScienceAndReligion.doc>.

<sup>25</sup> See Waggoner, ‘The Historiography Of The Scopes Trial: A Critical Re-Evaluation’, *TrinJ* 5:2 (1984), 155-74.

<sup>26</sup> In particular, see Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience Of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947).

being the formation of *de facto* conservative and reformist wings. Roger Olson<sup>27</sup> describes these as neo-fundamentalists and postconservatives respectively, neo-fundamentalists having a large closed-set of doctrinal commitments and postconservatives having a few basic commitments that constitute the kernel of an open-set of doctrines.

It is the contestable nature of the American neo-evangelical coalition that occasions the frequent internecine conflicts within this group, although the constitution of the reformist and conservative parties varies in relation to specific doctrinal or pastoral matters. Since they have a non-comprehensive definition of the content of faith, reformists tend to be more open towards novel theological constructions and towards the revision of the evangelical tradition on issues such as biblical inerrancy, gender roles, inclusivism, exclusivism and the doctrine of God. Having a comprehensive definition of the content of faith, conservatives tend to focus upon non-constructive theological tasks,<sup>28</sup> regarding innovative proposals by reformist colleagues with suspicion, since theological novelty is for this party unevangelical and quite possibly heretical. Accordingly, if this analysis is correct, the periodic conflicts with which neo-evangelicalism is seized are as much quarrels regarding who is entitled to define the parameters of the movement as they are disagreements regarding doctrine or practice.

The archetypal conflict between reformists and conservatives concerns the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. There are four stages to this dispute. (i) The first stage is *innovation*, the inerrancy conflict being initiated by, among other things, Fuller Theological Seminary's decision to abandon the traditional commitment to the

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<sup>27</sup> Olson, 'Tensions', p.78.

<sup>28</sup> See e.g. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction To Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994). This piece is critical rather than constructive theology, clarifying and refining existing conservative theological positions.

doctrine. (ii) The conservative *reaction* insisted upon the inerrancy of all biblical propositions, including those that referred to matters other than doctrinal content.<sup>29</sup>

(iii) The ensuing debate resulted in the *polarisation* of both popular and scholarly evangelical opinion, with some reformist evangelicals vociferously denying that strict inerrancy was, in fact, the historical position of conservative Protestant bibliology.<sup>30</sup>

(iv) The final stage is *consolidation*. Several conservative scholars founded the International Council On Biblical Inerrancy,<sup>31</sup> a single-issue organisation convened to define the theological boundaries of the community by producing theological statements clarifying the evangelical position on inerrancy. These conservative confession-like statements covered bibliology, hermeneutics and application.<sup>32</sup>

The so-called *Battle for the Bible* is illuminating because subsequent conflicts, including the gender dispute, have tended to have the same basic structure. The gender dispute follows this pattern of (i) reformist innovation, (ii) conservative reaction, (iii) polarisation and (iv) consolidation quite closely,<sup>33</sup> with the mature conflict being now largely managed by two rival organisations – the Council For Biblical Manhood And Womanhood<sup>34</sup> and Christians For Biblical Equality.<sup>35</sup> To all intents and purposes, these groups represent opposing neo-evangelical discourses, and they often give the impression of talking past one another on precisely the same issues

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<sup>29</sup> See Lindsell, *Battle For The Bible*, p.18.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. Rogers and McKim, *The Authority And Interpretation Of The Bible* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979); against Rogers and McKim see Woodbridge, 'Biblical Authority: Towards An Evaluation Of The Rogers And Mckim Proposal', *TrinJ* 1:2 (1980), 165-236.

<sup>31</sup> Hereafter I.C.B.I.

<sup>32</sup> See 'The Chicago Statement On Biblical Inerrancy', *JETS* 21:4 (1978), 289-96; 'The Chicago Statement On Biblical Hermeneutics', *JETS* 25:4 (1982), 397-401; 'The Chicago Statement On Biblical Application' in *International Council On Biblical Inerrancy: Summit III* (Chicago Conference: 1986).

<sup>33</sup> Ronald Pierce's historical survey of the controversy is broadly compatible with my analysis. See Pierce, 'Contemporary Evangelicals For Gender Equality' in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. Pierce *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 58-75.

<sup>34</sup> Hereafter C.B.M.W.

<sup>35</sup> Hereafter C.B.E.

and texts.<sup>36</sup> This illustrates that combativeness and liability to schism are to some extent inherent to the discourses of the American neo-evangelical scene. In short, neo-evangelicals argue about gender because neo-evangelicals argue.

### 2.2.3 The Historical Context: Protestants And Gender

The headship controversy is shaped by more than evangelical identity politics, gender having historically been a matter of controversy for many conservative Protestant traditions. This derives from two, apparently opposed, features of the Protestant tradition. (i) On the one hand, the received stance of most conservative Protestant traditions has been the advocacy of social and ecclesial patriarchy, there being ample material within the biblical texts and the preceding Christian tradition upon which to base such a stance. (ii) On the other hand, the emphasis upon hierarchy has also been complemented by ideals of mutuality between the sexes, due in part to certain core doctrines that apply equally to males and females.<sup>37</sup> These core doctrines include, amongst others, the priesthood of all believers and the perspicuity of Scripture.<sup>38</sup>

This ambivalence regarding gender has usually been resolved in the direction of patriarchy. This is partly attributable to cultural inertia, since pre-Protestant Europe could hardly be characterized as egalitarian by post-Enlightenment standards. It is also due to the focus of the magisterial Reformation upon the transformation of both Church *and* society. Since the propagation of a Protestant social ethos depended upon the household as the primary locus of socialisation, early Protestantism, particularly the Reformed traditions, advocated a stratified household ideology, albeit

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<sup>36</sup> See the comments in Wilks *et al.*, 'Biblical Truth And Biblical Equality: A Review Article', *EvQ* 78:1 (2006), 65-84, p.83.

<sup>37</sup> This point has been well made by Sally Gallagher. See ch.2 of Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity And Gendered Family Life* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), pp.19-38.

<sup>38</sup> Perspicuity is interesting because, as a corollary of revelation, its agent is God rather than the male or female reader. See Luther, *On The Bondage Of The Will* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1957), p.28.

one in which the marriage relationship ought ideally to include elements of mutuality as well as hierarchy. This is especially apparent in the family literature of early Puritanism, in which male magistrates, ministers, husbands and fathers are the symbolic guardians of order.<sup>39</sup> Given (i) the selection of biblical texts (e.g. Gen 2-3; 1 Tim 2) upon which Puritan pastors based their arguments and (ii) their partial reliance upon Aristotelian political theory, it is little surprise that they emphasised patriarchy at the expense of more egalitarian themes to which the radical Reformation was slightly more amenable.

There is also a civic aspect to early Protestant discussions of gender. Whilst political circumstances frequently necessitated that early Protestants reflect upon the nature of their obligations towards the authorities, the reigns of the Catholic queens Mary Tudor and Mary Stuart in England and Scotland inevitably entangled the questions of gender and civic power. In particular, Mary Tudor's reign became the occasion for severe polemic by both Christopher Goodman<sup>40</sup> and John Knox<sup>41</sup>. However, the picture of principled objection to female government Knox and Goodman paint is complicated by the fact that what occasioned these polemics was not merely Mary's ascent to the throne, but the perception that she was an anti-Protestant tyrant. Anglophone attitudes towards female power were somewhat softer than this traditionally,<sup>42</sup> and they tended to revert to the more ameliorative traditional stance when Mary's Protestant half-sister Elizabeth ascended to the English throne.

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<sup>39</sup> See Anthony Fletcher's discussion of Gouge, Whately, Griffith and Gataker, in Fletcher, 'The Family, Marriage And The Upbringing Of Children In Protestant England' in *The Family In Theological Perspective*, ed. Barton (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1996), 107-28, pp.108-15.

<sup>40</sup> See Goodman, *How Superior Powers Ought To Be Obeyd Of Their Subjects* (Geneva: John Crispin, 1558).

<sup>41</sup> See Knox, 'The First Blast Of The Trumpet Against The Monstrous Regiment Of Women' in *The Works Of John Knox*, vol. 4, ed. Laing (Edinburgh: Printed For The Bannatyne Club, 1855), 349-422.

<sup>42</sup> On Early Modern attitudes to female monarchs, see Richards, 'To Promote A Woman To Beare Rule: Talking Of Queens In Mid-Tudor England', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28:1 (1997), 101-21.

A similar combination of concerns is evident in colonial America, particularly in the heresy trial of Anne Hutchinson in Boston in 1637. Hutchinson's prosecution concerned her denial of the covenant of works – the Puritan belief that obedience to the divine Law is a preparatory precondition for divine grace<sup>43</sup> – a denial she had first articulated in a mixed-sex study group that she held in her home. It was actually the group's decision to make public this stance that occasioned the trial. Since the covenant of works was integral to Puritan social theory, their announcement challenged, whether intentionally or otherwise, the ethos and civic authorities of Puritan Massachusetts.<sup>44</sup> The impropriety of Hutchinson's hosting of this group became a major issue at her trial, since her accusers suspected that she had crossed the line between the legitimate expression of female lay piety and the *de facto* usurpation of ministerial duties. This illustrates the *symbolic* importance of public compliance with traditional gendered propriety, since Hutchinson's alleged unwomanly behaviour was cited as evidence of her generally seditious tendencies.

Whilst the significance of Puritanism for the development of the subsequent gendered ideals of the American Protestant tradition cannot be overestimated, other religious movements pursued different policies. In particular, both Quakers and Moravians officially accorded women a far more elevated and active status than was customary in Puritan churches.<sup>45</sup> The difference between these traditions and the Puritans was a periodic cause of friction, with the Puritan authorities in Massachusetts eventually hanging the Quaker preacher Mary Dyer in Boston in 1660 for unwomanly

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<sup>43</sup> See Bendroth, 'Feminism, Anne Hutchinson, And The Antinomian Controversy, 1634-1638', *TrinJ* 2:1 (1981), 40-48; Hall, *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).

<sup>44</sup> James C. Scott's analysis of the stages of dissent is helpful here. See Scott, *Domination And The Arts Of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p.2.

<sup>45</sup> See Dunn, 'Saints And Sisters: Congregational And Quaker Women In The Early Colonial Period', *American Quarterly* 30:5 (1978), 582-601.



conduct.<sup>46</sup> This radical alternative to Puritan gender codes was largely contingent upon the personal opinions of the founders of these movements, George Fox and Nicolaus von Zinzendorf,<sup>47</sup> with the deaths of Zinzendorf and Anna Nitschmann in 1760 marking a change in the attitude of the Moravians.<sup>48</sup> In any event, Moravian practice was less egalitarian than Quaker practice, insofar as the division of the community into sex segregated 'choirs' functioned as a *de facto* barrier against females holding office over males.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, by the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Moravians had ordained women to every office within the community except bishop.

Although radical communities, particularly the Quakers, exercised considerable influence upon English and American society, their 'spiritual' egalitarianism held sway principally within their immediate spheres of influence. However, important social changes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century tended to give wider American Protestant culture a democratic flavour, and this influenced the religious activity of women. In the first instance, 18<sup>th</sup> century revivalist movements increased the public participation of the laity in ministry, including in the presentation of public testimonies and exhortations. The effect of this was to dissociate certain spoken activities from questions of ordination, which was at that time a male preserve, and this opened new possibilities for those women regarded as having an 'extraordinary call' so long as they avoided sermons.<sup>50</sup> This was complemented by a more pervasive antiauthoritarianism associated with the revolutionary war. Gordon Wood has

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<sup>46</sup> See Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity*, p.23.

<sup>47</sup> Dunn, 'Saints And Sisters', p.595.

<sup>48</sup> Smaby, 'Female Piety Among Eighteenth Century Moravians', *Pennsylvania History* 64 (1997), 151-67, p.152.

<sup>49</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp.158-59.

<sup>50</sup> On 'extraordinary call' and avoiding the sermon form see Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity*, pp.25-28. See also Melnyk, 'Women's Theology And The British Periodical Press' in *Reinventing Christianity: Nineteenth Century Contexts*, ed. Woodhead (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 191-98, pp.193-94.

observed that in American society during this period ‘traditional structures of authority crumbled under the momentum of the Revolution, and common people increasingly discovered that they no longer had to accept the old distinctions’.<sup>51</sup> This included the traditional distinctions of ministerial office.

The shape of subsequent Protestant views of gender derives from the effects of theological, scientific, social and economic Modernity upon this situation. In terms of social ideology, an emergent liberal political emphasis upon individual equality and autonomy tended to clash with the pre-enlightenment Protestant notions of gendered hierarchy and mutuality, particularly at the points of interface between private and public life such as the legal or contractual aspects of marriage and divorce law.<sup>52</sup> Paradoxically, the same period saw the consolidation of an ideology of separate spheres among the Victorian bourgeoisie, and this served to domesticate and privatise women further. Behind this was an essentialist opposition between male and female bodies, personality and even religious experience. As Sally Gallagher observes, this essentialism was in fact a pastiche of earlier Protestant expressions of hierarchy and mutuality,<sup>53</sup> but it was not a uniquely religious phenomenon. Its influence upon scientific discourse has been observed by Fiona Erskine, who notes Charles Darwin’s somewhat unexamined assumption that ‘women were tenderer and less selfish...[and] also more emotional and less capable of reasoned thought’.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Cited in Rawlyk, ‘A Total Revolution In Religious And Civil Government: The Maritimes, New England, And The Evolving Evangelical Ethos, 1776-1812’ in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies Of Popular Protestantism In North America, The British Isles, And Beyond 1700-1990*, ed. Noll et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 137-55, p.145.

<sup>52</sup> See the discussion of marriage law and the Protestant social ethos in Witte, ‘Male Headship: Reform Of The Protestant Tradition’ in *Does Christianity Teach Male Headship: The Equal Regard Marriage And Its Critics*, ed. Blankenhorn et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 28-39.

<sup>53</sup> Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity*, p.31.

<sup>54</sup> Fiona Erskine in Barton, ‘Male And Female He Created Them: Interpreting Gender After Darwin’ (Durham University: Unpublished Paper, 2007), pp.2-3. On such taxonomies see Lloyd, *Man Of Reason*.

Ironically, this extreme essentialism constitutes one of the initiators of change within Anglophone societies. The gendered taxonomy maps onto a series of distinctions between public and private, commercial and domestic, legal and moral, practical and spiritual. As such, it renders the familial, non-commercial, moral and spiritual areas of society as *female* space, thereby providing an implicit justification for the involvement of evangelical women in Victorian social reformism.<sup>55</sup> This roughly coincides with the emergence of new revivalist movements such as the Salvation Army, in which the sphere of potential female influence included not only social activism but also public ministry.<sup>56</sup> This greater female participation derives partly from the somewhat lay-centred, mission-oriented ecclesiology of such movements, which tended to be correspondingly open to what earlier revivalists would have regarded as a woman's 'extraordinary calling'. It is also partly a demographic issue; non-conformist revivalism appealed principally to the lower classes, who were concomitantly less constrained by bourgeois gender norms.

The separate spheres ideology became increasingly problematic in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the one hand, the social disruption of two world wars punctuated by a global economic crisis and the 'stagflation' of the 1970s rendered the ideal of a male breadwinner and female homemaker only intermittently attainable even among the middle classes. On the other hand, the ideology increasingly came to be regarded as inimical to the interests of women, not only in terms of the way in which it had previously justified their disenfranchisement, but also in terms of the well-

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<sup>55</sup> Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity*, pp.34-36. See also Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be: Biblical Feminism For Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), p.314 on the abolitionist campaigners Sarah and Angelina Grimké.

<sup>56</sup> On ordination see Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth* (Sisters: Multnomah Publishers, 2004), pp.457-59; on female ministry see Hassey, 'Evangelical Women In Ministry A Century Ago' in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. Pierce *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 39-57.

documented 'eerie restlessness' that enforced domesticity appeared to generate in some post-war American women.<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, a combination of economic necessity and the emergence of second-wave feminism forced a general renegotiation of the social and familial roles of women from the 1960s onwards. Both fundamentalists and conservative neo-evangelicals tended to regard these changing social and familial patterns as signs of decline, and increasingly sought to reaffirm traditional 'family values' in the marriage and parenting literature they produced.<sup>58</sup>

This period of socio-economic and political change coincided with the growing influence of theological Modernity in the mainstream denominations and the concomitant rise of separatist fundamentalism.<sup>59</sup> This development in Protestant religion had a twofold relation to the ecclesial roles of women. On the one hand, as Betty DeBerg observes,<sup>60</sup> it is possible to regard emergent fundamentalism not only as a response to theological Modernity, but also as an expression of discomfort with regard to changing gender norms. As such, she construes the preoccupation with gender in early fundamentalist rhetoric as a rearguard action aimed at re-masculinising the Church<sup>61</sup> and bolstering a declining notion of the sacralised home as female space.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, the very act of separation by many conservatives hastened the ascendancy of theological Modernism in some denominations. Since Modernists often were amenable not only to female ministry, but also to female

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<sup>57</sup> See Griffith, *God's Daughters*, pp.39-46. On the causes of this 'eerie restlessness' see Rupp and Taylor, *Survival In The Doldrums: The American Women's Rights Movement, 1945 To The 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture 1830-1980* (London: Virago, 1987).

<sup>58</sup> See e.g. Dobson, *Man To Man About Woman* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1975); McDowell and Wakefield, *The Dad Difference* (Amersham: Scripture Press Foundation, 1989).

<sup>59</sup> See section 2.2.2.

<sup>60</sup> DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender And The First Wave Of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.76-78.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p.62ff.

ordination, it is little surprise that in the mainstream denominations there was a rash of decisions in favour of female ordination from the mid-1950s onwards.<sup>63</sup>

#### 2.2.4 The Cultural-Hermeneutical Context: Recent Studies

In a recent ethnographic study, Sally Gallagher<sup>64</sup> has offered a useful theoretical model for understanding the multilayered relationships between evangelicals, their distinctive religious subculture and the inherited Protestant gender narrative outlined above. She draws upon Ann Swidler's notion of culture as:

[A] "tool kit" of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems.<sup>65</sup>

As such, for Gallagher, the various discourses, practices, strategies, narratives and theological frameworks embedded in (i) the biblical traditions, (ii) evangelicalism itself, and (iii) the Protestant gender tradition, offer a repertoire of potential responses to the challenges presented by the social location in which evangelicals live, work and worship. Swidler<sup>66</sup> argues that during periods of substantial or accelerated socio-economic change necessity compels individuals and communities to search for such resources particularly actively. The repertoire of gender tools that Gallagher finds in evangelicalism includes 'both egalitarian and gender-essentialist tools'.<sup>67</sup> This is correct, insofar as evangelicals draw upon both Puritanism and also the more egalitarian Pietist traditions. However, it is arguable that ambivalence towards gender is inherent to the theological grammar of Protestantism, and the biblical materials.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> See Chaves, *Ordaining Women*, p.16ff.

<sup>64</sup> Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity*.

<sup>65</sup> Swidler, 'Culture In Action: Symbols And Strategies', *American Sociological Review* 51:2 (1986), 273-86, p.273. See Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity*, p.15.

<sup>66</sup> Swidler, 'Culture In Action', p.278.

<sup>67</sup> Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity*, p.15.

<sup>68</sup> Section 2.2.3.

For Gallagher, the way in which most evangelicals bring these tools to bear upon their circumstances is more complicated than simply selecting *either* an egalitarian *or* a gender-essentialist set of practices from the Protestant gender toolkit; they use both sets of tools in intuitive and pragmatic combinations.

Rather than consistently espousing either hierarchy or egalitarianism, most evangelicals draw on both the language of partnership and the language of headship in describing their ideals for marriage. They literally mix their own metaphors in an effort to capture the fluidity and complexity of contemporary family life. Much work goes into articulating these ideals as evangelicals draw on the cultural tools favoured by both gender-essentialist evangelicals and their biblical feminist counterparts.<sup>69</sup>

One of the results of this interplay is that most American evangelicals travel a considerable distance to accommodate the changing values and economic exigencies of present-day American society, whilst retaining a commitment to male headship as an evangelical identifier. This might be taken as an indication that gender traditionalism and feminism are, in fact, minority positions on the spectrum of evangelical gender discourses, with the bulk of the movement pursuing a *via media* between these extremes. However, such an inference would be mistaken, since the position of even the most ardent present-day advocates of evangelical traditionalism arguably constitutes a significant departure from both the biblical materials<sup>70</sup> and the rigorism of the Puritans.<sup>71</sup> The basic distinction within the movement is between a minority of evangelical feminists, whose principled objection to patriarchy requires them to deny the primacy of the male, and the majority, who are committed to both *de facto* egalitarianism and *de jure* patriarchy.

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<sup>69</sup> Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity*, p.77.

<sup>70</sup> I make this point in ch.6.

<sup>71</sup> See e.g. Piper, 'A Vision Of Biblical Complementarity' in *Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 25-55, pp.50-59; also Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), p.39.

I think that the popularity of this latter position derives, in part, from its facility to express the ambiguous relationships that evangelical movements have with their host cultures. On the one hand, American neo-evangelicalism is opposed to fundamentalism's social disengagement but, on the other hand, it is an activist movement that seeks to transform culture rather than the converse.<sup>72</sup> In short, evangelicals ought to be in the world, but not of it. Living as patriarchal-egalitarians expresses something of this paradox and it enables them to be open to certain elements of secular egalitarianism, whilst justifying countercultural resistance to what they consider to be its negative features.

The application of headship practices is a creative process that depends upon many factors, such as class, ethnicity and denomination. David Blankenhorn describes conversations with two groups of women that illustrate this well. For the first group, comprising women from an African-American Pentecostal congregation in a poorer Chicago neighbourhood, headship is both necessary and prophylactic; they argue that men without a ceremonial role that embeds them in families are liable to become antisocial and succumb to the influences of drugs, crime and violence.<sup>73</sup> For the second group, comprising white, middle-class women from Ohio, the rhetoric of headship is conditioned far less by these social dangers; consequently, it is described in less immediate terms. Blankenhorn reports one of his interlocutors as saying somewhat humorously, "I run the train, but I let him blow the whistle."<sup>74</sup> This is not to state that the language of social danger is entirely absent from middle-class neo-

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<sup>72</sup> See section 2.2.2.

<sup>73</sup> Blankenhorn *et al.*, ed., *Does Christianity Teach Male Headship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), p.x.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xi.

evangelical headship rhetoric; it is rather that this danger is expressed as anxieties about families, homosexuality and decline of the Protestant ethos in America.<sup>75</sup>

Finally, two pieces of research illustrate Gallagher's point regarding the role of creative agency in this process of applying the evangelical gender "tool kit". The first, by R. Marie Griffith,<sup>76</sup> concerns the Women's Aglow Fellowship International, which until recently advocated female submission to male headship. However, many members regard this behaviour as not only principled but *strategic*. Viewing submission to husbands as commensurate with a correct demeanour towards God, they understand it as a means by which divine agency is released therapeutically into difficult or broken relationships. In short, for these women, submission is a method of gaining control over circumstances that otherwise might overwhelm them.<sup>77</sup>

The second piece of research, a participant observation by Brenda Brasher,<sup>78</sup> concerns the women of the Mount Olive and Bay Chapel congregations in California. Describing the core tenets of these congregations as a 'sacred canopy',<sup>79</sup> that shelters the community from a secular milieu perceived to be hostile, Brasher notes that life beneath this canopy is marked by a thoroughgoing gender differentiation in which institutional authority is held by males. The official transcript of male headship obscures the empowering influence of fundamentalist religion for these women, in that it minimizes their agency in shaping their gender performance. In the first instance, Brasher notes that the pattern of gendered ministry pursued in these

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<sup>75</sup> See e.g. Hardenbrook, 'Where's Dad? A Call For Fathers With The Spirit Of Elijah' in *Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 378-87; Rekers, 'Psychological Foundations For Rearing Masculine Boys And Feminine Girls' in *Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 294-311.

<sup>76</sup> Griffith, *God's Daughters*.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. p.178ff.

<sup>78</sup> Brasher, *Godly Women* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11f.



communities has produced semi-autonomous female enclaves in each congregation, and these enclaves exert a powerful, yet informal, influence over Church policy.<sup>80</sup> More pertinent, however, is Brasher's analysis of the way in which male headship is a motif around which these women are able to construct a theocentric, countercultural identity that can resist the disparate, conflicted and changing identities that Modernity would otherwise require them to adopt.<sup>81</sup>

### 2.2.5 Section Summary

The object of this exercise has been to establish at the outset of this study that the headship dispute is more than a disagreement regarding the interpretation of certain biblical texts. Rather, it is a function of several factors. (i) The character of evangelicalism as a bibliocentric, cruciocentric, conversionist and activist Protestantism. (ii) Its contested identity, exhibited in its combative theological discourse and its proclivity for controversy. (iii) The history of Protestant reflection upon gender, which provides some of the tools evangelicals bring to bear upon this issue. (iv) The changing patterns of gender performance in present-day Western society, which not only reflect economic constraints upon that which is possible, but also ideological challenges that require evangelicals to dig deep within their tradition in order to respond. In short, evangelicals argue about gender because they must negotiate their own biblical and theological traditions; because they argue about most issues; because of the ambivalence of the Protestant gender tradition; and because gender is one site where they feel most keenly the tensions caused by social changes.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp.62-80. I find it somewhat ironic (and inspiring) that these women's groups manage to accomplish some of the same functions (e.g. initiating change) from *within* a patriarchal church order as Fiorenza's notion of *Ekklesia* performed *in response* to such an order. See Fiorenza, *In Memory Of Her* (London: SCM, 1983), pp.24-31.

<sup>81</sup> See Brasher's final chapter. Brasher, *Godly Women*, pp.165-82.

## 2.3 A Survey Of The Headship Dispute

The evangelical headship controversy can to a very large extent be summed up in terms of divergent responses to a single question, namely whether the existence of certain uniquely male positions of authority in the family and Church is consistent with a belief in the ‘intrinsic’ equality of the sexes. However, the strategies and arguments evangelical traditionalists and feminists have brought to bear upon this question has caused the debate to proliferate over time. The purpose of this section of the chapter is to delineate some of the basic strands of this body of work, so as to prepare the ground for my analysis of a single feature of the controversy – the ‘gender and Trinity argument’. To this end, I will consider the headship controversy as: (i) a *practical* dispute, from which emerges a series of (ii) *theological* and *exegetical* disputes, which in turn inform several (iii) *philological* disputes. Finally, (iv) I offer a preliminary survey of the controversy known as the ‘gender and Trinity’ debate.

### 2.3.1 A Practical Disagreement

As was observed above,<sup>82</sup> evangelical ideals and aspirations with regard to gender fall into one of two categories (i) the affirmation of *de facto* egalitarianism alongside certain symbolic expressions of *de jure* patriarchy, or (ii) a thoroughgoing affirmation of *de jure* egalitarianism. However, these ideals can be expressed in several ways, and this is because of two factors. In the first instance, each gender ‘script’ can be performed on a civic, ecclesial or familial ‘stage’, and the various Protestant traditions have different assessments of how to negotiate the boundaries between these social spheres. Second, the combination of elements of mutuality and hierarchy in the traditionalist ideology is amenable to more diverse expressions than outright

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<sup>82</sup> Section 2.2.4.

acceptance or rejection of female empowerment in any one of these spheres. With very few exceptions, American evangelicals are amenable to civic gender egalitarianism, being in favour of equality in the workplace and the political enfranchisement of women.<sup>83</sup> However, the stance of different evangelical organisations towards gender egalitarianism in churches and families ranges from outright rejection, through relative neutrality, to outright advocacy.

Logically, three alternatives (rejection, neutrality and acceptance) expressed across two fields (gender equality in the home and in the church) offer nine potential variations upon the ideological dichotomy between evangelical feminists and evangelical traditionalists. There are, in fact, four basic stances.<sup>84</sup> Wayne Grudem identifies them as (i) 'two-point complementarian', (ii) 'one-point complementarian', (iii) uncommitted and (iv) egalitarian.<sup>85</sup> Two-point complementarian groups favour the retention of uniquely male leadership roles in both the home and the Church, whereas one-point complementarians apply this only to the home, being unaligned on ecclesial questions. There are no corresponding 'two-point' or 'one-point' egalitarian groups, since a defining feature of evangelical feminism is a commitment to the allocation of roles in both the home and the Church on a non-gender specific basis. Uncommitted groups have no official stance towards gender roles in either family or Church, and they may comprise either complementarians or egalitarians.

From the complementarian perspective(s) the way in which one determines which practices are enjoined or forbidden is far from straightforward, as some

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<sup>83</sup> See the discussion of equal pay legislation from an evangelical traditionalist perspective in Atwood, 'Is there equal pay for equal work?' *JBMW* 3:3 (1995), 1-5.

<sup>84</sup> Suzanne Scholz identifies three (i) complementarian, (ii) egalitarian and (iii) moderate. See Scholz, 'The Christian Right's Discourse On Gender And The Bible', *Journal Of Feminist Studies Of Religion* 21:1 (2005), 81-100.

<sup>85</sup> Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, p.518ff.

complementarian commentators admit.<sup>86</sup> The difficulty is that they articulate male headship not as a system of rules, but as a series of principles and values, and the resultant strategies are functions of the way in which these values are brought to bear upon specific social situations. Hence, in his initial overview of the complementarian position, John Piper is careful to state not only his notions of masculinity and femininity but also that these ideas will be instantiated ‘in ways appropriate to a man’s/woman’s differing relationships’.<sup>87</sup> Masculinity is, for Piper, characterised by ‘benevolent responsibility’, in the form of a calling to ‘lead, provide for, and protect’, but this necessarily takes a different form in spousal relations than it would vis-à-vis a female colleague.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, Piper defines femininity in terms of a woman’s complementary ‘disposition to affirm, receive and nurture’<sup>89</sup> such male leadership, and this would remain so even in dealings with male subordinates.

On this basis, Piper argues that acknowledging male headship is essentially a process of discernment; it requires men and women to identify the points at which certain activities might violate these putative essential differences. Since these differences turn upon the definition of masculinity in terms of leadership, the clear limit scenarios involve women in positions of influence or authority over men. For Piper, a woman may legitimately occupy any role in which she can exercise her authority without hindering the expression of the masculinity or femininity of any of the agents involved. His suggested strategy for discerning such situations involves locating the specific form of influence in relation to two axes – (i) personal→non-personal, and (ii) directive→non-directive – with personal, directive female authority

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<sup>86</sup> See the various comments to this effect in e.g. Piper, ‘A Vision Of Biblical Complementarity’; Grudem, ‘But What Should Women Do In The Church?’ *JBMW* 1:2 (1995), 1-7.

<sup>87</sup> Piper, ‘A Vision Of Biblical Complementarity’, pp.35-36.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.44-45.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46.

over adult males being considered inappropriate.<sup>90</sup> Wayne Grudem applies an analogous rationale to the question of ministerial functions within the Church. He lists various offices according to the extent to which they require (i) 'governing' authority, (ii) 'teaching' authority and (iii) public recognition. Excluding those instances where the New Testament either explicitly prohibits or explicitly permits women to engage in certain ministerial activities, Grudem argues that a woman's eligibility for a particular role decreases in relation to the influence she will exert over an entire congregation and the degree to which it is formalised by visible office-bearing.<sup>91</sup>

Although evangelical feminism is substantially more homogeneous than evangelical traditionalism in its attitude towards the exercise of female leadership roles, there remain differences of emphasis within the movement. In particular, they continue to debate the existence of essential differences between males and females, or whether all such difference is socially constructed. Letha Dawson Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty illustrate one strand of this discussion well. Perhaps the first authors to articulate an evangelical feminist perspective, they make a sharp distinction between the adjectives masculine and feminine, which designate socially constructed mores of 'gender', and male and female, which relate to the biological reality 'sex'.<sup>92</sup> Apart from reproduction and certain basic genetic and hormonal differences, they argue that most variations *between* the sexes are negligible, there being usually more

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p.51.

<sup>91</sup> Grudem, 'But What Should Women Do?' pp.3-4. See also Hurley, *Man And Woman In Biblical Perspective: A Study In Role Relationships And Authority* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981), pp.245-52.

<sup>92</sup> Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be*, p.110. See also Storkey, *Created Or Constructed?* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000).

variation *within* each sex.<sup>93</sup> They regard gender polarity as a function of psychosocial formation and thus concur with much second-wave feminism of this general period.<sup>94</sup>

Nevertheless, other egalitarian authors are more amenable to the notion of essential differences between men and women. Writing shortly after Scanzoni and Hardesty, Paul Jewett<sup>95</sup> argues for theological rather than socio-biological reasons that sexual difference permeates every feature of human existence. Following Karl Barth,<sup>96</sup> he regards the male-female partnership as one of the fundamental forms of human-human interaction, and it is through this interaction that the irreducible differences between the sexes are revealed. Jewett's egalitarianism is not manifested by a rejection of essentialism – he is in fact as 'essentialist' as many complementarians.<sup>97</sup> Rather, it follows from two of his conclusions: (i) his insistence that the nature of sexual difference cannot be known *a priori* – it can only be discovered;<sup>98</sup> and (ii) that the subordination of women is incommensurate with the dominant threads of the biblical tradition.<sup>99</sup>

The basic differences between evangelical traditionalists and evangelical feminists can be summed up in the following manner: (i) Evangelical *traditionalists* are united around a particular notion of what men and women happen to be. They insist that the sexes are intrinsically equal but essentially different, and central to this model of difference is male leadership. However, there are different viewpoints regarding where, and if so how, male leadership ought to be acknowledged in the

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<sup>93</sup> See in response to this claim Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, pp.484-89.

<sup>94</sup> Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be*, p.111ff.

<sup>95</sup> Jewett, *Man As Male And Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

<sup>96</sup> See Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III.: *The Doctrine Of Creation*, 4, ed. Bromiley and Torrance (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1961), pp.116-18; Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*, pp.43-48.

<sup>97</sup> Jewett's essentialism is approvingly cited in Piper, 'A Vision Of Biblical Complementarity', p.33.

<sup>98</sup> Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*, pp.187-88.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.142-45. Daphne Hampson terms this the 'golden thread' approach. See the discussion in Hampson, *Theology And Feminism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp.22-30.

form of restricted access to office-bearing roles. (ii) Evangelical *feminists* are less united around a specific anthropological model; they have several viewpoints regarding the existence of essential differences between males and females. However, they are united in rejecting the non-reciprocal subordination of wives to husbands and the exclusion of women from the pastorate and associated ministries.

By way of a brief comment upon these differences, it is perhaps worth noting first the apparent tensions in the traditionalist approach. On the one hand, traditionalists appear to describe male leadership as a responsibility that corresponds to some of the most fundamental characteristics of male and female natures as created by God. As such, they give gender the appearance of having a stable ontological basis.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, although some traditionalists may not articulate it in exactly this manner, gender is a performance that has to be learned through appropriate childrearing practices.<sup>101</sup> In short, it is an inherently plastic category – it can be learned and mis-learned. This appears to render evangelical traditionalism liable to Judith Butler’s penetrating critique of the sex-gender distinction as a hegemonic discourse aimed at the habitual formation of a compulsory heterosexual subjectivity.<sup>102</sup> Although such a criticism has some force, it misses much in the traditionalist statements regarding gender. Traditionalists are certainly interested in the formation of heterosexual subjectivity.<sup>103</sup> However, their understanding of human sin means that they have few illusions about the stability of what they recommend;

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<sup>100</sup> See e.g. Johnson, ‘The Biological Basis For Gender-Specific Behaviour’ in *Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 285-98.

<sup>101</sup> See e.g. Rekers, ‘Rearing Masculine Boys’.

<sup>102</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism And The Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.144.

<sup>103</sup> See e.g., Grudem and Piper, ‘An Overview Of Central Concerns’ in *Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 60-92, pp.82-87.

they may regard masculinity and femininity as natural subjectivities, but they no longer come naturally – manhood and womanhood must be *recovered*.<sup>104</sup>

It is also notable that similar apparent tensions exist vis-à-vis egalitarian positions. On the one hand, evangelical feminist scholars have not yet arrived at a consensus regarding essential differences. On the other hand, they generally advocate a Church and family polity in which leadership roles are allocated on a non-gender specific basis, almost always on the basis of competency. This seems at first inspection to be logically problematic. If a movement can agree concerning neither the existence of genuine differences between men and women nor in what any such differences might consist, then whence comes the justification for its insistence that any supposed gender differences have no bearing upon leadership competences? In actual practice this criticism applies principally to Paul Jewett's theology of a real but unquantifiable difference. It is far less applicable to recent work by egalitarian scholars that exhibits a renewed interest in socio-biological studies of gender, since these studies ostensibly proceed on an empirical basis, rather than from *a priori* assumptions regarding the natures of men and women.<sup>105</sup>

Finally, one should note the way in which both evangelical feminists and evangelical traditionalists alike qualify the language of power, in a manner that renders it mainly non-coercive. In the case of evangelical traditionalists, mutual submission (cf. Eph 5:21) is effectively limited between the sexes, but the notion of a male servant-leader (cf. Mk 10:42ff) is used frequently as a motif that informs recommendations that males adopt a consensual, respectful and collaborative approach towards their spouses. In the case of evangelical feminists, who deny the

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<sup>104</sup> See the comment in Scholz, 'The Christian Right's Discourse', p.88.

<sup>105</sup> See e.g. Kimball, 'Nature, Culture And Gender Complementarity' in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. Pierce *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 464-80.



equation of male headship with male authority, this qualification takes the form of a more thoroughgoing emphasis upon both mutual submission and servant leadership by both sexes.

### 2.3.2 Exegetical And Theological Disagreements

Before commencing an analysis of the theological and exegetical points of *difference* between feminist and traditionalist evangelicals, it is appropriate to comment upon a significant point of *similarity*. One of the first characteristics one notices upon opening several of the texts that have contributed towards the evangelical headship controversy is that they are exercises in situating human gender in the context of a salvation-historical narrative structure. Gilbert Bilezikian's<sup>106</sup> publication *Beyond Sex Roles* is sufficient to illustrate this point. He begins with a chapter entitled 'God's Creation Design', in which he presents an exposition of several verses from Genesis 1 and 2. This is followed by a passage entitled 'Sudden Death', in which the biblical Fall account is applied to human gender. After this come 'The Old Covenant Compromise' and 'The New Creation In Christ', which describe the relationship between the place of men and woman with respect to Israel and then Christ. Finally, he presents a model of the Church as 'The New Community', in which he proposes that God's original design for human gender can be recovered and eventually consummated. Both feminist and traditionalist evangelicals, in both monographs and collaborative pieces, adhere to the same basic narrative structure of *Creation→Fall→[Israel]→Christ→Church→Consummation*.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985).

<sup>107</sup> See e.g. Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be*, pp.21-103; also the ordering of exegetical chapters in Piper and Grudem, ed., *Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991); Pierce *et al.*, ed., *Discovering Biblical Equality* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

This type of arrangement is unsurprising, since at one level the shape of the biblical narrative constitutes not merely the backstory for Christian theology and exegesis, but rather narrative itself is fundamental to the arrangement of the biblical Canon and the salvation-historical shape of Christian theology. N.T. Wright offers a now-famous illustration not only of the significance of the biblical storyline, but also of the creativity required to enact this story faithfully in the present. He likens it to the first four acts of a five-act play, with the sole extant material from the fifth act being the very end of the story.<sup>108</sup> The Church is obliged to improvise the missing material creatively so as to be able to perform the script. Wright's theatrical analogy is useful here because it illuminates the shared narrative structures that evidently frame the work of both feminist and traditionalist evangelicals. It is perhaps less helpful in explaining why the differences between these rival companies of 'players' concern not only the fourth act, but also acts one and two – creation and fall.<sup>109</sup> These differences are illustrated particularly well by the contrasting statements produced by the rival organisations *Council On Biblical Manhood And Womanhood (The Danvers Statement)*<sup>110</sup> and *Christians For Biblical Equality (Men, Women And Biblical Equality)*.<sup>111</sup> These papers offer summaries of the most significant points of exegetical and theological difference between the traditionalist and feminist evangelical constituencies, with the discussion of biblical materials in each case following the basic *Creation→Fall→Redemption* narrative that I outline above.

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<sup>108</sup> Wright, *The New Testament And The People Of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), p.142; Wright, *Scripture And The Authority Of God* (London: SPCK, 2005), p.91.

<sup>109</sup> See e.g. Ortlund, 'Male-Female Equality And Male Headship: Genesis 1-3' in *Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 95-112; Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, p.109; Hess, 'Equality With And Without Innocence: Genesis 1-3' in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. Pierce *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 79-95, p.87.

<sup>110</sup> Council On Biblical Manhood And Womanhood, 'The Danvers Statement' (Wheaton: CBMW, 1988).

<sup>111</sup> Christians For Biblical Equality, 'Men, Women And Biblical Equality' (Minneapolis: CBE, 1989).

*(i.) God, Creation And Anthropology*

The *Danvers Statement* makes three theological claims on the basis of the biblical creation narratives.<sup>112</sup> These are as follows: (i) both males and females alike are in God's image (Gen 1:27), (ii) distinctions between the roles they ought to occupy are ordained by God (Gen 2:18, 21-24) and (iii) male headship existed prior to the Fall, and is one of these created differences (Gen 2:16-18). The corresponding discussion in the evangelical feminist publication offers a different perspective.<sup>113</sup> In terms of the *imago Dei*, *Men, Women And Biblical Equality* concurs with the *Danvers Statement*, but in terms of created distinctions in roles, it asserts that both males and females share joint responsibility for the mandates of populating and governing creation (Gen 1:28). With respect to the claim that male headship is a creational norm, the feminist evangelical response is flat denial.

Much hangs upon the sense of the term *ēzer* ('help') in Genesis 2:18, since it bears upon the question of whether male leadership and female 'helping' are creational ordinances. However, a lexical discussion regarding the sense of the term cannot settle the argument, since, in my view, both parties have much invested in their own stance. Rather, they are likely to pursue strategies that permit them to retain their existing commitments. Feminist evangelicals argue that the word cannot designate a subordinate role, since it is elsewhere used of God (Ps 121:1-2). However, this is to neglect the relationship between contextual and lexical sense – it is quite possible for a word to bear a sense in one context that might be absurd in another. Evangelical traditionalists rarely mention that this is perhaps the sole *explicit* evidence in the creation narratives that could support the view that male leadership predates the Fall.

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<sup>112</sup> Council On Biblical Manhood And Womanhood, 'The Danvers Statement', §§1-3 in the Affirmations section.

<sup>113</sup> Christians For Biblical Equality, 'Men, Women And Biblical Equality', §§1-3 in the Biblical Truths section.

However, the issue of the *imago Dei* is no less theologically significant than that of the sense of the term *ēzer*. Not least among the many issues facing evangelical interpreters of Genesis 1:26-28 is the question of how the Divine image ought to be understood canonically and historically? As will become apparent in the exegetical chapters of this thesis,<sup>114</sup> it is far from self-evident that Paul understood the *imago Dei* as applying equally to both males and females (cf. 1 Cor 11:7-9), still less that he on this basis advocated an egalitarian ecclesial and familial order. The same can be said of Christian tradition, as Tertullian's statement 'You [Eve] destroyed so easily God's image, man' (*De Cul. Fem.* I.i.) demonstrates. Indeed, the current evangelical insistence that both sexes participate equally in the Divine image depends logically upon their assumptions regarding in what the image consists, and how notions of male-female difference bear upon it.

Bruce Ware offers a useful threefold categorisation of the different concepts of the *imago Dei* throughout Christian history.<sup>115</sup> (i) The majority pre-Modern stance involved attributing the image to some structure or combination of faculties, such as reason, deliberation, will, memory or intellect, by which human beings may be distinguished from the rest of creation and likened to God. (ii) The second stance is relatively novel, and identifies human relationality *per se* and the relationship between the sexes *par excellence* as an image of the relational nature of the Trinity. (iii) The final example views the image as a functional category; it is constituted in the role or office of vice-regency for which God created human beings. One of the purposes of Ware's study is to commend to his readers this third model of the *imago Dei*, and to show how it allows the affirmation of unique male authority roles.

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<sup>114</sup> See ch.5.

<sup>115</sup> Ware, 'Male And Female Complementarity And The Image Of God' in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002), 71-92.

Given that Western thought has historically regarded women as less rational than men,<sup>116</sup> it is no surprise that the first model tends towards a belief in a differential, or even male-only, notion of the divine image.<sup>117</sup> The stance adopted in both the *Danvers Statement* and *Men, Women And Biblical Equality* tends to militate against this. Evangelical interest in the relational model is prevalent among those engaged with mainstream Protestant theology, since these ideas derive from the work of both Karl Barth and lately Jürgen Moltmann. For Barth, it is impossible for the ‘God who is no *Deus solitarius* but *Deus triunus*, God in relationship, [to] be mirrored in a *homo solitarius*’.<sup>118</sup> Paul Jewett<sup>119</sup> uses this as a basic frame for his egalitarian model of gender relations – man is constituted as *man* only insofar as he relates to woman and *vice versa*. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Barth made few practical inferences regarding gender roles on the basis of his theology, since he described the divine call to ‘mirror’ Trinitarian fellowship as independent of ‘any special masculine or feminine standard’.<sup>120</sup> However, Moltmann moved the discussion substantially further than Barth, when he argued that the existence of the Trinity as a non-monarchical community ought to find expression in a social order that is politically and sexually egalitarian.<sup>121</sup> Although she is in my view less radical than Moltmann, evangelical feminist Aida Spencer expresses similar ideas – unique male authority roles violate the relationality of the *imago Dei*:

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<sup>116</sup> See e.g. Lloyd, *Man Of Reason*

<sup>117</sup> See also the discussion of differential participation in the *imago Dei* in Augustine, *De Trinitate* XII.vii.10.

<sup>118</sup> Barth, *CD III.4*, p.117.

<sup>119</sup> Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*

<sup>120</sup> Barth, *CD III.4*, p.154.

<sup>121</sup> Moltmann, *The Trinity And The Kingdom Of God* (London: SCM, 1981), pp.163-65. Note also Lesslie Newbigin’s ironic criticism that the purpose of the Trinity is hardly to justify ‘the human need for participatory democracy’. Newbigin, ‘The Trinity As Public Truth’ in *The Trinity In A Pluralistic Age*, ed. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 1-8, p.7.

Females as well as males are needed in positions of authority...to help people better to comprehend God's nature. God's image *needs* male and female.<sup>122</sup>

(ii.) *Gender And The Biblical Fall*

Since, therefore, there are several models of the *imago Dei* available, and few explicit textual features in the biblical accounts sufficiently clear to direct the discussion towards a general consensus regarding the nature of gender relationships prior to the biblical Fall story (Gen 3), the difference of opinion among evangelicals remains. The *Danvers Statement* describes the Fall as introducing two forms of distortion into male-female relationships.<sup>123</sup> (i) On the one hand it can inflame the will-to-power in both sexes, causing men to become overbearing leaders and women rebellious 'helpers'. (ii) On the other hand, it also leads to the avoidance of responsibility, such that neither sex fulfils its obligations well. *Men, Women And Biblical Equality*<sup>124</sup> begins by affirming the equality of the sexes in their fallen state – neither the first man nor the first woman is more culpable than the other. It then goes on to refute the traditionalist stance, and follow through the logic of its creation anthropology, by arguing that the male headship is a result of the Fall.

By way of a critical comment, it is difficult to determine what justification the framers of the *Danvers Statement* can offer for their accounts of the differential effects of the Fall upon males and females. On the one hand, their taxonomy of effects is ostensibly the result of mapping two types of sin – acts of commission and acts of omission – onto the two roles of 'head' and 'helper' that traditionalist evangelicals believe to be warranted by the biblical text. On the other hand, the

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<sup>122</sup> Spencer, *Beyond The Curse: Women Called To Ministry* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989), p.29. Italics mine. The interest of egalitarian evangelicals in the relational Trinity is particularly evident in Grenz's study of Boff, Zizioulas and LaCugna. Grenz, *Rediscovering The Triune God: The Trinity In Contemporary Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004), pp.117-62.

<sup>123</sup> Council On Biblical Manhood And Womanhood, 'The Danvers Statement', §4.

<sup>124</sup> Christians For Biblical Equality, 'Men, Women And Biblical Equality', §§4-5.

characterisation of distinct male and female tendencies could be regarded as a function of gender stereotypes that construe femininity in terms of responsiveness and passivity. Certainly, the above taxonomy could be regarded as embodying assumptions about power and agency – that the normative female experience is one of relative powerlessness and that a sin of commission in such a context is characterised by rebelliousness rather than abusiveness. Evangelical traditionalists would not be alone in succumbing to the influence of such stereotypes; Sarah Coakley observes that the feminist charge of ‘masculinism’ often elides the categories of ‘female’ and ‘powerless’ in a way that obscures the liability of both sexes towards the abuse of power.

Foucault has shown us that we all wield ‘power’ in *some* area, however insignificant it may appear to the outside world (power over our children, our aged dependents, even our domestic animals)... ‘abusive’ human power is thus always potentially within our grasp.<sup>125</sup>

In terms of feminist evangelical discussions, Gilbert Bilezikian’s comment upon Genesis 3 is particularly useful because he focuses upon the narrative sequence of the passage as a means of determining the nature of culpability for the Fall and its effects or consequences for men and women.<sup>126</sup> This places him squarely within the theological approach exemplified by *Men, Women And Biblical Equality*.<sup>127</sup> One of his most significant observations concerns the dialogue between the first woman and the serpent in Genesis 3:1-4. Noting that the woman was not yet created when the original prohibition to eat from the tree of knowledge was given (Gen 2:16-17),<sup>128</sup> Bilezikian argues that her inaccurate summary of the command (Gen 3:3)

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<sup>125</sup> Coakley, ‘*Kenōsis* And Subversion: On The Repression Of ‘Vulnerability’ In Christian Feminist Writing’ in *Powers And Submissions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 3-39, p.34. Italics original.

<sup>126</sup> Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, pp.39-58.

<sup>127</sup> Bilezikian was in fact one of the framers of the document.

<sup>128</sup> Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, p.43.

demonstrates that she was at a comparative disadvantage.<sup>129</sup> She succumbed not because she was female, but because her relative lack of knowledge made her liable to being deceived. With respect to the subsequent confrontation with God (Gen 3:12-19), Bilezikian argues that, although the Fall is occasioned by the disobedience to the Divine prohibition, male 'rule' (Gen 3:16) is not, as some traditionalists propose, imposed because the woman's actions constituted a violation of a putative original hierarchy between male and female.<sup>130</sup> Patriarchy is not an ironic punishment imposed by God for 'unwomanly conduct'; it is itself an aspect of the Fall.

By way of a brief comment upon Bilezikian's approach, it seems to me that his reading strategy of careful consideration of characterisation, plot and storyline, together with his focus upon both explicit *and* implicit features of the text is a good one. Nevertheless, I suspect that his reading is largely conditioned by the need to provide an exposition of the Fall narrative that will prove amenable to an egalitarian interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15, in which the woman's role in the Fall is especially significant and problematic. What leads me to this opinion is his focus upon the fact that the woman was deceived (cf. 1 Tim 2:14). On the one hand he denies that her liability to deception evinces a constitutional flaw in females, which is certainly a direction in which some Christian exegetes have taken the discussion (e.g. Tertullian, *De Cul. Fem.* I.i.), but on the other hand he also seeks to avoid giving the impression that she was not responsible for her actions, since this would reinforce the traditionalist view of male headship. This canonical perspective is, of course, entirely commensurate with Bilezikian's narrative approach to biblical interpretation, although

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p.262n2.

<sup>130</sup> In adopting this stance, Bilezikian engages specifically with Hurley, *Man And Woman In Biblical Perspective*, p.217f.



the fact that he does not openly acknowledge his agenda renders his argument liable to the suspicion that it is circular.

*(iii.) Ordering The Redeemed Community Hermeneutically*

As has been seen, the traditionalist and feminist evangelical disagreement turns to a large degree upon a single issue, namely whether or not gendered hierarchy is a corrupted form of an initially good male headship or whether headship itself is constituted by human fallenness. This issue is important, since one can anticipate that one of the effects of redemption would be to make possible the restoration, whether partial or complete, of the pattern of relationality that existed prior to the Fall. In short, if male headship is *constituted* by fallenness then the redemptive ideal will necessarily be egalitarianism, whereas if it is *corrupted* by fallenness then it need not be. It is worth noting at the outset that contributors to this debate give relatively little attention to the hermeneutical question of how evangelical Christians who do not regard the biblical creation and fall narratives as historical reportage should address the issues of gender and patriarchy. Partly this is because on the one hand the American neo-evangelical predilection for the doctrine of biblical inerrancy tends to militate against such a position,<sup>131</sup> or at least its expression, whereas on the other hand the debate is conducted from within the hermeneutical frame of a narrative theology such as Wright's.

Reflection upon how to organise the evangelical community along lines of gender takes two very general forms – (i) consideration of the teaching and practice of Jesus, (ii) careful exposition of various New Testament gender passages. In terms of the teaching and practice of Jesus, both feminist and traditionalist evangelicals tend to

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<sup>131</sup> See e.g. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, p.113ff.

agree that he affirmed women in his positive personal conduct towards them (Jn 4:7ff), his teaching with regard to marriage (Matt 5:31ff.), the significant roles occupied by women in the gospels (Lk 23:55ff.) and his incorporation of female figures, metaphors and perspectives into his teaching (Mk 12:42; Lk 18:3).<sup>132</sup> The principal points of difference between these stances concern the extent to which Jesus' practice could be regarded as a revolutionary breaking of patriarchy *per se*,<sup>133</sup> and whether or not his appointment of twelve male disciples constitutes a definitive signal that he retained the notion of male leadership. Apart from the gospels, most of the significant gender passages in the New Testament are to be found in the Pauline corpus. The most important of these are (i) Galatians 3:26-28, (ii) 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, (iii) Ephesians 5:21-33, and (iv) 1 Timothy 2:9-15. The interpretation of these texts is particularly contested, with the principal difference of opinion being whether or not 'neither male and female' in the Galatians 3:26-28 baptismal formula constitutes a definitively egalitarian statement that relativises these other statements, which generally place some form of restriction upon women vis-à-vis men.<sup>134</sup> If Galatians 3:26-28 is definitive, then from the fundamental principles of evangelical bibliology, it logically follows that the patriarchal elements of the other texts are concessive, situational or temporary.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> See e.g. Borland, 'Women In The Life And Teachings Of Jesus' in *Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 113-23; Spencer, 'Jesus' Treatment Of Women In The Gospels' in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. Pierce *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 126-41.

<sup>133</sup> See further Grenz, *Women In The Church: A Biblical Theology Of Women In Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), p.74ff; also cited in Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, p.159.

<sup>134</sup> See e.g. Paul Jewett, who describes Gal 3:26ff as the 'Magna Carta' of humanity. Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*, p.142.

<sup>135</sup> William Webb has formulated a hermeneutic to address precisely this tension. See Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals*. I discuss this in ch.6.

One of the results of this type of exegetical dilemma is that it is difficult to see how traditionalist and feminist evangelicals are to avoid making the exegesis of New Testament texts a straightforward function of a series of pre-exegetical preferences. It is one thing to say that one's decision about how to apply 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is determined by one's assessment of the statement in Galatians 3:26-28. Indeed, it is theologically and narratively consistent to justify one's view on such matters with respect to a series of judgements regarding the basic storyline of the Bible, including the creation and Fall stories and the ministry of Jesus. However, as I have demonstrated,<sup>136</sup> feminist and traditionalist evangelical opinions regarding these texts are shaped by *a priori* commitments to conflicting systems of values and ideals regarding gender. This raises the question of whether the disagreement between these parties *can* be resolved, since they effectively get out of the text much the same values and ideals that they bring to bear upon it. Klyne Snodgrass comments upon the way in which this tendency has affected the interpretation of Galatians 3:28, but his comments are equally applicable to any of the passages about which evangelicals disagree. He writes:

We all have our canon within the canon, which is just another way of saying that we are attracted to those verses in Scripture that express what we already believe – even if we do not put our beliefs into practice.<sup>137</sup>

### 2.3.3 Philological Disagreements: κεφαλή – A Case Study

Given that much of the exegetical controversy within the headship dispute turns upon three New Testament passages – 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, Ephesians 5:21-33, and 1 Timothy 2:9-15 – it is little surprise that interpretations of these texts have been particularly controversial. Since both evangelical traditionalists and evangelical

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<sup>136</sup> See section 2.2.4 and 2.3.1.

<sup>137</sup> Snodgrass, 'Galatians 3:28: Conundrum Or Solution?' in *Women, Authority And The Bible*, ed. Mickelsen (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 161-81, p.167.

feminists share a common understanding of biblical authority in which difficult or unpalatable texts cannot be rejected,<sup>138</sup> the controversy is generally manifested in disputes about (i) the reader's situation, (ii) the situation presupposed in the text, (iii) the argument of the passage, and (iv) the sense of specific terms. All three of these passages contain terms that have proved controversial.

The philological debate attached to 1 Timothy 2:12 concerns the question of whether the Greek verb ἀϋθεντέω designates the *exercise* or the *misuse* of authority, and hence whether the verse extends a blanket or a partial prohibition over females in positions of authority over males.<sup>139</sup> In Ephesians 5:21-33 there are two disputed terms – the Greek words ὑποτάσσω and κεφαλή, the latter of which appears also in 1 Corinthians 11:3. The discussion regarding ὑποτάσσω concerns the question of whether it always denotes strict submission or whether its force is ameliorated when it accompanies the dative reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλοις ('to one another').<sup>140</sup> Practically, it concerns the question of whether wives are instructed to be *deferent* or *subject* to husbands and the extent, if any, of a husband's reciprocal obligation.

The debate regarding the sense of the Greek word κεφαλή is by far the most substantial of these discussions, and for this reason I have chosen to analyse it here. Moreover, this discussion is especially relevant to the 'gender and Trinity dispute' which turns upon the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3 in which κεφαλή repeatedly

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<sup>138</sup> This is not to state that evangelicals are not selective in their appropriation of the biblical materials, it is only to state that they regard selectivity as exegetically illegitimate.

<sup>139</sup> See e.g. Kroeger, '1 Timothy 2:12 - A Classicist's View' in *Women, Authority And The Bible*, ed. Mickelsen (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 225-43; Moo, 'What Does It Mean Not To Teach Or Have Authority Over Men? 1 Timothy 2:11-15' in *Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 179-93. The examples I list here are all taken from the evangelical headship controversy and not from mainstream studies.

<sup>140</sup> See e.g. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, p.288nn.30-31; Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, pp.191-93.

occurs. I evaluate this dispute below.<sup>141</sup> It is also a principal point of interface between evangelical discussions of headship and mainstream biblical scholarship, since the lexical discussion emerged several decades prior to the headship controversy and it has contributions from both evangelicals and non-evangelicals. The basic division of scholarly opinion concerns the metaphorical sense of κεφαλή, specifically whether in the period in which 1 Corinthians was composed it was able to bear the meanings (i) ‘person in authority over’, or (ii) ‘source’ or ‘point of origin’.

*(i.) The Pre-History Of The κεφαλή Debate*

The debate regarding the sense of κεφαλή began in 1954 with a short article written by Stephen Bedale.<sup>142</sup> Bedale argues that, since κεφαλή as ‘ruler’ is alien to both classical and modern Greek, if Paul uses it to denote a ‘person in authority’ then he is likely to have acquired this sense from the LXX use of the term to translate the Hebrew word *rō’s* (‘head’).<sup>143</sup> This leads him to his principal claim, namely that to decode Paul’s use of κεφαλή one must begin by examining the sense of *rō’s* and how the LXX renders it. *Rō’s* (‘head’) has two primary senses – an anatomical sense,<sup>144</sup> and as a metaphor designating ‘first’. When used spatio-temporally, this metaphor designates the ‘beginning’ of something;<sup>145</sup> however, when applied to persons, it designates the person of ‘first-rank’ in a group.<sup>146</sup> In terms of the LXX rendering of these three senses, Bedale observes that κεφαλή is always used to translate *rō’s* (*lit.*),

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<sup>141</sup> See section 2.4 and ch.3.

<sup>142</sup> Bedale, ‘The Meaning Of κεφαλή In The Pauline Epistles’, *JTS* 5:2 (1954), 211-15.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p.211.

<sup>144</sup> Hereafter, *rō’s* (*lit.*).

<sup>145</sup> Hereafter, *rō’s* (*met.1*).

<sup>146</sup> Hereafter, *rō’s* (*met.2*).

and that the Greek term ἀρχή is always used for *rō's̄(met.1)*; however, *rō's̄(met.2)* is occasionally rendered by κεφαλή (Jud 11:11) and occasionally by ἀρχή (Ex 6:25).<sup>147</sup>

For Bedale, the LXX rendering of *rō's̄(met.2)* implies some form of connection, unique to *biblical* Greek, between the terms κεφαλή and ἀρχή. This connection is associative rather than denotative; hence there is slippage between the various senses. Citing Colossians 1:18 to this effect, Bedale argues that the Pauline use of the κεφαλή metaphor occasionally incorporates the sense of *rō's̄(met.1)*, thereby allowing it to approximate in meaning to ἀρχή. Elsewhere, it incorporates *rō's̄(met.2)*, thereby denoting a 'leader' or 'authority', albeit that this should be regarded as the authority of primogeniture – 'first-ness'. Concerning 1 Corinthians 11:2, he writes:

Eve derives her being from Adam...That is to say, the male is κεφαλή in the sense of ἀρχή relatively to the female; and in St. Paul's view, the female in consequence is 'subordinate'.<sup>148</sup>

One of the problems of Bedale's argument is its tantalising brevity; he simply fails to provide sufficient evidence to warrant some of the assumptions that he makes. In particular, the central pillar of his argument is that the 'authority' sense of κεφαλή must originate in the LXX – that it derives from neither classical Greek nor first-century Greek or Hebrew. The only evidence he provides is (i) an assertion regarding 'normal Greek usage', and (ii) some reflections upon the heart and not the head being the seat of reason in first-century psychology.<sup>149</sup> Additionally, Bedale's assumption that κεφαλή can, by a process of semantic slippage, come to bear the sense of *rō's̄(met.1)* as well as *rō's̄(met.2)*, is speculative. If he is correct in presenting κεφαλή and ἀρχή as entirely distinct semantic ranges apart from this putative connection,

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<sup>147</sup> Bedale, 'κεφαλή', p.213.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p.214.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., pp.211-12.

then by his own data κεφαλή and ἀρχή intersect only at ‘leader’, since the LXX translators always translate *rō’s(met.1)* as ἀρχή. Finally, Bedale’s *etymological* approach to lexical questions places his conclusions in further doubt. Even if *rō’s(met.2)* did originally derive its sense as ‘leader’ from the notion of being ‘first’,<sup>150</sup> Bedale’s assumption that the sense ‘first’ is implied every time ‘leader’ is invoked is unwarranted; it is, in fact an instance of the linguistic error known as ‘illegitimate totality transfer’.<sup>151</sup>

Notwithstanding these issues, forms of Bedale’s thesis appeared in the work of several subsequent commentators.<sup>152</sup> According to Barrett, there are two native Greek metaphorical applications of κεφαλή. The first application signifies ‘head’ as a metonym, whereas the second denotes ‘origin’ or ‘beginning’, a reading Barrett supports by citing two Greek texts that substantially predate Paul (*Herodotus* 4.91; *Orphic Fragments* 21a).<sup>153</sup> In the example from Herodotus, κεφαλή denotes the plural sources of a river, whereas in Orphic Fragments it is applied to Zeus, and Barrett deduces from the context that it signifies ‘beginning’. He also correctly observes that variant copies of the fragments render κεφαλή as ἀρχή, implying from this that the significance of this text for κεφαλή as ‘beginning’ is thereby enhanced. At this point, he cites Bedale’s research, presumably in support of a general connection in both native and LXX Greek between κεφαλή and ἀρχή. Barrett concludes that this native sense of ‘origin’ is the primary theological sense of κεφαλή

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. defn. II of ἀρχή in Liddell *et al.*, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996).

<sup>151</sup> See Barr, *The Semantics Of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p.218.

<sup>152</sup> See e.g. Barrett, *A Commentary On The First Epistle To The Corinthians* (London: A.&C. Black, 1968), p.248; Bruce, *1 And 2 Corinthians* (London: Oliphants, 1971), p.102f; Scroggs, ‘Paul And The Eschatological Woman’, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 40:3 (1972), 283-303, pp.298-99.

<sup>153</sup> Both texts are cited in Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.248.

in 1 Corinthians 11:3. He writes, 'Paul does not say that man is the lord (κύριος) of the woman; he says that he is the *origin of her being*'.<sup>154</sup>

(ii.) *The Recent Controversy*

The involvement of evangelicals in the discussion of the metaphorical sense of κεφαλή was initiated by two articles by Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen in *Christianity Today*.<sup>155</sup> Their first article is concerned with what they regard as an unconscious, but harmful, male bias evident in English translations of several New Testament texts.<sup>156</sup> Drawing a formal distinction between translation and covert commentary, the Mickelsens claim that glosses such as 'supreme over' for κεφαλή in 1 Corinthians 11:3 (*GNV*), constitute an 'attempt to "improve" or "clear up" what the Holy Spirit chose to do' in inspiration.<sup>157</sup> However, their point is not simply methodological and theological; in addition to arguing that ambiguous terms ought to be translated literally wherever possible, they also offer a judgement concerning the sense of κεφαλή – that its sense is 'origin' or 'source' and not 'authority over'.

In their first article, the Mickelsens warrant this interpretation of κεφαλή by appealing to the same Greek texts Barrett cites (*Herodotus* 4.91; *Orphic Fragments* 21a), although unlike Barrett they are explicit in stating that they obtain this evidence from the Liddell-Scott lexicon.<sup>158</sup> However, in their subsequent article they offer a more substantial argument, appealing ultimately to the practice of the LXX

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid. Italics mine. See also 'ground of being' in Schlier, 'κεφαλή' in *TDNT*, vol. 3, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 673-81, p.679.

<sup>155</sup> Mickelsen and Mickelsen, 'Does Male Dominance Tarnish Our Translations', *Christianity Today* (5 October 1979), 23-29; Mickelsen and Mickelsen, 'The Head Of The Epistles', *Christianity Today* (20 February 1981), 20-23.

<sup>156</sup> Mickelsen and Mickelsen, 'Does Male Dominance?' p.29.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p.25.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p.23.



translators.<sup>159</sup> Their principal claims are that (i) Liddell and Scott do not recognise 'superior rank' as a sense of κεφαλή, (ii) Arndt and Gingrich in Bauer's lexicon provide limited support for this reading, but that (iii) this support is restricted to eight instances in the LXX in which κεφαλή is used to translate the Hebrew term רֹֿד־ִשׁ.<sup>160</sup> In short, the Mickelsens suggest that Greek-speaking Christians would have been largely unaware of the minority reading of κεφαλή as 'superior rank', and that it is therefore unlikely that this was what Paul intended. They propose instead two meanings, derived principally from the literary and rhetorical context – 'source' (e.g. 1 Cor 11:3; Col 2:19) and 'top' (e.g. Eph 1:20-23).<sup>161</sup> Subsequent to these studies, both evangelical and mainstream opinion regarding the use of κεφαλή as a designation for a man vis-à-vis a woman has been divided broadly into three camps. Some scholars favour the sense 'person in authority over',<sup>162</sup> others 'source',<sup>163</sup> with a third favouring 'preeminent' or 'top' on the basis of a head-body contrast.<sup>164</sup>

The principal protagonist of this ongoing controversy is Wayne Grudem, who, in one of the most comprehensive studies to date, surveyed 2336 instances of κεφαλή dating from the Classical through to the late Patristic periods. Levelling many of the

<sup>159</sup> Mickelsen and Mickelsen, 'Head Of The Epistles', p.20.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., pp.20-21. See the defn. in Bauer *et al.*, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1952); Liddell *et al.*, *LSL*.

<sup>161</sup> See also Mickelsen and Mickelsen, 'What Does *Kephalē* Mean In The New Testament' in *Women, Authority And The Bible*, ed. Mickelsen (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 97-110.

<sup>162</sup> See e.g. Grudem, 'Does Κεφαλή ('Head') Mean 'Source' Or 'Authority Over' In Greek Literature? A Survey Of 2,336 Examples', *TrinJ* 6:1 (1985), 38-59; Fitzmyer, 'Another Look At ΚΕΦΑΛΗ In I Corinthians 11:3', *NTS* 35 (1989), 503-11; Fitzmyer, '*Kephalē* In I Corinthians 11:3', *Interpretation* 47:1 (1993), 32-59; Grudem, 'The Meaning of Κεφαλή (Head): An Evaluation Of New Evidence Real And Alleged', *JETS* 44:1 (2001), 25-65.

<sup>163</sup> See e.g. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, p.277n13; Kroeger, 'The Classical Concept of Head As Source' in *Equal To Serve*, ed. Hull (Old Tappan: F.H. Revell, 1987), 267-83; Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*, vol. 2 (Zürich: Benziger, 1995), p.501ff.

<sup>164</sup> See e.g. Perriman, 'The Head Of A Woman: The Meaning Of ΚΕΦΑΛΗ In 1 Cor 11:3', *JTS* 45:2 (1994), 602-22; Thiselton, *The First Epistle To The Corinthians*, ed. Marshall and Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), p.812.

same criticisms that I raised above vis-à-vis Bedale,<sup>165</sup> Grudem argues that the sense ‘source’ rests entirely upon the two texts Barrett cites. In the first of these texts (*Herod.* 4.91), he notes that κεφαλή is plural rather than singular and is predicated not of a person (cf. 1 Cor 11:3) but of the river Tearus (Τεάρου ποταμοῦ κεφαλαί). This serves to distinguish κεφαλή in Herodotos from the singular, personal Pauline usage.<sup>166</sup> In relation to the Orphic materials, Grudem observes that the expression ‘Zeus the head, Zeus the middle’ (Ζεὺς κεφαλή, Ζεὺς μέσσα) (Ps.-Aristotle, *Mund.* 7.401.A)<sup>167</sup> implies a reading of κεφαλή as ‘beginning’ or ‘first’ rather than ‘source’ (cf. Ζεὺς πρῶτος γένετο), and this receives additional support from variant readings in which ἀρχή replaces κεφαλή. In terms of the sense ‘authority over’, Grudem proposes 49 instances in which the term is used to designate a person of superior rank. Of these, 30 derive from biblical sources, with the remainder being found in Classical authors, Philo and various other Jewish and Christian texts.<sup>168</sup> On the basis of these findings he entirely rejects the Mickelsens’ conclusions and posits ‘authority over’ as one of the primary metaphorical senses of κεφαλή.

The remaining bulk of this conflict comprises various interactions between Grudem and his interlocutors, together with one or two significant new contributions. The interaction between Grudem, Bilezikian and Kroeger chiefly concerns the interpretation of data, specifically whether the lists of ancient evidence cited on both sides constitute actual evidence. In a paper he presented to the plenary session of the

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<sup>165</sup> Grudem, ‘Κεφαλή: 2,336 Examples’, pp.41-43.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p.44. See also Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics And Biblical Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1989), p.142.

<sup>167</sup> Grudem cites the Kern edition of the *Orphics*, whereas I reference the Loeb edition of Ps.-Aristotle, *De Mundo* 7.401.A. With thanks to Grudem for this reference. See Grudem, ‘Κεφαλή: 2,336 Examples’, p.45n15.

<sup>168</sup> Grudem, ‘Κεφαλή: 2,336 Examples’, p.51.

Evangelical Theological Society, Bilezikian<sup>169</sup> presents a twofold response to Grudem's earlier argument. He argues that most of the evidence for the reading 'authority over' is amenable to the interpretation 'source', with the remainder being understood as designating a 'ruling part' and not a person.<sup>170</sup> On this basis, he moves to a more general critique of Grudem's taxonomy, which makes no clear distinction between ruling *persons* and ruling *parts*; Bilezikian suggests that this distorts the evidence.<sup>171</sup> Grudem disputes the former claims, but he accepts the legitimacy of the latter criticism and modifies his taxonomy accordingly.<sup>172</sup>

Catherine Clark Kroeger's contribution to this debate is twofold. Of particular interest is her application of ancient physiological notions of the head as the source of various secretions, including semen.<sup>173</sup> Whilst her use of this strategy is intriguing, in the last analysis it represents a category error. Physiological function and physiological terminology are related, yet distinct; as Grudem<sup>174</sup> humourously notes, one is unlikely to hear the phrase 'your *source* is giving off abundant nasal secretions this morning', despite the head being the physiological source of such secretions. More debatable is Kroeger's use of Patristic material. Arguing that the sense 'authority' over is relatively unattested until Byzantine Greek, she claims, on the grounds of God being the 'source' of Christ, that several Patristic writers understood

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<sup>169</sup> Bilezikian reproduces his paper in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. of Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, pp.215-52.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.230-49.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p.251.

<sup>172</sup> Grudem, 'The Meaning Of Κεφαλή (Head): A Response To Recent Studies', *TrinJ* 11:1 (1990), 3-72, p.57ff.

<sup>173</sup> Kroeger, 'Classical Concept of Head', pp.269-73. On a potential role for the head and hair in ancient reproductive biology, see Martin, 'Paul's Argument From Nature For The Veil In 1 Corinthians 11:13-15: A Testicle Instead Of A Covering', *JBL* 123:1 (2004), 75-84.

<sup>174</sup> Grudem, 'Κεφαλή: Response', p.68.

κεφαλή as 'source'.<sup>175</sup> Nevertheless, her claim that John Chrysostom (*Hom.XXVI*) 'declared that only a heretic would understand Paul's use of "head" to mean "chief"' is in my view not only false, but inflammatory.<sup>176</sup>

Richard Cervin's approach differs from both Bilezikian and Kroeger, inasmuch as he offers an appraisal of Grudem's selection of texts, lexicons and linguistic methodology. He makes three principal claims. (i) Grudem's analysis employs a circular mode of reasoning, since it includes several New Testament instances of κεφαλή in an article written to determine the sense of κεφαλή in the New Testament.<sup>177</sup> (ii) Some of Grudem's other sources must be rejected if he is to demonstrate that the sense 'authority over' is a native Greek sense of κεφαλή, since texts with a connection to either Hebrew or Latin would confuse the evidence.<sup>178</sup> (iii) Finally, after excluding all of the instances he disputes, Cervin concludes that neither 'source' nor 'authority over' are particularly good renderings of κεφαλή, preferring instead the definition 'preeminent'.<sup>179</sup> In adopting this stance he anticipates the conclusion of Andrew Perriman.<sup>180</sup> Notwithstanding this, Grudem disputes all of Cervin's conclusions, reserving his severest comments for Cervin's first two claims, which he accuses of separating the act of New Testament interpretation from the literature that is closest to the New Testament and therefore the most pertinent.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Kroeger, 'Head' in *Dictionary Of Paul And His Letters*, ed. Hawthorne *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 375-77, p.377.

<sup>176</sup> I argue this in ch.3 section 3.2.2. See also Grudem, 'Κεφαλή: New Evidence', p.25ff.

<sup>177</sup> Cervin, 'Does Κεφαλή Mean "Source" Or "Authority Over" In Greek Literature? A Rebuttal', *TrinJ* 10:1 (1989), 85-112, p.94.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p.110ff.

<sup>180</sup> Perriman, 'Head'.

<sup>181</sup> Grudem, 'Κεφαλή: Response', pp.5-13.

(iii.) *The Significance Of The κεφαλή Debate*

One of the principal effects of this discussion has been that the participants have argued to an impasse, with any philological and lexical attempt to resolve the question of what κεφαλή might mean being destined to fail to achieve consensus. This is quite independent of the question of which of the lexical arguments considered here happens to be the strongest. My own judgement favours Grudem's work, principally because the arguments for 'source' appear to me to be tenuous, indeed tendentious, whilst the evidence of early Christian interpreters (e.g. Chrysostom) seems to favour 'authority' and not 'preeminence'. This is, in effect, to agree with Joseph Fitzmyer, who has argued for an element of lexical inertia; since the longstanding interpretation of κεφαλή is 'authority', a novel sense ought to present a better reading of the text if it is to displace the traditional reading.<sup>182</sup> The persistent lack of scholarly consensus is *prima facie* evidence that neither 'source' nor 'preeminent' is sufficiently compelling.

To elaborate upon Fitzmyer's point, a differential burden of proof falls upon evangelical traditionalists and evangelical feminists. For both of these parties, the central issue is the practical question of whether the biblical texts warrant a non-reciprocal relationship of male authority over females in the Church and home. Since the principal purpose of evangelical feminist scholarship is to exclude the traditionalist position, it follows that members of this party have less investment in establishing a new positive meaning of κεφαλή ('source' or 'preeminent') than they do in disestablishing the sense 'authority over'. Since they fail to exclude this sense, their traditionalist opponents are able, in principle, to synthesise any novel proposals with an understanding of the term as 'authority'.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Fitzmyer, 'Kephale', p.57.

<sup>183</sup> Grudem illustrates this point in Grudem, 'Κεφαλή: Response', p.19

On account of these difficulties, more recent studies of the κεφαλή metaphor have sought to establish its sense contextually by means of the discursive, rhetorical and structural features of the passages in which it is found. This was the strategy pursued by Judith Gundry-Volf,<sup>184</sup> who argued that the sense of κεφαλή in 1 Corinthians 11:3 can be inferred from the immediate context of the argument, namely the discussion of honour, shame and attire in verses 4-5. Needless to say, there is a degree of circularity in this logic, insofar as the lexical debate regarding κεφαλή was partly a project designed to determine how its sense in 1 Corinthians 11:3 bears upon the argument. This approach however, makes the sense of the term wholly contingent upon its surroundings, and in the final analysis renders the question of what κεφαλή might mean exegetically superfluous.<sup>185</sup>

#### **2.3.4 Attempting To Break The Deadlock: Gender And The Trinity**

One effect of the impasse at various levels of the headship controversy has been to prompt both traditionalist and feminist evangelicals to search for a rhetorical and theological lever that can break the deadlock. Clearly, such leverage cannot be obtained by appealing to matters about which evangelicals may legitimately disagree, such as the question of whether patriarchy predates or postdates the Fall, since these are the issues at stake. Instead, leverage can be obtained in one of two ways: (i) by making a proposal that logically follows from or is particularly coherent with some cardinal evangelical principle, or (ii) by demonstrating that one's opponents' proposals logically contradict such a principle. This latter strategy is particularly apparent in the way in which traditionalists construe the headship controversy as an

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<sup>184</sup> Gundry-Volf, 'Gender And Creation In 1 Cor 11:2-16: A Study In Paul's Theological Method' in *Evangelium, Schriftauslegung, Kirche. Festschrift Für Peter Stuhlmacher*, ed. Adna et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 151-71.

<sup>185</sup> For this reason my exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (ch.5) leaves κεφαλή indeterminate.

issue not just of biblical interpretation, but also of biblical authority.<sup>186</sup> Whether this judgement is warranted or not, it is effectively a way of stating that certain proposals constitute a *de facto* departure from the evangelical community. Due to the discursive tendencies of evangelicalism,<sup>187</sup> these strategies for obtaining leverage tend to map onto the reformist-conservative dichotomy, with feminists/reformists tending to construct proposals, and traditionalists/conservatives tending to critique them as being novel and hence unevangelical. The ‘gender and Trinity dispute’ is a notable reversal of this tendency.

This dispute emerges from arguments by several evangelical feminists, most notably Gretchen Gaebelin Hull,<sup>188</sup> Catherine Clark Kroeger,<sup>189</sup> and Kevin Giles,<sup>190</sup> in which the doctrine of God is invoked precisely for the purpose of obtaining leverage over the gender debate. The basic strategy Hull and Kroeger<sup>191</sup> pursue is to observe that whatever one takes the κεφαλή metaphor to mean vis-à-vis the male-female relationship in 1 Corinthians 11:3, verbal analogy indicates that something similar is affirmed of the remaining two metaphorical uses in the sentence. This means that a reading of κεφαλή δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ (1 Cor 11:3) as ‘man is “in authority” over woman’, strongly suggests also that ‘God is “in authority” over Christ’ (1 Cor 11:3b). However, this generates a theological difficulty for conservative evangelical interpreters, since the framers of the classic Trinitarian definitions condemned at least one form of subordination of the Son to the Father in the Trinity. Since the classic Trinitarian doctrine is widely considered as an

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<sup>186</sup> Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, p.528.

<sup>187</sup> See section 2.2.2.

<sup>188</sup> Hull, *Equal To Serve* (Old Tappan: F.H. Revell, 1987), pp.193-94.

<sup>189</sup> Kroeger and Kroeger, ‘Subordinationism’ in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Ewell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 1058; Kroeger, ‘Classical Concept of Head’, p.283.

<sup>190</sup> Giles, *The Trinity And Subordinationism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

<sup>191</sup> Giles pursues a different strategy from Hull and Kroeger. See the analysis in ch.3.

evangelical essential,<sup>192</sup> the charge of subordinationism is very serious. Hull sums up the dilemma as follows:

If we define head as 'authority over' then 1 Corinthians 11:3 can mean that there is a dominant to subordinate hierarchy within the Trinity...Early in its history, orthodox Christianity took a firm stand against any teaching that would make Christ a subordinate figure. To say that God is somehow authoritative over Christ erodes the Savior's full divinity and puts a Christian on dangerous theological ground.<sup>193</sup>

In short, the evangelical feminist invocation of the Trinitarian doctrine is a way of subverting the exegesis of their traditionalist counterparts. If one may not have the subordination of women to men without entailing the subordination of the Son to the Father, then does not fidelity to the text and to the classical formulae entail the rejection of both types of subordination? To be fair to this viewpoint, it poses a question that is neither controversial nor novel, exegetically or theologically; the relationship between gendered subordination and Christological subordinationism was raised by C.K. Barrett<sup>194</sup> in his discussion of 1 Corinthians 11:3, and again by George Knight III<sup>195</sup> in an early evangelical traditionalist piece.

Traditionalists tend to engage with this argument particularly vigorously, in the first instance, I suspect, because its rhetorical politics are not lost on them. As I have noted, one result of evangelical discursive tendencies is that reformist evangelicals are associated with theological novelty and Modernity, with the conservative cohort self-identifying as the guardians of history and orthodoxy within the movement. By associating the traditionalist position with a heresy, the feminist evangelicals who utilise this strategy turn the tables on their interlocutors and

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<sup>192</sup> E.g. it is one of two requirements for membership of the Evangelical Theological Society. See Olson, 'Tensions', p.77.

<sup>193</sup> Hull, *Equal To Serve*, pp.193-94.

<sup>194</sup> Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.249.

<sup>195</sup> See Knight, *The New Testament Teaching On The Role Relationship Of Men And Women* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), p.43ff.



ironically paint themselves as the genuine conservatives in this instance.<sup>196</sup> In short, this is a very subtle, yet deliberate, form of political manoeuvring. In response, several traditionalists insist that evangelical feminists have simply misunderstood the nature of the subordination declared to be heterodox by the ancient church, and that the feminists are the actual heretics. They contend that the only subordination condemned is one which predicates 'a difference of *essence or being* among Father, Son and Holy Spirit'.<sup>197</sup> As neither the economic subordination of the incarnate Christ nor the eternal voluntary obedience of the Son to the Father directly corresponds to a 'difference of essence or being', these traditionalists argue that neither is condemned.

In the final analysis, this dispute has proved to be counterproductive. It has not settled for evangelicals the question of how to read 1 Corinthians 11:3, but in my opinion this is not because God and gender are unrelated theologically. What is more, far from actually helping to resolve conflict, the gender and Trinity argument has actually intensified it. The polarisation over 1 Corinthians 11:3, which for evangelicals is not ultimately a theoretical but a practical issue, has simply spread upwards to the doctrine of God. I suspect that this may be attributed to the manner in which the doctrine was invoked in the first place, namely as a means to winning rather than resolving an argument. However, none of this is to state that the dispute is fruitless; as the next chapter will demonstrate, the hermeneutics of this particular issue in the headship controversy are a useful entry point for a study of the biblical

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<sup>196</sup> See e.g. Bilezikian, 'Hermeneutical Bungee-Jumping: Subordination In The Godhead', *JETS* 40:1 (1997), 57-68; Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, p.106ff.

<sup>197</sup> Schreiner, 'Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity: 1 Corinthians 11:2-16' in *Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood*, ed. Piper and Grudem (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), 124-39, p.129. Italics mine. See also Kovach and Schemm, 'A Defense Of The Doctrine Of The Eternal Subordination Of The Son', *JETS* 42:3 (1999), 461-76, esp. p.462; see also the material from the Sydney Anglican Diocesan Doctrine Commission in Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, pp.122-37.

materials that touch upon these matters. This provides the basis for my initial exegetical response to the dispute.

### **2.3.5 Section Summary**

The argument of this section has been that although the evangelical headship controversy is conditioned by several factors, it concerns a very basic difference of opinion. All evangelical traditionalists argue that males have unique leadership roles in the family, with some extending this to ecclesial polity, whereas all evangelical feminists regard leadership selection on the basis of gender alone to be illegitimate. This difference is underwritten by theological and exegetical studies that set human sex and gender within variant understandings of the broader purposes of God in the world. Various philological debates derive from these competing readings, but the principal example of such a study – the lexical sense of κεφαλή – has proved as inconclusive as the theological and exegetical debates that occasioned it. The final section offered a preliminary analysis of the ‘gender and Trinity’ controversy with which the next chapter of the thesis is concerned.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed the background of the evangelical controversy regarding gender roles in the Church and family and offered an initial survey of significant strands of the controversy to date. It was seen that a plethora of historical, theological, discursive and contextual factors coincided to make gender a site of especial symbolic significance for evangelicals. Traditionally, male headship has been the principal area in which the divine ordering of creation is socially manifested and a distinctively Protestant social order is constituted; yet, paradoxically, violation of this order in the form of a woman’s ‘extraordinary call’ is one of the vehicles by

which Pietist-influenced revivalism demonstrates its commitment to the priority of the New creation over the Old. As a contested issue, the gender dispute also taps deeply into the combative instincts of American neo-evangelicals, with the hierarchical-egalitarian divide being emblematic of the basic conservative-reformist division in this post-fundamentalist community. Different gendered patterns, values and ideals also comprise the central tools by which American evangelicals negotiate the various ideological and economic transitions that they have faced since the middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It was also seen that the headship dispute turns upon a single question, namely whether the existence of certain uniquely male positions of authority in the family and Church is consistent with a belief in the 'intrinsic' equality of the sexes. Evangelical traditionalists and evangelical feminists bring different assumptions to bear upon this question. Traditionalists generally agree that certain essential differences in *disposition* between the sexes underwrite male office-bearing, whereas evangelical feminists have more diverse opinions regarding the question of gendered anthropology, but they are unanimous in rejecting the legitimacy of sex or gender as criteria that determine eligibility for office. Both parties to the dispute locate a theology of gender and an exegesis of biblical gender texts within the broader narrative context of a creation-fall-redemption-consummation scheme. To summarise, evangelical traditionalists generally regard equality, unity *and gendered hierarchy* to have been (i) a feature of pristine human relationships, (ii) that this pattern was corrupted and not instituted at the Fall, and (iii) that redemption entails the recovery of nature. Evangelical feminists dispute (i) and, by proposing patriarchy as a consequence of the Fall, also (ii). Accordingly, they regard the redemptive recovery of nature to involve the recovery of an egalitarian social order. The 'gender

and Trinity' debate emerged as a method, albeit unsuccessful, of clearing these impasses, and it is to a fuller analysis of this debate that this thesis now turns.

### 3.

## PAUL AND THE HERMENEUTICS OF THE GENDER AND TRINITY DEBATE

### 3.1 Introduction

#### 3.1.1 Summary Of Previous Chapters

The preceding chapter of this thesis presented the background and basic contours of the evangelical disagreement over the roles of men and women. In terms of background, the evangelical preoccupation with gender is a function of several factors – the discursive tendencies of American neo-evangelicals, the historical ambivalence of Protestantism towards gender, and the need to adapt to the socio-economic and ideological changes in Western societies in the industrial and post-industrial periods. Broadly speaking, evangelical attitudes towards gender are manifest in competing sets of ideals, with gender traditionalists on the one hand having a ‘cultural toolkit’<sup>198</sup> comprising a pragmatic synthesis of both egalitarian and patriarchal values, whilst feminist evangelicals adopt a thoroughgoing egalitarianism. The headship controversy is a result of bringing these competing values to bear upon the question of whether the biblical materials warrant a uniquely male leadership role (headship). This practical question is addressed by appealing to competing narrative models of biblical theology, and the impasse has resulted in increasingly detailed attention being given to the terminology that appears in contested passages (e.g. κεφαλή). Since these debates remain at deadlock, an alternative method of obtaining leverage over the discussion has been sought by appeals to the classical Trinitarian definitions. This debate – which I have called the ‘Gender and Trinity debate’ – is the topic of the present chapter.

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<sup>198</sup> Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity*, p.15.

### **3.1.2 The Argument Of This Chapter**

The body of this chapter is divided into three sections. (i) The first builds upon the overview of the Gender and Trinity debate in the preceding chapter<sup>199</sup> by presenting a more substantial analysis of the contributions made by both feminist and traditionalist evangelicals. (ii) As the second section will demonstrate, these different approaches to the question of the relationship between gendered subordination and theological subordinationism share certain logical and hermeneutical features. That is to say, I think both parties bring the classic theological definitions to bear upon the biblical materials – and the biblical materials to bear upon each other – in a way that evinces a particular epistemological and hermeneutical model. (iii) In the third section of the chapter, which constitutes the beginning of my exegetical response to the Gender and Trinity debate, I begin from the premise that 1 Corinthians 11:3 – the central text of the Gender and Trinity debate – should be interpreted in its epistolary context. However, close attention to the theological epistemology of 1 and 2 Corinthians, in my view, demonstrates that the model of understanding evangelicals bring to bear upon 1 Corinthians 11:3 is at odds with that evinced by the literature most closely related to it. Nevertheless, this argument is not to state that the doctrine of God and human gender are unrelated in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; rather, it is to clear the ground for my own exegesis of the passage in subsequent chapters.

### **3.2 The Gender And Trinity Argument: Themes And Variations**

Prior to examining the hermeneutics of the Gender and Trinity debate and offering my own exegetical response to it, it is appropriate to analyse the various approaches to the question of how the classic prohibition of certain forms of Trinitarian subordination

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<sup>199</sup> See section 2.3.4.

bears upon the question of gendered subordination, and specifically the headship of the male with regard to the female in 1 Corinthians 11:3. To this end, this section of the chapter offers a fourfold illustrative analysis of the dispute: (i) First I explore the pre-history of the debate, insofar as it represents an application of theological developments in Trinitarian theology from outside of the evangelical community. This is followed by studies of (ii) the feminist evangelical protagonists, (iii) the traditionalist evangelical respondents, and finally (iv) an examination of a recent significant development in the discussion.

### 3.2.1 The Pre-History Of The Debate

By way of a preliminary illustration, it is by no means a novel move to bring gendered subordination and theological subordination to bear upon one another on the basis of 1 Corinthians 11:3. In his *Homilies On First Corinthians*, John Chrysostom (*Hom.XXVI*) comments upon just such a reading. Presented in the form of a diatribe against unspecified, probably Arian, opponents Chrysostom argues that generalising from the subordinate status of the woman in 1 Corinthians 11:3 to the status of the Son vis-à-vis the Father results in theological contradiction and absurdity. Utilising a classic *reductio ad absurdum*, he writes:

[The opponents]:

“As the man governs the wife”, saith he, “so also the Father, Christ.”

[Chrysostom]:

Therefore also as Christ governs the man, so likewise the Father, the Son. “For the head of every man,” we read, “is Christ.” And who could ever admit this? For if the superiority of the Son compared with us, be the measure of the Father’s compared with the Son, *consider to what meanness thou wilt bring Him. (Hom.XXVI)*<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> This is Talbot W Chambers’ translation, the paragraphs, italics and additional notation are my own.

Chrysostom goes on to observe that this tension derives from what he regards as a faulty understanding on the part of his opponents of the nature of theological language. He suggests that there is a fundamental tension of honour within the male-female pair, admitting on the one hand that a wife is 'free...[and]...equal in honor', but on the other that she is 'reasonably subjected' (ὑποτάσσω), not least because of the Fall, on account of which 'equality of honor causeth contention'.<sup>201</sup> There is however, no such ambiguity within the Trinity, since the Son has 'the same honor with Him that begat Him' (*Hom.XXVI*). In short, Chrysostom regards God as κεφαλή of Christ to be a limit-case in the use of metaphor, one in which the Son is at once both perfectly obedient and perfectly free in a manner not wholly congruent with every particular of the male-female, or Christ-male pairings. This approach to theological language is characteristic of other Patristic interpreters; for instance, Hilary (*Trin.* II.2) describes any discussion of the Trinity as a limit case in hermeneutics; it 'strain[s] the poor resources of our language to express thoughts too great for words'.<sup>202</sup>

Despite this Patristic word of caution, it ought to be noted that Christian, particularly Reformed, traditions contain theological resources of varying degrees of usefulness for the participants of the Gender and Trinity debate. In terms of the Son's submission to the Father, Calvin (*Institutes* I.xiii.20) describes an 'order' within the personal subsistences<sup>203</sup> of the Trinity, which violates neither the full participation of each Person in the Divine essence nor the element of ordering. Although he does not use the term submission to describe this ordering of the subsistences, the statement is

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<sup>201</sup> It is interesting that in this regard Chrysostom agrees with the feminist evangelicals that prior to the Fall there was no mention of patriarchy.

<sup>202</sup> Calvin makes a similar point with respect to Patristic exegesis and theology in Calvin, *Institutes Of The Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), I.xiii.18.

<sup>203</sup> I use subsistence and person interchangeably here.



amenable to a range of interpretations of which a limited form of submission is one. This is also the position of Charles Hodge, who argues that whilst the unity of the Divine essence 'does indeed preclude all priority and all superiority as to being and perfection...it does not preclude subordination as to the mode of subsistence and operation'.<sup>204</sup> Louis Berkhof adopts a similar position, describing 'a certain subordination'<sup>205</sup> as to the subsistences, who are distinct from one another only by virtue of their personal operations, with *generation* being uniquely of the Father, *filiation* of the Son and *procession* of the Spirit. T. C. Hammond, who is significant principally on account of his wide popularity among evangelicals, tersely describes the Trinitarian doctrine in terms of unity of essence, full deity of persons and the subordination of the Son and Spirit to the Father.<sup>206</sup>

Nevertheless, as was seen in the preceding chapter, there are notions that can be used to underwrite a more egalitarian view of the Son's relation to the Father in the Trinity. The first of these, a focus upon relationality, has already been briefly discussed with respect to the way in which the evangelical feminist writer Paul Jewett utilised Karl Barth's relational model of the *imago Dei*.<sup>207</sup> Barth has been significant at the reformist end of the American neo-evangelical spectrum, particularly at Fuller Theological Seminary,<sup>208</sup> largely because of the influence his doctrine of revelation has exercised over discussions of bibliology. Taking the relational model further than Barth, Jürgen Moltmann has been influential upon Protestant discussions of the Trinity generally, and certain feminist evangelicals share his notion of the Godhead as

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<sup>204</sup> Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1940), p.464.

<sup>205</sup> Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: Banner Of Truth, 1958), p.89.

<sup>206</sup> Hammond, *In Understanding Be Men* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1968), p.56.

<sup>207</sup> Barth, *CD III.4*, p.117; Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*, pp.43-44. See section 2.3.2(i).

<sup>208</sup> Jewett was for some time the Professor of Systematics at Fuller.

a non-hierarchical community.<sup>209</sup> There are also several non-evangelical Christian feminists who focus their attention upon the Trinity, many of whose concerns have been mirrored in evangelical debates regarding such issues as the theological acceptability of gender neutral-language for God.<sup>210</sup> Finally, Karl Rahner's dictum regarding the absolute identity of the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity<sup>211</sup> necessarily affects the question of what the incarnate Christ's submission to God indicates about the personal, rather than economic, operations of the First and Second persons of the Trinity.

It is not my intention here to pursue a detailed examination of developments in Trinitarian theology, since for the most part evangelicals engaged in the Gender and Trinity dispute use, but do not develop, these ideas. Nor is it my aim to determine which, if any, of these variant theological traditions constitutes a legitimate development of the classical Trinitarian statements, since that is beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather, I seek to comment upon the validity and logic of the use to which feminist and traditionalist evangelicals put these theological models as hermeneutical frames for the express purpose of obtaining leverage over the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 or the gender debate more generally. That evangelicals use the doctrine of the Trinity *hermeneutically* has already been noted,<sup>212</sup> with the first instance that I can find of it being invoked in relation to gender 'roles' being in the work of George W. Knight III.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> See e.g. Grenz, 'Theological Foundations For Male-Female Relationships', *JETS* 41:4 (1998), 615-30; Grenz, *Rediscovering The Triune God*.

<sup>210</sup> See e.g. the similarities between the issues raised in Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1992), esp. Part III (Naming God). p.135ff; Soskice, 'Trinity And Feminism' in *Cambridge Companion To Feminist Theology*, ed. Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 135-50.

<sup>211</sup> Rahner, *The Trinity* (London: Burns And Oates, 1970), pp.98-103.

<sup>212</sup> See section 2.3.4.

<sup>213</sup> Knight, *Role Relationship Of Men And Women*.

Knight, engaging with prior works by both Jewett and Scanzoni and Hardesty,<sup>214</sup> appeals to a pattern of intra-Trinitarian relationships as a means of describing his belief that men and women occupy different roles, including differences of authority, in a way that does not violate their fundamental equivalence of status. The Son is not ontologically inferior to the Father, but he nevertheless assumes a subordinate position, hence subordination and equality cannot be incommensurate with one another. His stance is as follows:

The ontological relationship analogous to that between man and woman...is that between Father and Son (1 Cor. 11:3). That Christ submits as Son and as incarnate...does not mean therefore that He is inferior to the Father, nor does it cast into doubt His deity...Just as no inferiority may be asserted or assumed for Christ in His submission, so also...for woman, and no objection may be justly made because her submission rests on her cocreated identity as woman in relation to man.<sup>215</sup>

Knight applies this logic to males and females and this sets the scene for the Gender and Trinity dispute and, insofar as this proposal was adopted and refined by gender traditionalist evangelicals,<sup>216</sup> it became the target of substantial criticism.

### 3.2.2 Feminist Evangelical Protagonists

The principal feminist evangelical responses to this argument mirrored its strategy of invoking the doctrine of the Trinity so as to lever the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3. The initial two examples of this strategy are found in the work of Gretchen Gaebelein Hull<sup>217</sup> and Catherine Clark Kroeger. I focus here upon three short articles by Kroeger, in which the sequential development of her position is evident. In the

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<sup>214</sup> See *Ibid.*, p.1; also Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*; Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be*.

<sup>215</sup> See further Knight, *Role Relationship Of Men And Women*, p.44.

<sup>216</sup> See e.g. Grudem, 'Review: The New Testament Teaching On The Role Relationship Of Men And Women. George W. Knight III.' *JETS* 22:4 (1979), 375-76; also Hurley, *Man And Woman In Biblical Perspective*.

<sup>217</sup> Hull, *Equal To Serve*, pp.193-94.

first article – a definition of ‘subordinationism’ co-authored with her spouse Richard Kroeger for the *Evangelical Dictionary Of Theology*<sup>218</sup> – the topic of female subordination to males is left unaddressed. They define theological subordinationism as any view that ‘assigns an inferiority of being, status or *role* to the Son or Holy Spirit’.<sup>219</sup> The reference to the term ‘role’ here is significant, since as both feminist and traditionalist evangelicals have observed,<sup>220</sup> its application to the distinctions between the Persons is a relative novelty that appears to have begun with Knight. It is likely therefore, that the Kroegers have gender traditionalist evangelicals in their sights.

This judgement is confirmed by Kroeger’s second article,<sup>221</sup> in which she brings this definition to bear upon the question of the sense of κεφαλή. Her argument is twofold; the bulk of the paper is concerned with demonstrating that ‘source’ is a well-attested sense of the metaphor, whilst the final section seeks to exclude the interpretation ‘authority over’ on the grounds that it implies theological subordination, hence heresy.<sup>222</sup> This basic format is repeated in her final article.<sup>223</sup> In terms of the lexical question, her argument adopts what could be termed a ‘sandwich’ approach. She seeks to demonstrate the credibility of her proposed sense of the term in (i) pre-Pauline literature, (ii) post-Pauline literature, so as to (iii) infer on this basis that her proposal applies to the Pauline usage of κεφαλή. Theologically, she frequently cites Patristic writers in support of her argument that ‘head’ cannot mean ‘authority over’, the most significant instance being her ascription to John Chrysostom (*Hom.XXVI*) of

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<sup>218</sup> Kroeger and Kroeger, ‘Subordinationism’.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid. Italics mine.

<sup>220</sup> Kovach and Schemm, ‘Eternal Subordination Of The Son’; Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, p.175.

<sup>221</sup> Kroeger, ‘Classical Concept of Head’.

<sup>222</sup> See section 2.3.3.

<sup>223</sup> Kroeger, ‘Head’.

the view that ‘*only* a heretic would understand Paul’s use of “head” to mean “chief” or “authority over”’.<sup>224</sup>

This final claim is significant, not least because, if my reading of Chrysostom<sup>225</sup> is correct, then Kroeger has fundamentally misread him.<sup>226</sup> It seems to me that Chrysostom’s objection to his interlocutors concerns not the lexical sense of κεφαλή, but rather their failure to acknowledge the linguistic problems of reasoning analogously to God. Since both Kroeger and the traditionalists, whose argument she seeks to exclude, reason analogously in the opposite direction (Trinity→human gender), and Chrysostom is, in any case, amenable to some female subordination, the applicability as well as the validity of this interpretation of Chrysostom is in doubt. Notwithstanding this, I am less interested hermeneutically in the question of whether she has understood Chrysostom correctly, than I am with the place both he and the other Patristic authors occupy within her argument. The Patristic authors are not merely of philological interest to her.<sup>227</sup> She appears to cite them as Doctors of the Church, *viz.* authoritative, or at least privileged, interpreters – and it seems to me that she accords their writings the same hermeneutical status *vis-à-vis* the creedal formulae as that accorded to the intentions of the Framers of the Constitution in American jurisprudence. Her overall argument conforms to the following logical structure.

### **The Logic Of Kroeger’s Argument**

- Kroeger ASSUMES
1. The basic principles of evangelicalism, which include:
    - (i) high view of Scripture
    - (ii) doctrine of the Trinity

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid., p.377. Italics mine.

<sup>225</sup> See section 3.2.1.

<sup>226</sup> See also Grudem, ‘Κεφαλή: New Evidence’, esp. pp.25-28.

<sup>227</sup> Kroeger, ‘Head’, p.377. She also cites Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria, Basil, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Eusebius, but her principal point concerns Chrysostom.

- FROM her reading of 1 Corinthians 11:3
2. κεφαλή bears the same sense:  
(i) with respect to God vis-à-vis Christ  
(ii) with respect to man vis-à-vis woman

- FROM her reading of the Fathers
3. The proscription against subordinationism extends to:  
(i) inequalities of being  
(ii) inequalities of status  
(iii) inequalities of role

- HENCE
4. κεφαλή in 1 Corinthians 11:3 cannot bear the sense 'authoritative [role] over' with respect to:  
(i) God and Christ (from 1, and 3 above)  
(ii) Man and Woman (from 4(i) and 2 above)

AND BY EXTENSION

- (iii) Those who deny 4.(ii) (i.e. evangelical traditionalists) are logically committed to deny 4.(i) and such a stance is heretical. (from 2 and 3 above)

By way of a critical comment, although Kroeger's argument is logically valid, it is tendentious. That is to say, it turns upon the question of whether her definition of subordinationism as the attribution of inferiority of 'being, status or role'<sup>228</sup> is correct – and this is debatable. As has been noted, the terminology of 'role subordination' is novel within the Trinitarian tradition; hence the question of whether it is consistent with the confessional formulae cannot be determined in advance. Evidently, the proponents of this stance regard it as commensurate with the tradition. Accordingly, for Kroeger's definition to be hermeneutically informative she must demonstrate either that the stance is incoherent or that it is the stance condemned as heresy by the Patristic church. As it is, she manages to do neither task. To be fair, a similar consideration applies to George Knight and those who follow him, since they often assume too readily that what they mean by 'role subordination' is (i) amenable to the Trinitarian formulae and (ii) coherent. In terms of the latter concern, Rebecca

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<sup>228</sup> Kroeger and Kroeger, 'Subordinationism'

Groothius aptly observes that it is difficult to imagine a just and permanent subordinate position that does not entail some notion of subordinate ontology. She writes:

If you cannot help but be what you are, and if inferiority in function follows inexorably from what you are, then you are inferior in your essential being.<sup>229</sup>

Gilbert Bilezikian<sup>230</sup> takes up the issue of whether 'role subordination' constitutes an illegitimate departure from the classic Trinitarian definitions, responding mainly to articles by several traditionalist evangelicals in which they formalize the notion. There are two significant aspects to his argument. On the one hand, he seeks to demonstrate on biblical grounds that Christ's subordination to God is a function of the incarnation alone and does not impact upon the mutuality that he argues is the essence of inner-Trinitarian fellowship. On the other hand, he aims to demonstrate the incoherence of any notion of permanent subordination within the immanent Trinity.

Bilezikian's theological perspective upon interpretation is perhaps best seen in the way he understands the eschatological subordination of Christ to God in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. Understanding this as the final act of Christological subordination, he interprets the subsequent reference to God being 'all in all' as an indication that after this final self-humiliation there will be eternal mutuality between Father and Son. Accordingly, he claims that the temporary nature of Christ's submission serves as a poor model for the permanent subordination of women to men.<sup>231</sup> Bilezikian's chief theological concern is to demonstrate that 'subordination

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<sup>229</sup> Groothius, *Good News For Women: A Biblical Picture Of Gender Equality* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), p.55; cf. Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, pp.179-83; Cary, 'The New Evangelical Subordinationism: Reading Inequality Into The Trinity', *PriscP* 20:4 (2006), 42-45, p.44f.

<sup>230</sup> Bilezikian, 'Hermeneutical Bungee-Jumping'; see also Bilezikian's critique of James Hurley's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3 in Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, p.279.

<sup>231</sup> Bilezikian, 'Hermeneutical Bungee-Jumping', pp.60-61.

that extends into eternity cannot remain only functional but...becomes *ipso facto* an ontological reality'.<sup>232</sup> His argument is apparently that existence is entailed in the concept of eternity, since 'eternity is a quality of existence'.<sup>233</sup> Since on this basis he judges 'eternity' to be ontological language, he concludes that eternal subordination of any sort within the Trinity violates in principle the equal participation of all of the Persons in the Divine essence, and is tantamount to heresy. This second aspect of the argument can be summarized thus:

### The Logic Of Bilezikian's Argument

#### Bilezikian ASSUMES

1. The basic principles of evangelicalism, which include:
  - (i) high view of Scripture
  - (ii) doctrine of the Trinity

#### FROM his reading of the Nicene tradition<sup>234</sup>

2. The proscription against subordinationism extends to:
  - (i) inequalities of being
  - (ii) inequalities of status

#### FROM the category 'eternal'<sup>235</sup>

3. whatever is eternal is necessary, hence categorically ontological

#### HENCE

4. Those who posit the 'eternal *functional* subordination' of the Son to the Father in the Trinity:
  - (i) posit an ontological form of subordination (*from 3 above*)
  - (ii) violate the Nicene tradition (*from 2 and 4(i) above*)

#### WHICH BY EXTENSION MEANS

- (iii) the assumption of 'eternal *functional* subordination' to resolve the tension over 1 Corinthians 11:3 necessarily entails the assumption of a heretical stance. (*from 1 and 4(ii) above*)

My only comment vis-à-vis Bilezikian's theological inference from 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 is to observe that he defers the question of how his

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid., p.63.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., p.64.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., pp.57-58.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., pp.63-64.



understanding of Christ's temporary subordination bears upon the two natures problem. He briefly mentions *kenotic* Christology, but he fails to address the sheer variety of Christian opinions regarding this issue.<sup>236</sup> In terms of his argument regarding eternal subordination, my criticism concerns his definition of terms. He is quite correct in stating that 'eternity' is generally regarded as an attribute of God (e.g. *Westminster Confession* 2.1), but the term 'ontological' is potentially confusing if it is taken as a designation of 'being' as opposed to 'appearance', and this approximates to Bilezikian's usage. To be fair, he inherits this terminology from Robert Letham, with whom he engages. However, he fails adequately to acknowledge that Letham uses the term 'ontological' where other theologians use the term 'immanent'.<sup>237</sup> This is important because ontological subordination quite properly designates both subordination of essence and subordination of subsistence, since both essence and subsistence pertain to the immanent (*viz.* ontological) Trinity. Traditionalists condemn a subordination of essence, but they admit a role-based subordination of subsistence. Since Bilezikian's terminology does not admit this distinction, he is poorly placed to adjudicate upon it, irrespective of whether or not the traditionalist proposal is consistent with orthodoxy.

Stanley Grenz<sup>238</sup> partially circumvents these problems by pursuing a different methodology from Bilezikian. He suggests that the personal operations of the Trinity are reciprocally defining, and that this implies a model of mutuality within the Godhead. It would seem to follow from this model that, if there is an analogy between the Trinity and human relationships, it serves to underwrite an egalitarian and

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<sup>236</sup> See the excellent survey of *kenotic* proposals in Coakley, 'Kenōsis And Subversion'.

<sup>237</sup> Compare e.g. 'The revelation of the economic Trinity truly indicates the ontological Trinity' in Letham, 'The Man-Woman Debate: Theological Comment', *WTJ* 52:1 (1990), 65-78, p.68 with e.g. 'the "Economic" Trinity is grounded in the "Immanent" Trinity' in Rahner, *The Trinity*, p.101.

<sup>238</sup> Grenz, 'Theological Foundations', p.618f. I do not think that Grenz engages directly with Bilezikian's article, but his discussion overlaps sufficiently to be relevant.

not a hierarchical socio-political order. Grenz's logic requires him to demonstrate that the filiation of the Son, evinced in the doctrine of eternal generation, mutually defines the Father *as* Father. To do this, he utilises the analogy of becoming a father himself; his fatherhood was contingent upon the birth of his son as much as his son's sonhood was contingent upon him becoming a father.<sup>239</sup> Once again, however, this fails to address the problem of subordination within relationships, since having one's personhood constituted through relation to another does not logically preclude there being a differential in authority within the constituting relationship. Georg Hegel's discussion of masters and slaves is a somewhat extreme example of this point, but Grenz's own experiences as a father of small children ought to bear this out.<sup>240</sup> In short, neither Bilezikian nor Grenz quite resolves the question of whether or not 'functional subordination' constitutes a *necessary* violation of the classic doctrines.

### 3.2.3 Traditionalist Evangelical Responses

The response to these direct and indirect accusations of subordinationism took the form of three engagements. (i) In the 1980s and early 1990s, several traditionalist scholars, such as Robert Letham,<sup>241</sup> Wayne Grudem,<sup>242</sup> and John Dahms,<sup>243</sup> began to refine George Knight's initial proposal, in response to the attempt by evangelical feminists to include 'role' subordination within the definition of the ancient heresy of subordinationism. (ii) The second phase of engagement took into account the articles and publications by feminist evangelicals, such as Bilezikian, Grenz and others from

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., p.618.

<sup>240</sup> Hegel, 'Lordship And Bondage' in *Phenomenology Of Mind* (New York: Harper, 1967), 229-40.

<sup>241</sup> Letham, 'Man-Woman Debate', p.68ff.

<sup>242</sup> Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, see ch.14 esp. p.245.

<sup>243</sup> Dahms, 'The Generation of the Son', *JETS* 32:4 (1989), 493-501; Dahms, 'The Subordination Of The Son', *JETS* 37:3 (1994), 351-64

the mid-1990s onwards, and is exemplified by Stephen Kovach and Peter Schemm's 1999 article regarding 'eternal functional subordination'<sup>244</sup> in which the basic traditionalist position is defended in more depth. (iii) Coinciding with this, in 1999 the Sydney Anglican Diocesan Doctrinal Commission initiated a systematic review of the arguments in a report entitled *The Doctrine Of Trinity And Its Bearing On The Relationship Of Men And Women*.<sup>245</sup> Although the conclusions of this document are representative of Sydney Anglicanism rather than American neo-evangelicalism, it nevertheless reflects their attempt to bring the American debate to bear upon the question of female ordination in Australia.<sup>246</sup>

(i) Taking Robert Letham's article as illustrative of the first phase of engagement, it is evident that his stance corresponds to that expressed by Charles Hodge and Louis Berkhof. With respect to the attributes of the Divine essence, Letham regards the Persons or subsistences within the Trinity as co-equal and co-eternal, but with regard to their mutual relations, they are ordered by activities of sending, obedience and procession. These relations are non-reciprocal:

The Father sends the Son and not vice versa. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and not vice versa. The Father is not sent, neither does he proceed. The Son obeys the Father. The Father does not enter into a situation where obedience is owed to the Son.<sup>247</sup>

However, a significant difference between Letham and these other theologians is that they articulate the distinctions between the Persons in terms of the activities of

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<sup>244</sup> Kovach and Schemm, 'Eternal Subordination Of The Son'; Schemm, 'Trinitarian Perspectives On Gender Roles', *JBMW* 6:1 (2001), 13-21.

<sup>245</sup> This document was originally published at <http://www.anglicanmediasydney.asn.au/doc/trinity.html>, but this page has expired. References here are to the copy of the complete report located in Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, pp.122-37.

<sup>246</sup> On the theological dependency of Sydney Anglicanism upon American neo-evangelical discourse, see Piggin's note on the 'Ordination of Women Debate' in Piggin, 'The American And British Contributions To Evangelicalism In Australia' in *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies Of Popular Protestantism In North America, The British Isles, And Beyond 1700-1990*, ed. Noll et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 290-309, p.301ff.

<sup>247</sup> Letham, 'Man-Woman Debate', p.68.

eternal generation, filiation and procession, whereas Letham derives his terminology from the relations as they are evinced during the ministry of Christ. This is, in fact, entirely consistent with Karl Rahner's method of proceeding from the experience of Trinitarian revelation to a theology of the Trinity.<sup>248</sup> It does, however, presume a specific notion of the continuity between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity. For this reason Letham appears to regard the temporal and functional activities of sending, obedience and procession to be instances of the eternal and constitutive activities of generation, filiation and procession, thereby enabling him to argue that obedience is entailed in the concept of the Son's eternal filiation. He then applies this notion to the male-female relationship by virtue of the *imago Dei*.<sup>249</sup>

Thomas Schreiner's<sup>250</sup> theological understanding of subordinationism is similar to that of Letham, with perhaps the main difference between their two papers being that Schreiner is specifically concerned with the hermeneutical challenge of 1 Corinthians 11:3. Setting his sights upon Catherine and Richard Kroeger's definition, he takes issue in the first instance with their use of the term *role*, correctly observing that it exerts a distorting influence over the definition. He fails in my view to recognise the relative novelty of the concept denoted by the term, but rather regards 'subordination in role' to be equivalent to or continuous with the 'subordination in the economic Trinity' that the Kroegers attribute to the Nicene fathers.<sup>251</sup> This identification is a little perplexing, since it evidently elides the question of the distinctions between the personal subsistences of the Trinity (*opera ad intra*) with the related, yet logically distinct, question of their different functions within salvation

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<sup>248</sup> Rahner, *The Trinity*, pp.98-103. Letham cites Thomas Torrance to the same effect.

<sup>249</sup> I have already noted the confusion caused by the fact that Letham uses the term 'ontological' where Rahner uses 'immanent'.

<sup>250</sup> Schreiner, 'Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity', pp.128-29.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p.129; cf. Kroeger and Kroeger, 'Subordinationism', p.1058.

history (*opera ad extra*). For instance, when Hodge, whom Schreiner cites, states that there is a 'subordination...as to the mode of subsistence',<sup>252</sup> he appears not to designate the economic but the immanent Trinity. Despite this, Schreiner's argument remains hermeneutically interesting for precisely the same reason as Kroeger's<sup>253</sup> – he considers the Nicene doctrine, correctly understood, to be pertinent to the interpretation of the statement 'man is κεφαλή of woman' (1 Cor 11:3). He differs from Kroeger in asserting that the Nicene tradition affirms ontological equality, but functional subordination.

(ii) The refinements to the traditionalist position proposed by Stephen Kovach and Peter Schemm<sup>254</sup> do not fundamentally alter the logic of the traditionalist theological hermeneutic, they simply concern certain refinements to the theological definition of subordinationism. Accordingly, their paper is of secondary importance for the hermeneutical analysis of this chapter. It will be sufficient to summarise the basic structure of their argument. They propose that both Bilezikian and the Kroegers have fundamentally misunderstood the nature of subordinationism, and they argue that 'functional' or 'role' subordination is commensurate with the Nicene traditions. They warrant this by first attempting to show that the Kroegers' definition is anomalous when placed alongside other prominent theological dictionaries, and second that important passages in the Bible, Hilary of Poitiers, Athanasius, the Cappadocians and Augustine warrant the view that functional subordination is orthodox.

(iii) The Sydney Anglican Diocesan Doctrinal Commission paper offers several contributions to this debate. The contributors to the paper argue that the

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<sup>252</sup> Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, p.462.

<sup>253</sup> See above.

<sup>254</sup> Kovach and Schemm, 'Eternal Subordination Of The Son'.

Nicene tradition is amenable to the eternal, non-essential subordination of the Son to the Father. Their argument for functional subordination is unremarkable, in that it pursues, albeit more briefly, the same basic strategy as that pursued by Letham, Kovach and Schemm.<sup>255</sup> Indeed, they go on to make some apt observations regarding the nature of subordination itself, suggesting that the Son's subordination must be defined in a manner commensurate with his unique filiation and freedom. As the following statement demonstrates, in this, their stance comes close to Chrysostom's argument regarding the Son's obedience:

True freedom is enjoyed when a perfectly good person delights in doing good; in this case, when the Son delights to please the Father.<sup>256</sup>

In terms of the significance of the Son's subordination, the members of the Doctrinal Commission offer two observations. First, they point out that one strength of the traditionalist case is that although most advocates of functional subordination regard the Son's submission to the Father as eternal, and not merely a function of the incarnation, their stance is relatively independent of this consideration (cf. §§30-31). This is, broadly speaking, correct – that the Second person of the Trinity can be co-equal with and also subordinate to the First person during the incarnation, is itself sufficient to demonstrate that equality and subordination are not incompatible. Second, the commission recognises 'God's life as a pattern' (§33) to be emulated, with the caveat that it is far from straightforward applying an analogy from the Divine Persons to human persons, since the term 'person' means something different in each case. The authors write: 'the relation between three Persons dwelling perichoretically is unlike any human experience' (§36). Despite this caveat, they regard Paul's

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<sup>255</sup> See §§17-28 of *The Doctrine Of Trinity And Its Bearing On The Relationship Of Men And Women* in Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, p.126ff.

<sup>256</sup> §18 of *Doctrine Of Trinity* in Giles, *Ibid.*, p.127. Compare this with Chrysostom, *Homily XXVI*: 'For as the obedience of the Son to the Father is greater than we find in men towards the authors of their being, so also His liberty is greater.'

argument in 1 Corinthians 11:3ff as constituting definitive evidence that the 'ordering of the Trinity...bear[s] upon the ordering of the sexes' (§§40-41).

By way of a brief critical observation, I have already noted in relation to Bilezikian, Letham and Schreiner the way in which inconsistencies of terminology in this debate needlessly contribute to the disagreement. This is not necessarily a fault of the participants, although occasionally it is, since not only does the post-Nicene tradition incorporate many overlapping technical terms,<sup>257</sup> it also encompasses overlapping models of the Trinity within which these terms have slightly different connotations. However, I think that in the absence of consistently applied shared conventions of nomenclature, the outlook for communication let alone consensus is poor, even between interlocutors from the same basic tradition. To illustrate my point, the Sydney statement uses the expression 'the very nature of his being as Son' (§18), by which I take the authors to mean 'filiation', *viz.* that which constitutes and characterises the Son's sonship. The terms 'nature' and 'being' are confusing in this context, since the Son's 'being' and 'nature' is the Divine essence; his sonship is a matter of subsistence and personal operation. Although the Sydney authors clarify their position later in the paragraph, this quotation nevertheless illustrates the ambiguities to which I refer. Given that the headship debate generally is characterised by combativeness and a preoccupation with using doctrine to manage socio-religious boundaries,<sup>258</sup> the lack of precise terminology simply creates more potential for disagreement.

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<sup>257</sup> E.g. essence, nature, being, substance, subsistence, person, hypostasis, ontological, functional, economic, immanent.

<sup>258</sup> See section 2.2.2.

### 3.2.4 Recent Developments In The Discussion: Kevin Giles

As I argued in the preceding chapter, the different parties to the evangelical headship controversy argued themselves into deadlock regarding the details of certain difficult texts, and sought by appealing to the Nicene tradition to obtain leverage over the interpretation of one of these texts, 1 Corinthians 11:3. In a similar manner, the contributors to the debate now find themselves in an analogous position vis-à-vis the details of the Nicene tradition. Feminist evangelicals claim to find resources within the tradition amenable to an egalitarian model of the Trinity; similarly, gender traditionalist evangelicals frequently cite Calvin, Hodge, Berkhof and Hammond to support a belief in functional subordination. The reason for this is that the parties to the Gender and Trinity debate appeal to a tradition that has been reinterpreted several times. Until consensus regarding the precise details of the tradition is established, its ability to function as a hermeneutical lever is compromised. With this in mind, Kevin Giles has recently applied the Nicene tradition to the question of how to read Scripture theologically.<sup>259</sup> He begins by observing that:

It has...become apparent during the debate on the woman-man relationship...that quoting biblical texts and giving one's interpretation of them cannot resolve complex theological disputes. In the fourth century, this approach to 'doing' theology had to be abandoned, and I believe that this approach should also be abandoned today because it always leads to a 'text-jam'.<sup>260</sup>

This is a problematic position for many evangelicals, since it appears to call into question the sufficiency and usefulness, hence the authority, of the biblical text.<sup>261</sup> Despite this, Giles offers a proposal for clearing 'text-jams' that he believes is

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<sup>259</sup> Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*; Giles, 'The Subordination Of Christ And The Subordination Of Women' in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. Pierce *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 334-54

<sup>260</sup> Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, p.3.

<sup>261</sup> See e.g. Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, pp.426-7.



warranted by the emergence of the Nicene tradition itself. He argues that the conflict between Arius and Athanasius derived, in part, from the fact that Arius asked of the text technical philosophical questions that it was not written to address.<sup>262</sup> The Nicene hermeneutical breakthrough was to recognise that, in such situations, it is the “scope” of Scripture – the overall drift of the Bible, its primary focus, its theological center<sup>263</sup> that determines a legitimate interpretative outcome. According to Giles, hermeneutical acuity necessarily entails being able to recognise when the world changes, and being able to bring these changes to bear upon the text in a manner that is commensurate with the Bible’s scope. One must ‘determine what is primary and foundational’.<sup>264</sup>

Consequently, the way in which Giles brings the Nicene tradition to bear upon the question of gender is twofold. On the one hand, he presents a substantial criticism of the functional subordinationism of evangelical traditionalists.<sup>265</sup> In this sense, his claim that the gender traditionalist stance ‘subverts the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity’<sup>266</sup> simply reiterates Kroeger’s logic. On the other hand, he uses the Nicene debate as a hermeneutical archetype – a classic instance in which the primary and foundational elements of Scripture’s ‘scope’ are correctly identified and applied. In this sense, for Giles, it is not only as the doctrine of God that the Trinity bears upon the interpretation of New Testament gender texts, it is also as an exercise in theological method. Putting this into practice, he argues that since both feminist and

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<sup>262</sup> Whilst, as Giles asserts, the New Testament is written in a non-philosophical discourse, I do not agree that it is devoid of technical philosophical categories and concepts. See chs.4-5 of this thesis; also Sterling, ‘Prepositional Metaphysics In Jewish Wisdom Speculation And Early Christological Hymns’ in *Wisdom And Logos: Studies In Jewish Thought In Honour Of David Winston*, ed. Runia and Sterling (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 219-38.

<sup>263</sup> Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, p.3.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>265</sup> See ch.4. of Giles, *Jesus And The Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent The Doctrine Of The Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), pp.129-71.

<sup>266</sup> Cf. Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, p.209

traditionalist participants in the headship dispute conceptualise gender in terms of *intrinsic* equality, their stances constitute a significant break with a past in which women were regarded as an intrinsically inferior ‘class’ of humanity.<sup>267</sup> Since the world of human gender has changed, Giles suggests, it befalls biblical interpreters to adopt a thoroughgoing egalitarianism in the light of the fundamentals of the tradition.

Although Giles is to be commended for his insistence that there is an ideological and conceptual gap between present-day gender discourses and the gender discourses of antiquity, I nevertheless have some critical comments in relation to his proposal. In particular, his approach to the ‘scope’ of Scripture seems to me to reflect a selective interpretation of the Patristic hermeneutical tradition. Quite apart from the Fathers’ penchant for allegory about which Giles does not comment, Thomas Torrance observes that, for Patristic hermeneuts, ‘biblical statements (*dicta*) are...to be interpreted in the light of the matters or realities (*res*) to which they refer’.<sup>268</sup> Certainly, the ‘scope’ of the text is brought to bear upon individual passages, but the *res scripturae* is not the ‘scope’ of the text; it is the Trinity itself, which constitutes the mystery beyond the explicit statements of Scripture and even beyond human language. Accordingly, for Torrance, the basic Patristic supposition is that piety and worship, not just biblical interpretation, constitute the hermeneutical axis of Trinitarian thought<sup>269</sup> – ‘godliness...exercises a directive force in all “sound doctrine”, and...must be allowed to guide theological understanding.’<sup>270</sup> As such, this raises the question of whether the Nicene controversy is a good hermeneutical

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<sup>267</sup> I argue for a similar position at the end of ch.5 and throughout ch.6. See *Ibid.*, p.142.

<sup>268</sup> Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1988), p.22.

<sup>269</sup> For this reason, heretics are often criticised for impiety.

<sup>270</sup> Torrance, *Trinitarian Faith*, pp.28-29. The ‘Response’ section of this chapter (3.4) revisits an idea similar to this.

archetype for the gender conflict, since the Trinity is by definition a *sui generis* interpretative issue.

### 3.2.5 Section Summary

This section of the chapter has analysed the pre-history and principal phases of the Gender and Trinity debate. To summarise: (i) The strategy of bringing gendered subordination and theological subordination to bear upon one another is not new, albeit that in the Patristic period, the focus was upon theology and Christology rather than gender roles. Within Christian theology there are resources amenable to either an egalitarian or a hierarchical reading of the Nicene tradition, hence, when George Knight first proposed on the basis of the Trinity that a woman could be of equal intrinsic status with, but functionally subordinate to, a man, controversy was inevitable. (ii) The first wave of feminist evangelical responses to Knight's proposal sought to exclude by definition any form of subordination within the Trinity, in order to lever the interpretation of the statement 'man is head of woman' (1 Cor 11:3) in a non-hierarchical direction. (iii) Traditionalist responses to this focussed principally upon the tendentious way in which particularly Kroeger's definition was formulated, and as a result Knight's proposal of 'role' subordination was clarified and refined to give the doctrine of 'eternal functional subordination'. (iv) Kevin Giles reiterated Kroeger's argument that gendered subordination logically entails a heretical theological subordination, but added to the debate the thesis that the Nicene doctrines are paradigms of hermeneutical methodology – instances of Christian theology legitimately going beyond what the biblical text states.

### **3.3 The Gender And Trinity Argument: Hermeneutical Assumptions**

This section of the chapter identifies and briefly critiques the fundamental hermeneutical axioms at work in the logic of the Gender and Trinity debate. The basis of this examination is my agreement with Giles, that the way in which one decodes and applies Scripture is indicative of one's way of 'doing' theology.<sup>271</sup> I contend that the central logical structure around which the debate is arranged evinces a particular set of assumptions regarding the hermeneutical basis of theological knowledge. That is to say, the hermeneutical practice of using the Nicene tradition as a lever upon the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3 presumes: (i) that Scripture and the Creeds are continuous; (ii) that the knowledge of God is accessible in the form of statements that can be decoded and brought to bear upon one another; and (iii) that this knowledge pertains in the last analysis to the immanent Trinity. Any theological hermeneutic presupposes a model of understanding, namely an epistemology, and this in turn presupposes a model of that which understands, namely an anthropology. As such, it is my view that the hermeneutical practice of the Gender and Trinity debate implies that human beings are presently constituted as the kind of creatures with the potential to have detailed knowledge of the inner workings of God – essentially that God is not in the final analysis a mystery. In the final section of this chapter, I shall demonstrate that this stance is unwarranted in the light of the literature closest, hence most pertinent, to the central text of this controversy, 1 Corinthians 11:3.

#### **3.3.1 Scripture And The Creeds**

Although there is significant diversity between participants in the Gender and Trinity debate as to the particulars of their individual proposals, it remains possible to identify

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<sup>271</sup> Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, p.3.

a general logic to the various arguments. In the first place, nearly all of the contributors explicitly affirm a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity and a high view of Scripture and, whether implicitly or explicitly, most participants tend to assume that κεφαλή bears the same basic sense when applied to God vis-à-vis Christ as it does when applied to man vis-à-vis woman. Accordingly, the basic argument (see below) is a syllogistic form derived from these two premises.

### **The Basic Form Of The Argument**

1. *IF (from 1 Cor 11:3)*  
Man is to woman AS God is to Christ (i.e. κεφαλή)
2. *AND IF (from the differing interpretations of the Nicene Tradition)*  
God 'is'/'is not' in authority over Christ
3. *THEN (from 1 and 2)*  
Man 'is'/'is not' in authority over Woman

Implicit in this syllogism is a connection between the biblical materials and creedal orthodoxy such that any opinion excluded by the creeds is automatically excluded as a possible element of the frame of reference of the New Testament writers. In other words, according to this position, Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:3 cannot be an instance of naïve subordinationism,<sup>272</sup> since Scripture cannot innocently advocate positions that would later be classified as unorthodox. This assumption must be made, since otherwise there is no logical purpose in citing the Nicene formula, and the resultant inference (3 above) is invalid. In short, it appears that, whether implicitly or explicitly, the contributors to the Gender and Trinity debate treat Scripture and the creeds as fundamentally continuous. This presumption has very deep roots in the conservative evangelical tradition, although it is by no means universally accepted amongst evangelicals.

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<sup>272</sup> *Contra Barrett, First Corinthians*, p.249.

Nevertheless, I find it intriguing that this strategy appears, at first glance, to violate the principle of the formal priority of Scripture in evangelical theology – do not most evangelicals regard Scripture as having formal precedence over theology? If so, then why use the Nicene tradition to lever the interpretation of a contested text? It seems to me that part of the answer to this is to be found in conservative Protestant approaches to the relationship between the text, the Church and the Spirit in the process of interpretation. Charles Hodge describes this relationship thus:

If the Scriptures be a plain book, and the Spirit performs the functions of a teacher to all the children of God, it follows inevitably that they must agree in all essential matters in their interpretation of the Bible. And from that fact it follows that for an individual Christian to dissent from the faith of the universal Church...*is tantamount to dissenting from the Scriptures themselves.*<sup>273</sup>

In short, for Hodge, the creeds constitute an ecumenical interpretative consensus that, by definition, must correspond to the ‘plain’ sense of Scripture as taught by the Holy Spirit. In that sense, to dissent from the creeds is to dissent implicitly from Scripture. Although some present-day evangelicals would perhaps dispute Hodge’s argument,<sup>274</sup> the actual interpretative practice in this particular controversy evinces the persistence of this line of reasoning. Presumably therefore, the use of the doctrine of the Trinity as an interpretative control is regarded as valid because, as a tenet of the ‘faith of the universal Church’, it is understood to be an assured result of the *biblical interpretation* of the universal Church. Although this position is highly coherent, the preceding analysis of the Gender and Trinity debate provides very good evidence that the ‘faith of the universal Church’ has been surprisingly difficult to discern.

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<sup>273</sup> Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, p.184 (emphasis mine) see also Hodge’s comments regarding the Nicene Creed (p.462).

<sup>274</sup> See e.g. Donald Bloesch on the differences between empirical-propositional truth and what he terms the ‘biblical view’. Bloesch, *The Future Of Evangelical Christianity*, p.120.

By way of a brief comment upon Hodge's argument, his statement regarding the clarity of the biblical materials and the role of the Spirit in interpretation illustrates particularly well the point I shall go on to make with regard to the relationship between hermeneutics, epistemology and anthropology. The classic expression of the Protestant doctrine of perspicuity is to be found in Martin Luther, whose actual position is somewhat more nuanced than his commonly cited dictum that it is 'a shameless blasphemy that the scriptures are obscure'.<sup>275</sup> Luther actually argued for a twofold approach to perspicuity – an external perspicuity that is contingent upon Scripture's status as encoded revelation from God, and an internal perspicuity that corresponds to the ability or inability of the reader to apprehend its message. The classic expression of perspicuity assumes an epistemological disparity that turns on the categories of revelation and anthropology, with the Spirit functioning as the hermeneutical bridge between an intrinsically plain text and human beings who, according to Luther, 'have their hearts darkened'.<sup>276</sup> Calvin's (*Institutes* I.ix.3) position is amenable to a similar interpretation.<sup>277</sup>

### 3.3.2 Perspicuity And Mystery

In view of the connection between revelation, epistemology and anthropology, it is appropriate to ask how this bears upon the present dispute? Perhaps the first point to note is that none of the contributors appears to consider the question of '*what sort of knowledge and understanding(s) of God and of gender can Christians reasonably be expected to attain?*' Yet, this is significant insofar as the ease with which evangelicals move between the Bible and the creedal expressions presumes not only that such

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<sup>275</sup> Luther, *Bondage Of The Will*, esp. p.128.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

<sup>277</sup> 'We have no great certainty of the word itself, until it be confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit'.

knowledge is readily available to them but also that they are in a position of being able to understand and apply it correctly. In the first instance, this is not to state categorically that one cannot move back and forth hermeneutically in this manner; it is rather to observe that when I compare Patristic reflections upon the Trinity with the evangelical Gender and Trinity materials, my response as a reader in each case is somewhat different. By comparison with the instrumental and at times incautious manner in which evangelicals use the doctrine, I have the sense that the Patristic writers believe themselves to be intruders upon a mystery, hence they are more cautious. Hilary of Poitiers (*Trin.* II.2)<sup>278</sup> illustrates my point particularly well:

The errors of heretics and blasphemers force us to deal with unlawful matters, *to scale perilous heights, to speak unutterable words, to trespass on forbidden ground.* Faith ought in silence to fulfil the commandments, worshipping the Father, reverencing with Him the Son, abounding in the Holy Ghost, but we must strain the poor resources of our language to express thoughts too great for words. The error of others compels us to *err in daring to embody in human terms truths which ought to be hidden in the silent veneration of the heart.*

This difference of temper between evangelicals and the Patristic writers is no small matter for the Gender and Trinity conflict, since this debate is dominated by the question of the nature of the Nicene tradition. It appears to me that the Patristic writers' concept of mystery is at least partly responsible for this difference insofar as this category is systematically downplayed in Protestantism. Luther's broadside against the 'obscurity' of Scripture is, it seems to me, not targeted at difficulties of critical exegesis, but rather seeks to exclude the view that the text is in any way intrinsically obscure. It is, in effect, tantamount to a denial that theological language is necessarily mysterious. This *de facto* denial is why Luther attributes obscurities in interpretation principally to 'darkened' hearts, since this allows him to maintain that the texts are not mysterious in themselves. In short, *claritas scripturae* is a political-

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<sup>278</sup> Italics mine.



theological critique of the need for a class of professional hermeneutical intermediaries; it necessitates a view of the text that accords with the right of individual Christians to interpret scripture themselves. As such, *claritas scripturae*, as Luther articulates it, can be construed as a procrustean bed upon which scripture is made to lie. For fear of admitting uncertainty, the eschatological limits of theological knowledge are insufficiently acknowledged, and mystery is inadvertently expunged from the text.

In my opinion, when this suspicion of mystery is combined with the lingering after-effects of the Scottish common-sense tradition, beloved of the Princeton School and the early evangelicals, the result is the hermeneutical conduct of the Gender and Trinity dispute. Theological certainty is required to settle the debate, so it is presumed that such certainty exists, whether or not the literature that bears most closely upon the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3 (*viz.* 1 and 2 Corinthians) indicates anything to the contrary. What I will suggest in the remainder of the chapter is that this literature evinces a somewhat ambivalent approach on the part of Paul towards the knowledge of God, and in view of the preceding analysis I think that this places him substantially closer to the Patristic hermeneuts than to the contributors to the Gender and Trinity debate. My case for this is twofold. First, Paul's approach to theological epistemology in these epistles is contingent upon the way in which one happens to be constituted (anthropology) and that in these texts, one's constitution is contingent upon one's status in relation to the shifting aeons (eschatology). Second, Paul's eschatological approach to theological understanding is reflected in a thoroughgoing appreciation of the category mystery, with God as the *final* mystery. As will be seen, this bears in particular upon the practices and principles I have identified as being operative in the Gender and Trinity debate. This, of course, does

not prevent the Nicene doctrine from being brought to bear upon the interpretation of verses such as 1 Corinthians 11:3, but it does warrant a spirit of hermeneutical caution that is, to date, uncharacteristic of the dispute.

### **3.3.3 Section Summary**

This section of the chapter begins by identifying the central logical argument of the Gender and Trinity dispute. One of the implicit premises of this argument is that the Nicene formulations can be applied straightforwardly to the exegesis of New Testament texts. This premise is informed by bibliological assumptions regarding the nature and status of Scripture, and the clarity with which it can be regarded to 'speak'. Central to the assumption of perspicuity are beliefs about theological epistemology and ultimately of anthropology, namely that God's revelation is intrinsically clear but extrinsically opaque apart from the illuminating agency of the Spirit. However, as I point out, these notions originally encoded a particular set of concerns designed to safeguard the right to the private interpretation of Scripture, and in so doing they unduly minimise the notion of God as an ultimate mystery. Consequently, although I have not argued that the Nicene tradition has no bearing upon exegesis, I do suggest that the model of theological understanding presupposed by the hermeneutical practices of the Gender and Trinity conflict might entail assumptions regarding epistemology and anthropology that are at odds with those that of Paul. I will warrant this claim in the following section.

### **3.4 Response: Anthropology And Epistemology In 1 And 2 Corinthians**

In this section of the chapter I address the concerns identified in the previous section by arguing that anthropological and epistemological categories are interrelated in Paul's writings, such that one's 'way of knowing' is the epistemic corollary of one's

basic constitution – that epistemology is a function of anthropology. However, as I also argue, since Paul’s anthropology is conditioned by the shifting of the aeons, this means in the final analysis that one’s epistemology and anthropology are functions of eschatology.<sup>279</sup> My examination of texts is threefold. (i) I turn first to 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 and 2 Corinthians 4:4-6, after which (ii) I consider 1 Corinthians 2:6-3:3, and finally (iii) I offer a reading of 1 Corinthians 13 in which God is, ultimately, an eschatological mystery to be adored rather than a theological definition or axiom.

### 3.4.1 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 and 2 Corinthians 4:4-6

ὥστε ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν οὐδένα οἶδαμεν κατὰ σάρκα· εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν. ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ (2 Cor 5:16-17)

In this pair of verses, Paul posits a correspondence between epistemology and anthropology and situates it eschatologically; the determining feature of one’s identity in relation to the ages being the question of whether one is ἐν Χριστῷ. For those who participate in Christ, the former things (τὰ ἀρχαῖα) are in the past, what exists is a new creation (καινὴ κτίσις). Commensurate with this new creation is the recognition that the pattern of knowing characterised by the epithet κατὰ σάρκα, and which corresponds to the way of being prior to new creation in Christ, is now no longer (νῦν οὐκέτι) appropriate. Paul does not specify here explicitly what this new-creational knowing might comprise, nor does he use a specific epithet to describe existence prior to being in Christ, but it is a reasonable inference from the text to suggest that knowing κατὰ σάρκα is the epistemic complement of being κατὰ

<sup>279</sup> My indebtedness to J. Louis Martyn here ought to be apparent. See Martyn, ‘Epistemology At The Turn Of The Ages’ in *Theological Issues In The Letters Of Paul* (London: T.&T. Clark, 1997), 89-110.

σάρκα, namely a being constituted by σάρξ (cf. 1 Cor 3:1, 3) rather than reconstituted by πνεῦμα (2 Cor 3:17-18, 5:5).

However, this reading depends to some degree upon what the term κατὰ σάρκα might mean; whether it is used here adverbially or adjectivally. As such, its interpretation has been much debated. If the term is an adjective, then to know Christ κατὰ σάρκα is not to know Christ in a 'fleshly' manner, where it is the verb 'to know' that is modified, but, as Bultmann claimed, it is to know the 'fleshy' Christ or the Historical Jesus<sup>280</sup>. Whatever the term's syntactic significance, it is clear that it has a strongly eschatological dimension. As J. Louis Martyn<sup>281</sup> has correctly argued, the wider context (2 Cor 2:14-6:10) locates the subject matter of these verses at the eschatological 'turn of the ages', but this is also confirmed by the immediate context.

In the immediately preceding verses (vv.14-15), Paul argues that the eschatological fact that 'one died on behalf of all' (εἷς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν v.14), means that 'all died' (οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανεν). This death of all does not take immediate, physical effect, but rather is to be seen in the concrete enactment of a basic reorientation of life; one dies by 'no longer' (μηκέτι) living to oneself but to Christ (v.15) (cf. Rom 6:9-11). Verses 16 and 17 are to be regarded as a continuation of this theme. Just as the living (οἱ ζῶντες v.15) no longer live to themselves, so too those who know, find their 'knowing' reoriented by the eschatological 'no longer' (οὐκέτι v.16) of participation in Christ's death. Dying to a particular pattern of life entails dying to all that life involves (cf. the Law in Rom 7:4-6), including here a

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<sup>280</sup> See Ibid., p.91n12; also Bultmann, *Theology Of The New Testament*, vol. 1 (London: SCM, 1952), pp.236-39; Schweizer and Meyer, 'σάρξ, σαρκικός, σάρκινος' in *TDNT*, vol. 7, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 98-151, p.130. Bultmann actually argued that the adverbial and adjectival meanings of κατὰ σάρκα coincided when it came to the activity of knowing Christ in 2 Cor 5:16.

<sup>281</sup> Martyn, 'Epistemology', 21n12.

particular pattern of knowing.<sup>282</sup> Whilst in the past ‘we have known’ (ἐγνώκαμεν) according to flesh, ‘we now *no longer* know’ (νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκουμεν) in that way (v.16).

It is at this point that Paul introduces in verse 17 the crux of this section of his argument. Being ἐν Χριστῷ entails not only a passing away of τὰ ἀρχαῖα (v.17) i.e. a moment of dying (v.15), but paradoxically involves a new creation, which underwrites the possibility of a new pattern of knowing. Indeed, in this intersection of creation language, of dying and the eschatological reconfiguration of knowledge, Paul recapitulates themes that he has already discussed at length earlier in the epistle and in 1 Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor 2:6-3:3). An important example of this is 2 Corinthians 4:4-6. In this earlier passage, Paul draws a stark comparison between those whose minds the ‘god of this age’ (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου v.4, cf. 1 Cor 2:6, 8:5) has blinded to the gospel, and those whom God, the creator, illuminates (v.6). As such, Paul merely extends his previous contrast between the impotent and veiled knowledge of God in Moses (2 Cor 3:12, 15) and the fact that God’s unveiled revelation in the face of Christ has the power to transform ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν those who behold it (v.18).

What is interesting about 2 Corinthians 4:6 is that this epistemological contrast is rooted in the eschatological-anthropological duality between creation and new creation that appears also in 2 Corinthians 5:17. There is first the evident allusion to Genesis 1:3, ‘the God who said, “light will shine out of darkness”’ (ἐκ σκότους φῶς

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<sup>282</sup> It is important to see here that this undermines Bultmann’s reading of knowing Christ according to the flesh as knowing the Historical Jesus. Paul’s point here is not that the Easter faith renders Christ inaccessible to human scrutiny κατὰ σάρκα. It is that those who participate in Christ have *died* to that way of knowing.

λάμπει 2 Cor 4:6).<sup>283</sup> This reference to the original creative word is eschatologically paralleled by the statement that God has again ‘spoken’ the same command, this time illuminating ‘the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Christ’ (v.6). James Dunn<sup>284</sup> regards this reference to the glory of God to be occasioned by Paul’s reflection upon his own conversion experience, in which, at least insofar as is narrated in Acts 9:3-4 and 22:6-7, the revelation of Christ was accompanied by a blinding light. Dunn’s observation notwithstanding, the principal reference in this verse is neither to Christology nor to Paul’s conversion experience, but to a Christological epistemology – to the *knowledge of God in the face of Christ*. This epistemology turns on God’s transformative reconstitution, or perhaps revivification (2 Cor 3:6), of certain basic faculties of knowledge (καρδία, νοήματα), in which hardened thoughts (3:14), veiled hearts (3:15) and blinded thoughts (4:4) give way to an unveiled face (3:18) and an illuminated heart (4:6).

### 3.4.2 1 Corinthians 2:6-3:3

In my opinion, the eschatological locatedness of knowledge is equally evident in 1 Corinthians, and especially in 1 Corinthians 2:6-3:3 and 13. 1 Corinthians 2:6-3:3 is particularly interesting inasmuch as, as shall be seen, it provides the frame for the later material. Paul begins by expanding upon a theme that he has already introduced in the passage immediately prior to this one, namely that his preaching of Christ crucified to the Corinthians (1 Cor 2:2) entailed the avoidance of a merely human pattern of wisdom (v.5). Consequently, this necessitated the rejection of eloquent words (v.1, 4) in order that the faith of the Corinthian community may be seen to be

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<sup>283</sup> If λάμπει (3ps, future, active, indicative of λάμπω) is read as volitive, then its meaning would be ‘light shine out of darkness’, which is nearer in sense to Gen 1:3 in the LXX (γενηθήτω φῶς i.e. ‘Let there be light’), however, if it is predictive then its meaning would be ‘light will shine out of darkness’.

<sup>284</sup> Dunn, *The Theology Of Paul The Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p.290.

constituted by the power of God (v.5). Yet it is not that Paul has no concern for wisdom, on the contrary he speaks θεοῦ σοφίαν ἐν μυστηρίῳ (v.7)<sup>285</sup>. However, this ‘wisdom in a mystery’ is unable to be comprehended from the eschatological perspective of this age, that is, by using the wisdom of the rulers of this age who crucified Christ and whom Paul rejects as ‘being abolished’ (καταργουμένων) (v.6). As the wisdom of God however, it can be known; it is spiritually discerned (πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται) (v.15) in the only way in which the ‘things of God’ (τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ) may be made known, by God’s πνεῦμα (v.11).

Nevertheless, the relationship between Paul’s eschatology, epistemology and anthropology is difficult to discern here. Not the least difficult is the fact that his two central sets of designations are themselves likely to be characteristic Corinthian epithets borrowed here by Paul.<sup>286</sup> The basic distinction between types of ‘knower’ functions in terms of a double contrast between those Paul designates as τέλειοι (‘mature/perfect’ 1 Cor 2:6), who are also designated πνευματικός/πνευματικοί (‘spiritual/spiritual’ 1 Cor 2:15 sg. 3:1), and those designated otherwise. In contrast with the term ‘mature ones’ is νήπιοι (‘infants’ 3:1), whereas the opposing term to πνευματικός/πνευματικοί is occasionally ψυχικός (2:14) or ‘natural’, and also occasionally σάρκινοι/σαρκικοί, that is ‘fleshly’ (3:1, 3). As Gregory Sterling<sup>287</sup> has correctly observed, it is debatable whether these sets of opposing terms, τέλειοι vs. νήπιοι, πνευματικός vs. ψυχικός, and πνευματικός vs. σάρκιος, constitute for Paul three pairs of opposites or two. In either case, it is possible to move towards an

<sup>285</sup> The use of μυστήριον in v. 7 to refer to the wisdom of God, parallels its likely use in reference to the proclamation of namely Christ crucified (v.2), as μυστήριον (mss traditions ℘<sup>46vid</sup>, κ\*, A, C, ar, r, sy<sup>p</sup>, and bo) of God (v.1). In other traditions the term used in v. 1 is μαρτύριον (testimony).

<sup>286</sup> See, Horsley, ‘Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos: Distinctions Of Spiritual Status Amongst The Corinthians’, *Harvard Theological Review* 69:3/4 (1976), 269-88; Thiselton, *New Horizons In Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), p.224; Martyn, ‘Epistemology’, p.100.

<sup>287</sup> Sterling, ‘Wisdom Among The Perfect: Creation Traditions In Alexandrian Judaism And Corinthian Christianity’, *Novum Testamentum* 37:4 (1995), 355-84, p.368.

appreciation of the significance of this terminology by discerning one of Paul's central points in this passage; 'knowing' is a function of an anthropological category, a faculty of knowledge. He expresses it in the following manner,

τίς γὰρ οἶδεν ἀνθρώπων τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ; οὕτως καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐδεὶς ἔγνωκεν εἰ μὴ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ. (1 Cor 2:11)

τὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in verse 11a is often poorly rendered, particularly so by the expression 'what is truly human' (*NRSV*), insofar as this obscures the fact that the expression denotes not that which is characteristic of humanity *qua* humanity, but of a human being *qua* an individual. As such, Paul's question here should be understood as a rhetorical reminder of the fact that no human being automatically has access to that which goes on within another; only that which is unique and internal to an individual, the person's spirit, can know that (cf. Aristotle, *Anim.* I.2.404.B).<sup>288</sup> This is, amongst other things, an admission that human beings lack the faculty to read minds, and Paul's statement in verse 11b is an extension, by analogy, of this fact. Only the Spirit of God can know that which is 'of God' (*viz.* 'the mind of Christ' v.16), and hence, just as human beings possess depths accessible only to themselves, so too there are τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ ('depths of God' v.10), accessible to the divine Spirit, who scrutinises not only God's depths, but everything that exists.<sup>289</sup>

The dual significance of πνεῦμα for Paul's epistemological framework in this passage can now be made clear. By contrasting the πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου with πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ, Paul's point does not suggest that the πνεῦμα in each case is the same basic 'stuff', although it may be. Rather, his point is functional; just as πνεῦμα designates the substantive, or material, basis of the faculty of human thought and

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<sup>288</sup> Aristotle cites Plato's attribution to the soul of a share in the elements (στοιχεῖα) of that which it knows, on the principle that like may know like (γινώσκεισθαι τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον). See Aristotle, *De Anima* I.2.404.B-05.B.

<sup>289</sup> There are perhaps similarities with certain Stoic notions here. See the discussion in ch.4.



perception, not only here but in ancient physics and medicine<sup>290</sup> (cf. Philo, *Det.* 83)<sup>291</sup>, so too God's πνεῦμα is the agent of true apprehension and understanding of τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ (v.11). Hence, the πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου could be described as that which constitutes human cognitive faculties in a manner commensurate with the wisdom of this age (v.6).<sup>292</sup> As it is an elemental feature of human makeup constituted by the *pattern* of this age (cf. 1 Cor 7:31), it is powerless to know that which can only be discerned spiritually (πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται v.14). In fact, it is the organ of discernment and perception for the ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος (v.14), whereas the πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ is the eschatological gift (v.12) by which its recipient, the πνευματικός (v.15) becomes the scrutiniser of all things, whilst being at the same time a mystery to those without God's gift (v.15b). In this way, the Spirit's role as the revealer of God's mysteries is twofold; the Spirit lies behind the mystery (1 Cor 2:10, 12), and also constitutes the faculty of comprehension. This, Paul terms πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες ('interpreting spiritual things by spiritual things' v. 13).<sup>293</sup>

<sup>290</sup> See Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), pp.21-25 and esp. 63ff.

<sup>291</sup> '[T]o the faculty which streams forth from the fountain of reason (ἐκ τῆς λογικῆς) breath (πνεῦμα) has been assigned' Philo, *Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Solet* 83.

<sup>292</sup> Cf. Martyn, 'Epistemology', p.100.

<sup>293</sup> Martyn's (Ibid., p.99) translation here is basically correct. However, there are other possible interpretations of the expression depending upon the three possible senses of συγκρίνοντες (pres. act. part. of συγκρίνω) and whether πνευματικοῖς is a masculine or neuter plural dative. Thiselton provides an excellent analysis of the six alternatives, but I think that the themes of Paul's argument explored here favour Martyn's view. See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, pp.264-66.



**Table 3.1: Anthropology And Epistemology In 1 Cor 2:6-16**

Epithet(s)	ψυχικός (v.6)	πνευματικός (v.6)
Eschatological Location	This age (v.6)	
Object of Knowledge	The things of a man (v.11)	The things of God (v.11) That given to us by God (v.12) The mind of the Lord (v.16a)
Discourse and Manner of Apprehension	In words taught by human wisdom (v.13a)	In (words) taught by the Spirit (v.13a)
Faculty of Comprehension	Man's πνεῦμα (v.11) The Spirit of the World (v.12)	πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ (v.11) The Mind of Christ (v.16b)
Response to τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ (v.11).	Misunderstanding, rejection as foolishness (v.14)	Spiritual discernment (v.13b,14)

Returning to the question of Paul's three sets of anthropological terms, it is possible to begin to discern the contours of his categories by classifying his epistemological references and tabulating them (see Table 3.1 above) against the two principal epithets in verses 6-16, πνευματικός and ψυχικός. This is not to neglect the πνευματικός-σάρκικος (1 Cor 3:1-3) or the τέλειοι-νήπιοι (vv. 2:6, 3:1) contrasts, but it is to suggest that the crux of Paul's argument is located in these two principal terms. What is more, although there are important questions to consider concerning these terms in relation to the Corinthians' twin-track religious epistemology and community ethic,<sup>294</sup> the chief task here is to outline their place within *Paul's* argument in response to the Corinthians. This is especially the case, given that Paul reuses the terms later in the epistle (1 Cor 15:44-46). However,

<sup>294</sup> E.g. Did the Corinthians have a tripartite anthropology, πνεῦμα-ψυχή-σάρξ, which underwrote the πνευματικός-ψυχικός distinction? Or is there perhaps a distinction to be made between the mortal soul and immortal spirit here? See Horsley, 'Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos', p.274; also more generally Chamblin, 'Psychology' in *Dictionary Of Paul And His Letters*, ed. Hawthorne *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 765-75.

discerning Paul's argument here also entails discerning some sense of his rhetorical purpose.

Paul's rhetoric here is designed first to correct and then to humble the self-designated Corinthian elite. Consequently, his strategy is to destabilise their perception of the significance of these terms so as to reorient their understanding of themselves in relation to one another.<sup>295</sup> As he indicates in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, the difference between knowing πνευματικῶς and knowing ψυχικῶς turns upon the possession of the appropriate noetic faculty, God's Spirit, and is evinced by one's understanding of the mysteries of God in the crucified Christ (1 Cor 2:1-3, 7). What this means is that, for Paul, there is no twin-track anthropology and epistemology *within* Christianity; all Christians are πνευματικοί; it is the unbeliever who is the genuine ψυχικός.<sup>296</sup> But the corollary of this is that failing to recognise other Christians as co-equal sharers in the divine πνεῦμα (cf. 1 Cor 12:13) amounts to a failure to act like a πνευματικός by exercising spiritual discernment of spiritual things (πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες 1 Cor 2:13). Instead, it is to know in the manner of those without the Spirit.

In the conclusion of this section, 1 Cor 3:1-3, Paul introduces a third anthropological term (σάρκινοι/σάρκικοι) partly as an attempt to ensure that his point is not misunderstood. ψυχικός is a loaded term for the Corinthians, apparently denoting something quite different for them (a non-elite Christian) than it does for Paul (someone who 'knows' like an unbeliever). Paul here eschews it, designating instead the Corinthians by a term that within their rubric could not fail to be seen as a

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<sup>295</sup> Margaret Mitchell has made extensive use of the category of deliberative rhetoric to argue that in 1 Corinthians Paul decentres individual self interest in favour of a reappraisal of one's status vis-à-vis the group. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991).

<sup>296</sup> See Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p.101.

designation for a pre-Christ, pre-Spirit mode of knowledge. This ironically undermines the Corinthians' own use of the τέλειοι-νήπιοι terminology.<sup>297</sup> The one who claims to be τέλειος and thus πνευματικός, who claims a spiritual faculty *different in kind* from other Christians, does not yet know how he or she needs to know (cf. 1 Cor 8:2). The divisions these people generate result in jealousy and dissension (1 Cor 3:3, cf. 13:4), but not love (1 Cor 2:9, cf. ch. 13). As such, the so-called τέλειοι are, in fact, identical to those whom they glory over; they are all νήπιοι (3:1), behaving like unbelievers, and fit only for milk (3:2).<sup>298</sup> One implication of Paul's argument here is that Christians live in the tension generated by being uniquely able to instantiate the epistemic possibilities of two contrasting eschatological periods. Although possessing the faculty necessary to live like πνευματικοί, they can also live and know like those without the Spirit, knowing κατὰ σάρκα (2 Cor 5:16), even though now it is no longer appropriate to do so.

### 3.4.3 1 Corinthians 13

In 1 Corinthians 2:6-3:3, and 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 Paul's argument indicates that he regarded the specific modes of apprehension and understanding commensurate with knowing the mysteries of God in Christ to entail a pneumatically reconstituted noetic faculty. However, as will be seen here in chapter 13, Paul also sets eschatological limits upon such knowledge. The initial verses of the chapter continue the topic of pneumatic speech, which Paul establishes in 1 Corinthians 12:28-31, whereas the chapter as a whole establishes the ethos and tone for the material which follows in chapter 14:1-18. As such, it is integral to the flow of Paul's argument at this stage of the epistle. Its location within the *inclusio* formed by the two imperatives, 'be

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<sup>297</sup> Sterling, 'Wisdom Among The Perfect', p.369.

<sup>298</sup> Horsley, 'Pneumatikos vs. Psychikos', p.288.

zealously concerned for' (ζηλοῦτε)<sup>299</sup> spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:31, 14:1), ought not to be taken as evidence that it is an interpolation, a parenthetical comment or an excursus. The references to tongues (13:1), prophecy and knowledge (v.2), being abolished or ceasing (13:8-10) are far from inimical to Paul's subsequent teaching on the significance of certain forms of pneumatic speech, but rather cohere with it, providing an eschatological and epistemological context for gifts to be regarded appropriately within a community ethic of love. They are a speaking and a knowing 'from a part' (ἐκ μέρους) (v.9), whereas in the age to come, when the τέλειος comes (v.10) and God is 'all in all' (1 Cor 15:28), they will be abolished.

Paul's argument in this passage takes the form of an encomium to love, structured according to three distinct sections, in verses 1-3, 4-8a and 8b-13. The theme of the first section (vv.1-3) is the insufficiency of the χαρίσματα (cf. 1 Cor 12:31) apart from ἀγάπη. This section itself further subdivides according to a repeated pattern of:

ἐὰν...[precondition(s)]...,  
ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω,...[ineffectual, even negative result] (vv. 1, 2, 3).

In verse 1, Paul begins with language. Apart from love, even the most exalted instance of the exercise of language, the glossolalic speech of heaven itself, is akin in its significance only to metallic noise.<sup>300</sup> Likewise, one who has the singular distinction of being able to prophesy (cf. 1 Cor 14:6), to understand the interpretation of all mysteries (τὰ μυστήρια πάντα), to grasp all knowledge (γνώσις) and to

<sup>299</sup> See Carson, *Showing The Spirit: A Theological Exposition Of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), pp.56-58; also Thiselton's excellent discussion of the various translation issues here Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.1025.

<sup>300</sup> Gordon Fee regards 'tongues of men and angels' as referring to two distinct pneumatic dialects, inspired human speech and the language of heaven. He cites the *Testament of Job* 48-50, as evidence that this could have been the Corinthians' stance towards glossolalia. Dale Martin rejects the evidence of the *Testament of Job* 48-50 on text-critical grounds, instead following Christopher Forbes in arguing that the comparison is between human speech and pneumatic, i.e. heavenly speech. See Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.630; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.267n3; also Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.1025.

exercise all faith (πίστις) is nevertheless *nothing* without love.<sup>301</sup> Indeed, Paul concludes that, apart from love, even the most extravagant examples of sacrificial generosity, which might otherwise be possible grounds for boasting (cf. ἵνα καυχῆσωμαι ‘in order that I might boast’<sup>302</sup> v. 3b), do nothing to benefit the giver.

What follows in the second section of the encomium (vv.4-8a) is a list of the qualities that love instantiates. Some of these qualities, especially the ‘negatively’ expressed ones, such as ‘love ... is *not* self-inflated’ ([ἡ ἀγάπη] ... οὐ φυσιοῦται v.4), indicate that Paul here has in his sights some of the faults that he has already identified in the Corinthians’ behaviour (cf. ἡ γνῶσις φυσιοῖ, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ 1 Cor 8:1). However, it ought also to be noted that Paul’s description of love ‘not seeking its own interests’ (v.5), and ‘bearing all things’ (v.7) deeply resonates with Christ-like self-giving. Such love is the *modus operandi* of God in Christ, as Michael Gorman writes,

*The criterion of the Spirit’s activity is cruciformity, understood as Christ-like love in the edification of others rather than oneself.*<sup>303</sup>

In the third and final section of the encomium (vv.8b-13) Paul shifts the focus from spiritual gifts within the context of love, to love and the epistemic status of the gifts within a temporal perspective conditioned by the eschaton. The transitional statement ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει (v.8a)<sup>304</sup> concludes the argument of the previous section by introducing the theme of the eschatological persistence, and hence

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<sup>301</sup> The repeated use of πᾶς in the first clause by contrast with οὐθείς in the final clause of this sentence suggests that Paul is using hyperbole here. Carson terms this as ‘playing with hypothetical superlatives’, Carson, *Showing The Spirit*, p.59.

<sup>302</sup> Various ms evidence attests to one or another form of καίω ‘burn’ here. καυθησομαι features in C, D, F, G, L, marginal reading from sy<sup>h</sup>, and καυθησωμαι in Ψ, ℣, καυθη in sy<sup>h</sup>. The reading here occurs in ℞<sup>46</sup>, κ, Α, Β.

<sup>303</sup> Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality Of The Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), p.60. Italics original.

<sup>304</sup> Some mss have ἐκπιπτει ‘falls off’ (κ<sup>2</sup>, C<sup>3</sup>, D, F, G, Ψ, 1881, ℣, lat.) as opposed to ‘falls apart/collapses’. See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.1060.

exalted importance, of love, in contrast with gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge (v.8b). As in the first section of this passage, Paul's point here is tightly argued. It takes the form of a fourfold scheme of temporal contrasts, three of which relate to epistemology across the ages (vv. 8-10, 12), and one which is an illustration from human development of the principle he seeks to show (v.9).

What should be noted from this arrangement (see Table 3.2 below) is that these temporal contrasts do not merely parallel each other; they also intersect, expand, and qualify. The relationship between the statements on prophecy and knowledge now and at the eschaton, and the analogy of speaking, understanding and reasoning as a νήπιος (v.11) and as an adult, is particularly tightly argued. Although here νήπιος (v.11) does not bear the same significance as it does earlier,<sup>305</sup> its occurrence in proximity to τέλειος (v.10) creates resonances with other passages in which the terms are significant yet contrasting features of the terminological landscape (1 Cor 2:6-3:3). This resonance helps to emphasise the close synthetic parallelism between verses 9-10 and the analogy of verse 11. Just as Paul used to speak as a child and know as a child knows (v.11), so too gifts of prophetic speech and knowledge (v.9) are presently ἐκ μέρους (v.9, 12b) – 'in part' or 'fragmentary'. As human development required Paul 'to have done with'<sup>306</sup> the things of childhood upon reaching majority, so too that which is fragmentary (τὸ ἐκ μέρους v. 10) in this current age, namely certain patterns of speech and knowledge, 'will be done away with'<sup>307</sup> at some future point.

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<sup>305</sup> In chapter 3:1 νήπιοι is used metaphorically to denote literal adults who are figuratively νήπιοι *in Christ*, whereas here it forms part of an analogy, in which its sense is its primary literal sense.

<sup>306</sup> κατήργηκα 1ps perf. act. ind. of καταργέω.

<sup>307</sup> καταργηθήσεται 3ps fut. pass. ind. of καταργέω.

**Table 3.2: Epistemology And Eschatology in 1 Cor 13:9-12**

PERIOD A: Former	PERIOD B: Latter	
Initial Situation Pertaining	Transition	Subsequent Change Enacted
(9) ἔκ μέρους γάρ γινώσκομεν καὶ ἔκ μέρους προφητεύομεν·	(10) ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον,	τὸ ἔκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται.
(11) ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος, ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος, ἐλογιζόμην ὡς νήπιος·	ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ,	κατήργηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου.
(12) βλέπομεν γάρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι,	τότε δε	πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον·
ἄρτι γινώσκω ἔκ μέρους,	τότε δε	ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην.

Given the theological context of this epistle at the 'turn of the ages'<sup>308</sup>, the abolition of epistemic gifts should probably be seen in the wider frame of reference of a number of eschatological abolitions in 1 Corinthians, beginning with 1 Corinthians 1:28. The abolition of the rulers of this age has already started, yet it is incomplete (1 Cor 2:6)<sup>309</sup>; not all rule, authority and power has yet been made subject to Christ (1 Cor 15:24-5). However, once this occurs, the final enemy, ὁ θάνατος (15:26), will be done away with by the resurrection, when one receives the incorruptible σῶμα πνευματικόν (15:44, cf. 15:50-54), fashioned in the image of Christ (15:47). It is interesting that the epistemological shift of the cessation of the gifts of pneumatic speech and knowledge coincides with this concomitant eschatological shift in the material basis of human constitution, viz. anthropology.

<sup>308</sup> Martyn, 'Epistemology', p.92.

<sup>309</sup> Note the shifts in tense voice and mood. *Wholly-future* (fut. pass. ind.) vis-à-vis the eschatological abolition of certain gifts, *wholly-past* (perf. act. ind.) vis-à-vis the abolition of childhood things, and *inaugurated* (pres. pass. part. καταργουμένων) vis-à-vis the eschatological abolition of the rulers of this age in 1 Cor 2:6.



Paul's focus shifts slightly in 1 Corinthians 13:12, when he moves beyond describing the cessation of the epistemic gifts, and hints at the nature of the eschatological reality that they prefigure. The verbal idea by which he describes present realities shifts from 'knowing' and 'prophesying' (v.9) to the activity of 'seeing' God (v.12). Yet at present this seeing is indirect, being δι' ἑσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι, and contrasts with the age to come in which such seeing will be πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον. It is highly likely that at this point Paul alludes to Num 12:6-8 (LXX), in which God speaks with Moses 'mouth to mouth', clearly (ἐν εἴδει) and 'not by means of riddles' (οὐ δι' αἰνιγμάτων). Paul was by no means the only interpreter to reflect upon this verse, Philo also cites Num 12:6-8 (cf. *Leg. All.* III.103; *Heres* 200). However, for Philo an enigmatical expression symbolically encodes hidden truths that are, in principle, currently apprehensible using higher noetic faculties (cf. *Spec. Leg.* I.200). For Paul, the αἰνίγμα is eschatologically conditioned; the constitutive precondition enabling full understanding has yet to be met.

Richard Hays<sup>310</sup> remarks that Paul here indicates that, at the eschaton, God will speak to us face to face. In my opinion, this slightly misunderstands Paul's point. If close attention is paid to the subject and the verb in 1 Corinthians 13:12 (βλέπομεν),<sup>311</sup> both of which are also implied in the second clause of the sentence, then one sees that Paul actually argues that at the eschaton *we behold* God face to face, not that God speaks to us in that manner. This means that the allusion here is perhaps more complex than Hays acknowledges, obliquely referencing not only passages in which God speaks to Moses στόμα κατὰ στόμα (Num 12:8 LXX), but

<sup>310</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, ed. Mays and Achtemeier (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), p.230.

<sup>311</sup> 1pp pres. act. ind. of βλέπω

also passages in which individuals see God (or God's messenger) πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον (cf. Jacob in Gen 32:31 LXX, also Gideon in Judges 6:22 LXX).<sup>312</sup> J. Louis Martyn suggests that the immediate occasion for the πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον expression is to be found in the likely claims of the Corinthian pseudo-apostles to have seen God face to face during ecstatic experiences<sup>313</sup>.

Whether he has this situation in mind or not, Paul evidently regards the present, partial, indirect and verbal knowledge in the χαρίσματα (12:31) to be continuous with the constitution of redeemed, yet pre-glorified humanity, but discontinuous with the future, complete, unmediated and visual knowledge of the face of God. As such, epistemology and anthropology remain commensurate with each other in every eschatological period, including at the juncture of the ages in which those with the πνεῦμα no longer know κατὰ σάρκα, and yet only know ἐκ μέρους and ἐν αἰνίγματι. Nevertheless, there is also continuity across the eschatological divide; this argument is an encomium to love, and, for Paul, the love which *will* speechlessly contemplate the *visio Dei* is, along with faith and hope, the sole appropriate context for all *present* Christian knowledge and speech (v.13).

This focus upon love hints at the personal dimension of theological knowledge. French philosopher Jean-Luc Marion<sup>314</sup> has rightly observed the place that love has within a phenomenology of knowing *persons*. Love begins the process of opening up persons to the possibility of self-disclosure, largely in the same way that a loving gaze dissolves the *aporia* created when persons are treated as objects of scrutiny. Under scrutiny a person is visible but only insofar as he or she is an object

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<sup>312</sup> Indeed, Hays fails to mention that the parallel between Num 12:8 and 1 Cor 13:12 is inexact. Whilst Num 12:8 describes the face-to-face encounter as στόμα κατὰ στόμα, 1 Cor 13:12 describes it in terms of πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον.

<sup>313</sup> Martyn, 'Epistemology', p.103.

<sup>314</sup> Marion, *Prolegomena To Charity* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002).

to be perused, but the loving gaze operates according to quite a different economy of knowledge – the recipient of one’s gaze becomes invisible as an object *per se*, but knowable in himself or herself. Paul has already hinted at such a dynamic when he states that if someone loves God then that person has already been known by God (ἐγνωσται 1 Corinthians 8:3)<sup>315</sup>; the priority of God’s knowledge is assumed and we are placed in a situation of having to choose to return the gaze. Consequently, it is no surprise that the element of continuity between the period of eschatological inauguration and the eschaton, at which the mystery of God will be finally disclosed, is love. Paradoxically, it is at this point where knowledge, like virginity, passes away at the moment of consummation – that we come to know as we are known (τότε δε ἐπιγνώσομαι καθὼς καὶ ἐπεγνώσθην 1 Cor 13:12b). Marion<sup>316</sup> expresses it thus:

A gaze is not truly accomplished unless, beyond objects, it sees a counter-gaze – which is to say, unless it sees a naught of object (*un néant d’objet*), a pure invisible.

#### 3.4.4 Section Summary

This section serves as an initial exegetical response to my observation that the Gender and Trinity dispute is premised upon a view of God’s revelation as presently-accessible and non-mysterious, with the corollary being that human beings with the aid of the Spirit are commensurate to the task of decoding and applying this revelation. The examination of three significant passages in the Corinthian correspondence has shown that Paul’s view of revelation, epistemology and anthropology was more complicated and nuanced than this. Paul situates Christians in the overlap of two aeons. Anthropologically, they bear within their own constitution the ambiguity of eschatological transition; they have the πνεῦμα and are, in that

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<sup>315</sup> 3ps perf. pass. ind. of γινώσκω

<sup>316</sup> Marion, *Prolegomena To Charity*, p.167.

sense, πνευματικοί, but they do not yet have the σῶμα πνευματικόν. Epistemologically, this means that their theological knowledge is bounded both above and below. On the one hand, their possession of the πνεῦμα opens up new epistemic possibilities to them – they can exercise ‘spiritual discernment of spiritual things’ (πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες 1 Cor 2:13), and they need not know κατὰ σάρκα any longer (2 Cor 5:17). On the other hand, God remains the *final* mystery, the disclosure of which coincides temporally with the cessation of the present eschatological tension – when the ambiguity of eschatological transition is resolved and God is ‘all in all’ (1 Cor 15:28).

### 3.5 Conclusion

In summary, the argument of this chapter has been concerned with the hermeneutics of the Gender and Trinity debate. This controversy is one strand of the evangelical disagreement regarding the places of men and women in the Church and home. The deadlock regarding the pastoral, theological, exegetical and philological aspects of the controversy<sup>317</sup> led some evangelical gender traditionalists to bring the doctrine of the Trinity to bear as a hermeneutical lever upon the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:3. The Gender and Trinity debate was initiated when certain evangelical feminists equated this argument with the ancient heresy of subordinationism.

The debate itself<sup>318</sup> concerns the question of whether the relatively novel theological description of ‘role subordination’ was covered by the ancient proscription against subordinationism. In general, gender traditionalists distinguish between ‘essential’ and ‘functional’ subordination – condemning the one, but admitting the other. However, most evangelical feminists regard all forms of subordination to be

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<sup>317</sup> See ch.2.

<sup>318</sup> Section 3.2.

proscribed, usually because they regard this stance as warranted by the ancient definitions, but occasionally because they believe that eternal functional subordination logically entails some form of 'essential' subordination. Although this debate is complicated by an occasional lack of precision regarding theological nomenclature, it is nevertheless possible to isolate a common logical sequence within nearly all of the arguments.

In my analysis of the hermeneutical assumptions of the basic form of the Gender and Trinity argument, I argued that the dispute assumes that (i) Scripture and the Creeds are continuous, (ii) theological knowledge is propositional and (iii) that this knowledge pertains to the immanent Trinity.<sup>319</sup> This 'comprehensive hermeneutical realism' is rooted in the Reformational doctrine of perspicuity, and it has two implicit premises. The first is that God's revelation is not intrinsically mysterious; the second is the anthropological corollary of this, namely that human beings are able by means of the Spirit to have detailed knowledge of the inner workings of God. This knowledge is presumed to be sufficiently clear as to warrant bringing it to bear upon the interpretation of biblical passages in a relatively straightforward manner.

The final section of the chapter responded to these hermeneutical assumptions by examining Paul's epistemology and anthropology in 1 and 2 Corinthians.<sup>320</sup> It was found that Paul's approach to theological knowledge is less direct and more nuanced than that in evidence in the Gender and Trinity dispute. For Paul, Christians embody the contrasting possibilities of two eschatological periods, one of which remains to be consummated. This being the case, theological epistemology is for the present a necessarily convoluted process; one knows; yet one knows neither fully nor directly.

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<sup>319</sup> Section 3.3.

<sup>320</sup> Section 3.4.

### 3.5.1 The Significance Of This Conclusion

Perhaps the principal point to be inferred on the basis of my exegesis of Pauline texts is that Paul's attitude towards God as an eschatological mystery is somewhat closer to the temper and assumptions of Patristic Trinitarian reflection than it is to the present conflict. I perceive relatively little hermeneutical 'fear and trembling' in the evangelical debate by comparison with Hilary's (*Trin.* II.2) evident anxiety that circumstances have forced him to speak about that 'which ought to be hidden in the silent veneration of the heart'. In short, the ill-tempered and combative tone of much of the evangelical interaction appears to be premised upon a type of certainty with which I am far from convinced either Paul or Hilary would have agreed.

For a community such as the evangelical community, which prides itself upon its fidelity to the biblical materials, the notion that one's epistemology and hermeneutical praxis run counter to that of the materials most closely related to the text one happens to be debating ought to serve as a corrective to these polemical tendencies. According to Paul's assessment, God's actions in the world, and by extension the God who acts, are temporally inscrutable; they are eschatological  $\mu\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\alpha$  (Rom 11:25, 1 Cor 2:6, 13:2, 15:51), the outline of which God has revealed in Christ through the Spirit. The detail of this is reserved for a future moment of final disclosure, which is coterminous with a future moment of final transformation. In the light of this, I suggest that Paul might have regarded certain contributors to the headship and Trinity dispute to be suffering from an over-realised epistemology and that, far from engaging them in debate, he might have suggested that they locate themselves and their hermeneutical praxis more appropriately vis-à-vis the shifting aeons.

None of this is to imply that evangelicals are wrong to address the question of the connection between the doctrine of God and human gender. 1 Corinthians 11:3 *does* suggest some form of analogy between the God-Christ and man-woman relationships. The question remains as to what the nature of this analogy might be and how it might bear upon the question of gender roles in the present-day. Given that Paul situates both anthropology and theological epistemology in an eschatological, hence cosmological, context, I want to suggest such an approach as a suitable exegetical starting point. To this end, the following two chapters of the thesis (i) explore Paul's eschatological perspective upon God, the Church and the world, and (ii) situate an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 in this context.

## 4. SETTING THE EXEGETICAL CONTEXT: GOD, CHURCH AND WORLD IN 1 CORINTHIANS

### 4.1 Introduction

#### 4.1.1 Summary Of Previous Chapters

The preceding chapters introduce the question I seek to address, namely how to attain to a theological understanding of human gender. This question derives from my analysis of the dispute within (Anglophone) evangelicalism regarding gender roles – the headship controversy. As was seen in the initial literature survey, this dispute ranges over several theological subdisciplines and concerns the interpretation of many biblical texts. However, one strand of the dispute, the gender and Trinity argument, constitutes a definable case study in the hermeneutics of gender, since it concerns the interpretation of one biblical text in particular – 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

Some evangelical feminists have argued that since 1 Corinthians 11:3 uses the Greek term κεφαλή to designate both God vis-à-vis Christ and also man vis-à-vis woman, those who teach the subordination of one sex to another are logically committed to believe also in the subordination of the Son to the Father within the Trinity. Since they reject the latter position as heretical, they argue that the former position is untenable. Their traditionalist opponents reject this argument, claiming instead that the classical Trinitarian doctrines proscribe only *essential* subordination, the belief that the Son is of a subordinate *nature* to the Father. They propose instead the *functional* subordination of the Son, and by extension of females.

This debate is interesting hermeneutically because it illustrates the relationship between Scripture, theology and interpretation in evangelicalism. However, invoking the doctrine of God in this manner is not a successful strategy, either in terms of the



outcomes of the debate or its content. In terms of outcomes, it fails to resolve the gender dispute, because I suspect that it was invoked as a way of outmanoeuvring one's opponents rather than generating consensus. In terms of coherence, it fails to come to terms with Paul's somewhat provisional theological epistemology in 1 Corinthians. In short, I suspect that the hermeneutical principles at work in this debate are at odds with the stance of the epistle in which the central text of the argument is situated.

#### 4.1.2 The Argument Of This Chapter

None of this is to suggest that the contributors to the gender and Trinity dispute are mistaken in seeing the relevance of the doctrine of God to the question of gender. Rather, it is to argue that the connection between God and gender presumed by Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is not in the first instance framed by the Trinitarian discussions of Nicea and beyond. This, of course, does not mean that creedal formulations are irrelevant to the discussion, but, for a community that insists (rightly or wrongly) upon the formal priority of the biblical materials, the question of successfully identifying Paul's argument in this passage is paramount.

To this end, the following two chapters explicate the relationship between God and gender in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. My argument is that Paul sees the correspondence between the doctrine of God and human beings in a cosmological context. He does not posit a straightforward correspondence with God and Christ on the one hand and man and woman on the other. Rather, the analogy is between the way in which God and Christ relate to *the cosmos* and the way in which Paul understands the sexes to have been created to relate to *one another*. This present chapter is concerned with establishing the basic exegetical framework for this reading,

namely the identification of the way in which Paul understands God, Christ and the world to interrelate. Chapter 5 offers an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and in its conclusion relates the model of sexual differentiation which emerges to this framework. Accordingly, the main body of the present chapter has two sections: (i) a preliminary discussion of significant research into Paul's cosmological language, which paves the way for (ii) the exegetical consideration that follows.

#### 4.2 Previous Studies Into Paul's Use Of κόσμος

I do not propose a comprehensive account of Paul's understanding of the relationships between God, Christ and the cosmos. This would, in the first instance, be to presume that such an account was possible – that Paul's theology, Christology and cosmology interrelate in a systematically articulable manner. Three considerations weigh against presuming this: (i) The occasional nature of the Paul's correspondence entails the recognition that his terminology may vary.<sup>321</sup> Hence, for several situational reasons certain terms may be prominent in one epistle but not another.<sup>322</sup> (ii) The same logic applies to Paul's choice of subject matter. This point is particularly pertinent to 1 Corinthians, in which Paul explicitly responds to verbal reports (cf. 1 Cor 1:11) and written communications (e.g. 1 Cor 7:1).<sup>323</sup> (iii) Finally, there is the question of theological development, it being unwise to assume too readily that Paul's notion of God, Christ and the cosmos remained static for the duration of his career.

On account of these considerations, the view of the world that I seek to expose and discuss here concerns a limited section of Paul's correspondence, 1 Corinthians.

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<sup>321</sup> See Adams, *Constructing The World: A Study In Paul's Cosmological Language* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 2000), p.242.

<sup>322</sup> E.g. κτίσις occurs frequently in Romans but never in 1 Corinthians (e.g. Rom 1:20, 25, 8:19-22, 39).

<sup>323</sup> E.g. περὶ δὲ (1 Cor 7:25, 8:1) see Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, p.191.

The principal goal of this discussion is not to determine to what use Paul put his cosmology and theology. Instead, the aim is to delineate a general framework, since I posit this as the appropriate context for his discussion of gender in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. However, it is necessary first to consider certain questions regarding Paul's cosmological language, in particular in what its nature, scope and usage might consist. This is necessary precisely because these topics have been matters of ongoing scholarly discussion, in particular by Rudolf Bultmann, Hermann Sasse and, more recently, Edward Adams who each address these issues to the Greek term κόσμος.<sup>324</sup>

#### 4.2.1 Rudolf Bultmann

For Bultmann,<sup>325</sup> a fundamental difference between classical and Pauline concepts of κόσμος is in the scope of the term. He argues that in antiquity κόσμος generally denoted a rational, ordered and fundamentally explicable totality which encompassed both the universe and the gods, whereas the traditions of Judaism always incorporated a qualitative distinction between creator and creation, such that God stood apart from the κόσμος. Since Paul is presumed to inherit this fundamental distinction from Hellenistic Judaism, his usage is judged atypical of wider antiquity. Bultmann argues that Paul uses κόσμος to denote the totality of creation only infrequently (e.g. Rom 1:20; 1 Cor 8:5) and very occasionally uses it as a designation for the somewhat smaller physical arena of the earth. Usually, it denotes 'the *quintessence of earthly conditions of life and earthly possibilities*',<sup>326</sup> which Bultmann takes as an indication that the Pauline usage of the term is predominantly anthropological and historical rather than cosmological.

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<sup>324</sup> Adams engages with both Bultmann and Sasse. Adams, *Constructing The World*, pp.12-18.

<sup>325</sup> Bultmann, *Theology*, p.254.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid. Translator's italics.

The second feature of Bultmann's reconstruction of Paul's concept of κόσμος is its temporal rather than spatial nature. As human existence is currently constituted by certain fundamental conflicts and choices, faith and unfaith,<sup>327</sup> flesh and spirit,<sup>328</sup> God and the 'god of this age (2 Cor 4:4)',<sup>329</sup> κόσμος as the basic designation for this sphere of existence stands in 'antithesis to the sphere of God or "the Lord"'.<sup>330</sup> It is the 'reality which threatens and tempts'.<sup>331</sup> Hence, for this reason, it is under divine judgement and, as such, is an eschatological category - 'the sphere of "the rulers of *this age*" (1 Cor 2:6,8)'.<sup>332</sup> Moreover, for Bultmann, these hostile powers are not objective but rather embody a mythological expression of the basic conflicts of human existence. This demythological trajectory within Paul's thought constitutes another point of departure from traditional cosmological discourse.

Nevertheless, I am unconvinced by Bultmann's analysis. His argument depends upon there being a basic discontinuity between classical and biblical traditions – characteristic of the now somewhat disputed Judaism-Hellenism divide.<sup>333</sup> This presumes that Greek theorists were unanimous in regarding the κόσμος as a unified, rational totality that included God/the gods. In fact, answers to the question of whether and if so how God/the gods relate to the cosmos varied between philosophical traditions, with some resembling what Bultmann describes as the biblical view more than others. This is not to discount the large areas of overlap

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<sup>327</sup> Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology: The Problem Of Demythologizing The New Testament Proclamation' in *New Testament And Mythology And Other Basic Writings*, ed. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1-44, p.15ff.

<sup>328</sup> Bultmann, *Theology*, p.232ff.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, p.256

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p.255.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p.259.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, p.256. Italics mine.

<sup>333</sup> See Martin, 'Paul And The Judaism/Hellenism Dichotomy: Towards A Social History Of The Question' in *Paul Beyond The Judaism/Hellenism Divide*, ed. Engberg-Pedersen (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 29-61.

between philosophical traditions. It is, however, to suggest that descriptions of a 'characteristically Greek view of the cosmos',<sup>334</sup> especially when this view is a foil for a purportedly Jewish view, necessarily simplify a complicated picture. For instance, Plato (*Ti.* 92.C) describes the κόσμος in contradistinction to its creator, whereas, for Aristotle, κόσμος as a designation for the entire universe overlapped the term οὐρανός, and this term included the prime mover, albeit in a transcendent capacity (*Metaph.* XII.1072.B).<sup>335</sup> As Stoic thought tended towards a materialist immanentist theology, it differed from both Plato and Aristotle.

Second, Bultmann appears at times to minimise the corporate nature of Christian experience in the world.<sup>336</sup> In the last analysis, his notion of κόσμος as a supra-personal reality stands over and against persons as individuals – each human being is 'always already' placed in a crisis of choice between God and the world.<sup>337</sup> This individualism is perhaps little surprise, since it maps neatly onto the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century existentialism that Bultmann advocates as a suitable replacement for what he regards as the defunct apocalyptic cosmology of the New Testament.<sup>338</sup> As Edward Adams<sup>339</sup> observes, this apologetic aspect to Bultmann's hermeneutical endeavour may very well have affected his exegetical judgement.

#### 4.2.2 Hermann Sasse

The second major treatment of Paul's cosmological terminology is by Hermann Sasse. For Sasse, the basic sense of κόσμος as world operates at several levels, being

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<sup>334</sup> Dunn, *Theology*, p.39.

<sup>335</sup> See Wright, *Cosmology In Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp.178-80.

<sup>336</sup> See also Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.16.

<sup>337</sup> Bultmann, *Theology*, p.259.

<sup>338</sup> See Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology', p.1ff.

<sup>339</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.16.

synonymous at the level of physical totality with the biblical idiom 'heaven and earth', and at another level being an eschatological designation for the earth as the 'theatre of salvation history'.<sup>340</sup> Like Bultmann, Sasse treats κόσμος as a temporal concept; it not only has a finite duration (1 Cor 7:31), its very nature is impermanent – whatever is constituted by it is corruptible.<sup>341</sup> As such, he regards the expressions κόσμος οὗτος and αἰὼν οὗτος as roughly coterminous (cf. 1 Cor 3:19; 5:10; 7:31).<sup>342</sup> That the κόσμος is eschatologically alienated from its creator results, according to Sasse, in two further characteristics of the New Testament usage: (i) It is not used for the 'eternal world of eschatological hope',<sup>343</sup> and (ii) God is not described as God and Lord of the κόσμος – God stands over against the κόσμος in judgement.<sup>344</sup> For Sasse, the corollary of this is that:

When the κόσμος is redeemed, it ceases to be κόσμος...it is βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ...the term κόσμος, which derives from pagan philosophy, is reserved for the world which lies under sin and death.<sup>345</sup>

Where I would take issue with Sasse's analysis is in his apparent selectivity with the biblical materials he cites. The opposition between God and the κόσμος he posits certainly applies in many Pauline texts (e.g. 1 Cor 1:20-21), but it is simply inaccurate to apply this to every instance of the term. In Romans 1:20 it is κόσμος that is the collective designation for the 'things created' (τὰ ποιήματα) by which the invisible attributes of God are seen and made known. Likewise, the validity of Sasse's contention that κόσμος is not used to denote the 'world of eschatological

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<sup>340</sup> Sasse, 'κοσμέω, κόσμος, κόσμιος, κοσμικός' in *TDNT*, vol. 3, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 867-99, p.893.

<sup>341</sup> Cf. φθορά in 1 Cor 15:50.

<sup>342</sup> Sasse, 'κόσμος', p.884.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, p.886.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, p.893.

hope'<sup>346</sup> rather depends upon how one defines 'eschatological'. Certainly, in Romans 4:13, Paul is able to describe God's paradigmatic promise to Abraham in terms of becoming the 'heir of the world' (κληρονόμος κόσμου). Even in 1 Corinthians, which in general presses the antithesis between God and the κόσμος, the world can be described in neutral terms – πάντα ὑμῶν...εἴτε κόσμος εἴτε ζωὴ εἴτε θάνατος (1 Cor 3:21-22). Hence, although much of Sasse's analysis is excellent, Edward Adams is correct that he overemphasises the negative connotations of the term.<sup>347</sup>

Another criticism Adams levels against Sasse concerns methodology. Citing James Barr's now famous criticism of the 'illegitimate totality transfer',<sup>348</sup> he correctly observes that both he and Bultmann utilise a concept-driven approach to biblical terminology, and that, having reconstructed a supposedly general definition, they too readily assume that its entire semantic range is invoked every time that it is used. Plainly this assumption is erroneous, since the application of it to ordinary human communication would make even the simplest figures of speech unintelligible. To be fair to Sasse, however, I think that he is slightly less guilty of this than Bultmann; whilst he does indeed follow a concept-driven methodology, when it comes to the term κόσμος as a physical description, he also argues that the New Testament materials are too diverse to formulate a unifying cosmological model.<sup>349</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Edward Adams

In a recent monograph, Edward Adams has advanced the discussion of Paul's cosmological terminology somewhat. To begin with, he abandons the quest for an

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid., p.884.

<sup>347</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, pp.17-18.

<sup>348</sup> Barr, *Semantics*, p.218; see Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.17.

<sup>349</sup> Sasse, 'κόσμος', p.887.

overarching Pauline concept of κόσμος. Instead, he situates Paul's cosmological language in an understanding of Paul's epistles as occasional correspondence. Accordingly, it is no longer a matter of identifying a single set of Pauline cosmological terms and ideas, but rather a matter of asking (i) which cosmological expressions Paul brings to bear upon the situation he addresses and (ii) to what ends Paul invokes these notions.<sup>350</sup>

Adams begins with a survey of the Graeco-Roman uses of the term κόσμος. He identifies five consistent features: (i) the κόσμος is ordered, (ii) it is a unity, (iii) it is beautiful, (iv) human beings are integrated into it as microcosm to macrocosm and (v) it is praiseworthy.<sup>351</sup> Although these characteristics operate differently within the various philosophical traditions of antiquity, Adams observes that together they result in a conformist, integrationist and stratified ideology of society;<sup>352</sup> human social norms are *naturalised*, that is, sanctioned by the notion of the 'rational ordering of the world, the divine arrangement of things'.<sup>353</sup> As Rosemary Wright correctly notes, this process is bi-directional, with on the one hand the language of the cosmos underwriting the prevalent ideology, and on the other socio-political language (e.g. δίκη, ἔρις) and concepts (e.g. household, city, monarch) being inscribed upon the cosmos.<sup>354</sup>

Against this background, Adams paints a picture of the Corinthians as a congregation with weak social boundaries. On the one hand the Corinthians tended to conform to patterns of behaviour generally accepted in wider society, whether in

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<sup>350</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, pp.21-22.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.64-69. See also ch.6.

<sup>352</sup> With a notable exception to this being the Cynics.

<sup>353</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.71.

<sup>354</sup> Wright, *Cosmology In Antiquity*, pp.69-74. Wright's best example is Heraclitus, *Fragments* 94, in which the course of the sun is determined by the 'daughters of Justice' (p.72). See also Marcus Aurelius, *Meditationes* 4.23, ὦ πόλι φίλη Διός ('O beloved city of Zeus').



terms of litigation (1 Cor 6:1-11), sexual practices (6:15-16) or food (ch.8, 10:14ff.).<sup>355</sup> On the other hand they evidently valorise certain qualities such as eloquence (1 Cor 2:1ff), in a manner suggestive of Gracco-Roman ideals.<sup>356</sup> Adams suggests that those who exhibit such tendencies are extremely likely to have held a view of κόσμος largely in accordance with the fivefold model he identifies. There is some warrant for this; if the statement οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὐδὲν εἶδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ ('we know that an idol is nothing in the world' 1 Cor 8:4) represents a Corinthian slogan quoted by Paul,<sup>357</sup> then it suggests that the Corinthian 'strong',<sup>358</sup> whom he quotes, underestimate the seriousness of idolatry, the reason perhaps being an underestimation of the reality of cosmic evil.<sup>359</sup>

Adams argues that, in response to this, Paul paints a picture of a world constituted by three apocalyptic dualities: (i) a spatial dualism comprising heaven and earth, (ii) a temporal dualism comprising this age and the next, and (iii) a social dualism comprising the elect and the world.<sup>360</sup> Perhaps the best illustration of the interconnection of these dualities is 1 Corinthians 15:20-49, in which the material/spatial contrast<sup>361</sup> between the man who is ἐκ γῆς χοϊκός ('from earth's dust' v.47) and the man ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ('from heaven' v.47), sums up the temporal contrast between the πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος and the ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ (v.45)/δεύτερος

<sup>355</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, pp.88-89.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid., pp.89-92.

<sup>357</sup> Witherington, *Conflict And Community In Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary On 1 And 2 Corinthians* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), p.188; Hays, *First Corinthians*, p.138.

<sup>358</sup> See Theissen, *The Social Setting Of Pauline Christianity* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1982), p.125; Horrell, *The Social Ethos Of The Corinthian Correspondence*, ed. Barclay et al. (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1996), p.108.

<sup>359</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 10:21: 'the cup/table of demons'.

<sup>360</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.106. The same categories are proposed in Aune, 'Apocalypticism' in *Dictionary Of Paul And His Letters*, ed. Hawthorne et al. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 25-35, pp.31-32.

<sup>361</sup> See the discussion of this text in ch.3.

ἄνθρωπος (v.47), which in turn frames the earlier collective designations ἐν ᾿Αδάμ and ἐν Χριστῷ (v.22). Paul's use of κόσμος maps very well onto this eschatological dualism, as is illustrated by the contrast in 1 Corinthians 1:20 between God's wisdom and the world's wisdom (σοφία τοῦ κόσμου), which intersects with temporal terms such as ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος ('this age').<sup>362</sup>

For Adams, Paul's purpose in adopting this pattern of terminology is both cosmological and sociological. Since, as has been noted, socio-political and cosmological concerns are mutually informing, to change the definition of κόσμος is to modify the social world presumed by this definition. Drawing on the theoretical work of Roger Fowler, Adams argues that Paul is engaged in 'linguistic defamiliarization'<sup>363</sup>, namely the uncoding of the fivefold ideology associated with Graeco-Roman antiquity. Recognising that it is their positive appraisal of the κόσμος which underlies the various accommodations the Corinthians are prepared to make with the surrounding culture, Paul seeks to redefine their world. In short, by opposing God and the κόσμος, Paul 'cleverly stands the ideology of κόσμος on its head'<sup>364</sup> and encourages the Corinthians to see themselves as separate (2 Cor 6:17).

#### 4.2.4 Discussion

This provides a useful context for this chapter's discussion. In particular, Adams' recognition that Paul adapts his cosmological terminology towards definite socio-rhetorical ends is especially helpful. It confirms my initial suspicion that Bultmann's and Sasse's attempts to offer comprehensive conceptual definitions presume a coherence of use between epistles that may, in fact, be absent. Adams

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<sup>362</sup> See Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.108.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, p.113.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*

notes this with respect to Romans, which tends to use κόσμος in a ‘non-pejorative’ sense, thereby inculcating a far more positive appraisal of creation than in 1 Corinthians.<sup>365</sup>

Nevertheless, that Paul’s terminology should vary with respect to the discursive situations he addresses constitutes an exegetical challenge as well as an insight. For it means that the cosmological language he adopts is not merely used *by* him, it is also imposed *upon* him. This, in turn, begs the question of whether Paul’s underlying cosmological framework entails a more positive appraisal of κόσμος than that which features in 1 Corinthians – one that he simply ‘tones down’ so as to achieve his rhetorical ends. Certainly, if the Corinthian situation modified Paul’s use of κόσμος, then it can be presumed to have done so in a twofold manner: (i) causing him to emphasise the negative associations of κόσμος, and (ii) requiring him to de-emphasise any positive connotations that he might otherwise have used. It is this that constitutes the exegetical challenge, since we have access only to what Paul emphasises and by definition cannot know what he de-emphasises. In short, a Paul who is strictly anti-κόσμος is, from our standpoint, indistinguishable from a Paul who for rhetorical ends presents only one side of an otherwise mixed appraisal of κόσμος. We simply lack access to the information necessary to judge with certainty whether the differences between Romans and 1 Corinthians regarding κόσμος are due to underlying theological differences or different discursive situations.

None of this is to suggest that Paul has no discernible cosmological perspective in 1 Corinthians apart from the socio-rhetorical ends to which he directs the term κόσμος; his cosmological ideas are expressed using a nexus of terms, aetiologies and narratives. The significance of the term αἰών has already been noted

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<sup>365</sup> Ibid., p.190.

by Bultmann, Sasse and Adams, as have the related pair of terms οὐρανός ('heaven') and γῆ ('earth').<sup>366</sup> John Painter<sup>367</sup> notes several others, of which two, καιρός ('time') and τὰ πάντα ('all things'),<sup>368</sup> occur in 1 Corinthians, and a final one, κτίσις ('creation'), appears in 2 Corinthians 5:17. The significance of all but the last of these terms will become apparent in subsequent sections of the chapter.

There remains nevertheless the question initially posed by Bultmann, namely whether Paul's cosmological language is genuinely cosmological, or whether it is historical and anthropological. This is significant because I shall argue in the next chapter that Paul regards human sexual differentiation to be a metaphysical matter, rooted in the way in which God constituted the created universe and the way in which the Church functions as cosmic space. Such a perspective presumes that when Paul uses cosmological language, his basic point of reference is not restricted to the 'world' of human history, salvation or existence, but encompasses the material realities that constitute male and female bodies. At this stage, it should be noted that the question in this chapter is not whether Paul's cosmological statements are tenable in a post-Enlightenment context,<sup>369</sup> merely whether the world of reference for these statements in their original illocutionary context happens to be the cosmos.

Generally, I find Adams convincing when he argues that the basic reference of Paul's cosmological terminology is the material cosmos. This is not to deny that Paul's cosmological terms may at times have a historical or anthropological

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<sup>366</sup> οὐρανός and γῆ together: 1 Cor 8:5; 15:47. γῆ alone: 1 Cor 10:26.

<sup>367</sup> Painter, 'World, Cosmology' in *Dictionary Of Paul And His Letters*, ed. Hawthorne *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 979-82.

<sup>368</sup> καιρός: 1 Cor 4:5; [7:5 not cosmological]; 7:29. τὰ πάντα: 1 Cor 2:15; 8:6; 11:12; [12:6,19 in relation to the Church]; 15:27,28.

<sup>369</sup> On this question vis-à-vis Paul's gender discourse, see ch.6. More generally, see Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology', pp.1-44; Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul And The Stoics* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 2000), p.17.

reference.<sup>370</sup> Neither is it to preclude the possibility that he sometimes uses elements of a mythological cosmology *demythologically* – the same pattern is discernible in Graeco-Roman philosophical writers.<sup>371</sup> It is to note that neither of these possibilities are mutually exclusive with Paul's cosmological language having a cosmological reference. Indeed, in an early essay Bultmann seems to admit as much, stating that the New Testament describes a 'mythological world picture',<sup>372</sup> which in its original setting was interpreted according to its *prima facie* sense but which *now* must be re-interpreted, that is, demythologised. It need not, however, be de-cosmologised.

This is confirmed by a number of articles and monographs by, amongst others, Markus Barth,<sup>373</sup> John Painter<sup>374</sup> and Edward Adams.<sup>375</sup> They suggest that Paul uses cosmological terminology as a frequent designation for the natural, including the non-human, world. This begs the question of why there should have been a historical tendency towards de-cosmologising Paul at all? Markus Barth suggests that it is a subtle form of eisegesis deriving, in part, from post-Kantian idealism; in short, Paul is *presumed* to be speaking non-cosmologically, because some modern-day exegetes find it difficult to envisage *how* Christ might be related to the natural world. The following comment is particularly apposite:

E. Kant is the spiritual father of W. Herrmann's theology, W. Herrmann of R. Bultmann's anthropocentrism, R. Bultmann of, e.g., E. Schweizer's aversion to a naturalistic description of Jesus Christ and salvation. All of them repudiate and abhor the notion that the spiritual and liberating work...of Christ...should in any way resemble...affect...or make use of natural means. Unshaken and unquestioned appears to be Kant's creed according to which

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<sup>370</sup> Bultmann, *Theology*, p.255.

<sup>371</sup> E.g. Varro, who attempted to map the various Graeco-Roman divinities onto the principles in (philosophical) cosmology. Varro is cited in Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 7.28.

<sup>372</sup> Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology', pp.1-2. See the discussion in ch.6.

<sup>373</sup> Barth, 'Christ And All Things' in *Paul And Paulinism: Essays In Honour Of C.K. Barrett*, ed. Hooker and Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982), 160-72.

<sup>374</sup> Painter, 'World'

<sup>375</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*

nature is the existence of things insofar as it is determined by general laws, and only the realm of the spirit is governed by freedom.<sup>376</sup>

It would indeed be ironic if the cosmological element of Paul's apocalyptic dualism had been systematically underplayed because of the unacknowledged hermeneutical influence of a peculiarly Modern form of dualistic thought.

#### 4.2.5 Section Summary

This discussion sets the scene for the exploration of Paul's cosmological ideas by situating the project in the context of the ongoing debate regarding the sense of the Greek word *κόσμος*. Rudolf Bultmann's usefulness is substantially diminished by several considerations: (i) the somewhat discredited Judaism-Hellenism dichotomy, (ii) the exegetical *tendenz* of restricting Paul's cosmological statements to history and anthropology, and (iii) the somewhat suspect 'theological word-analysis'<sup>377</sup> method. Hermann Sasse builds upon Bultmann's work; hence he is liable to similar criticisms, but he is most susceptible to criticism in the somewhat selective way in which he interprets the textual evidence. Edward Adams advances the discussion of Paul's cosmological terminology significantly. Not only does he adequately recognise the occasional nature of the Pauline correspondence, he pursues a methodology that is sensitive to developments in linguistics and social theory since Bultmann and Sasse. He argues that Paul uses *κόσμος* in a way that is designed to overturn the traditional ideology associated with the term, namely that the world is ordered, united, beautiful, paradigmatic, and praiseworthy.

In terms of the goal of this chapter this discussion is a helpful preliminary stage. In the first instance, Adams' focus upon the occasional nature of Paul's

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<sup>376</sup> Barth, 'Christ', p.164.

<sup>377</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.21.

correspondence confirms the decision to restrict attention here to 1 Corinthians. However, since it is impossible to get 'behind' the text to a comprehensive reconstruction of the theology Paul brings to bear upon situations, Adams' work also implies a note of caution. Finally, in terms of the historical tendency to read Paul's cosmological language as history, soteriology or anthropology, it was noted that this pattern of exegesis is (i) diminishing in scholarly popularity, (ii) contrary to the *prima facie* sense of a number of texts in 1 Corinthians, and (iii) representative of a particularly Modern form of eisegesis. It is therefore reasonable to regard Paul's cosmological language as denoting the spatial and temporal cosmos unless there are strong textual cues to the contrary.

### **4.3 An Exegetical Study Of Paul's Cosmology In 1 Corinthians**

This section of the chapter is concerned with (i) identifying a set of such terms and (ii) analysing significant passages in which they are used, so as to (iii) delineate some of the ways in which God, Church and cosmos relate in 1 Corinthians. What I will suggest is that Paul regards the Church, in some sense, as a cosmic space defined in antithesis to the present disordered form (σχῆμα) of the κόσμος, which is passing away (1 Cor 7:31). This, it will be seen, is important for the way in which Paul uses creation and nature language in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, as the concluding section of the next chapter will demonstrate.

#### **4.3.1 Initial Examination Of Paul's Cosmological Vocabulary**

Paul does not restrict himself to the single cosmological term κόσμος, but also utilises the terms οὐρανός ('heaven'), γῆ ('earth'), τὰ πάντα ('all things'), αἰών ('age')

and καιρός ('time').<sup>378</sup> This vocabulary is useful here, since it provides us with a wider set of texts to survey. Since, as Adams has noted,<sup>379</sup> κόσμος ('world') is a designation for the present world/age as a 'spatio-temporal entity', it is unsurprising to find a basic division between spatial/material (οὐρανός, γῆ, τὰ πάντα) and temporal (αἰών, καιρός) terms in Paul's cosmological vocabulary. To this list I have added the additional term ἡμέρα ('day'), since it is twice used to refer to the eschatological 'Day of the Lord [Jesus Christ]' (1 Cor 1:8; 5:5),<sup>380</sup> and on another occasion alone but with the same meaning (1 Cor 3:13).

For the purposes of this chapter I have quite deliberately selected only those instances of each term that *prima facie* designate the material world. For this reason I have followed Edward Adams in excluding a single instance of κόσμος, since in the context of 1 Corinthians 14:10 the term evidently has no bearing upon our discussion.<sup>381</sup> In the case of the term αἰών, which occurs 8 times in 1 Corinthians,<sup>382</sup> I have bracketed one occurrence (1 Cor 8:13; see Table 4.1 below), since it is likely that Paul adds the expression εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα to reinforce the emphatic negative of the preceding statement – οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα ('I will *not* eat meat'). As such, it probably does not constitute a technical reference, even though this section contains technical cosmological terms (cf. 8:4-6).<sup>383</sup> A single instance of the term καιρός (7:5)<sup>384</sup> has been excluded, since it concerns not an eschatological period (cf. 4:5; 7:29), but a

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<sup>378</sup> Painter, 'World', p.979

<sup>379</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.111.

<sup>380</sup> In 1 Cor 1:8 a few MSS (D F G) read ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ and 1Cor 5:5 has several variants, but the basic expression ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου (P<sup>46</sup> B) is attested in all. See NA<sup>27</sup> critical apparatus.

<sup>381</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.108n2.

<sup>382</sup> 1 Cor 1:20; 2:6 (x2),7,8; 3:18; 8:13; 10:11.

<sup>383</sup> See Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.389n70; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.657.

<sup>384</sup> 1 Cor 4:5; 7:5,29.



period of sexual abstinence. Of the 7 instances of ἡμέρα,<sup>385</sup> only three occurrences (1:8; 3:13; 5:5) have an immediate bearing upon the eschatological ‘Day of the Lord’; of the remaining four, three are simple designations (10:8; 15:4, 31). The final occurrence (1 Cor 4:3) is somewhat more complicated; Paul’s statement about being judged ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης ἡμέρας (lit. ‘by a human day’) designates a reference to some arena of human judgement but, as Barrett notes,<sup>386</sup> there may also be an oblique contrast with the ‘Day of the Lord’ (3:13). As this is uncertain, I have not counted it.

The process of determining which of the 42 instances of πάντα is cosmological is somewhat more difficult than it was for the other terms. Since the term πᾶς has a wide application, depending upon whether it is used as an adjective or noun, with or without the article,<sup>387</sup> I initially restrict my attention to those instances where it is used as neuter plural with the article (τὰ πάντα). Of the 10 occurrences of this form,<sup>388</sup> the four that appear in 1 Corinthians 15:27-28 are perhaps the most evidently cosmological, since the context concerns the final victory of Christ over enemies that are not merely human, but which include cosmic/mythic-level entities such as death (θάνατος v.26). After this, the twofold formula in 1 Corinthians 8:6 (εἷς θεὸς...ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα...εἷς κύριος...δι’ οὗ τὰ πάντα), and the single occurrence in 1 Corinthians 11:12b (τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) evidently use the expression ‘all things’ to designate the material creation,<sup>389</sup> as is suggested by the nexus of cosmological terminology in the former passage (cf. 1 Cor 8:4-5) and the clear references to creation and nature in the latter passage (cf. 11:7-9,14).

<sup>385</sup> 1 Cor 1:8; 3:13; 4:3; 5:5; 10:8; 15:4,31.

<sup>386</sup> Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.101.

<sup>387</sup> See Reicke and Bertram, ‘πᾶς’ in *TDNT*, vol. 5, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 886-96.

<sup>388</sup> 1 Cor 2:15; 8:6(x2); 11:12; 12:6; 19; 15:27; 28 (x3).

<sup>389</sup> Pace Murphy-O'Connor, ‘1 Cor viii.6 - Cosmology Or Soteriology?’ *RB* 85 (1978), 253-67.

Of the remaining three occurrences of τὰ πάντα in 1 Corinthians, one (1 Cor 12:19) is excluded as a cosmological reference since it clearly applies to the body metaphor for the Church and not to ‘all things’ comprising the physical cosmos. Another instance concerns God working ‘all in all’ (τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν 1 Cor 12:6), but the context here also suggests an ecclesial subject matter. The final instance (1 Cor 2:15) concerns ‘all things’ as the object of knowledge for those designated by the epithet πνευματικός<sup>390</sup> and, as such, it probably designates τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ (‘the things of the Spirit of God’ v.14) as opposed to the material cosmos *per se*. What is more, it is in any case disputed, since in many manuscripts it lacks an article.<sup>391</sup> For reasons that will become apparent, I nevertheless include it.

In addition to this group of occurrences, there are also a limited number of occasions in which πάντα is used without the article, apparently encompassing all that exists. Perhaps the best example of such a usage is to be found in 1 Corinthians 3:21-22, where, in an *inclusio* formed by two occurrences of πάντα ὑμῶν (‘all things are yours’), Paul mentions both human leaders and cosmic-level entities. Seven further occurrences in 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23 apparently reflect a Corinthian slogan πάντα ἔξεστιν (‘all things are allowed’), which Paul cites for the purposes of qualification and correction.<sup>392</sup> What this demonstrates is that [τὰ] πάντα, like κόσμος, is part of the Corinthians’ own technical register – and given that they appear to have applied it to issues of corporeality (e.g. sex 1 Cor 6:12-20; food 10:23-11:1), it is likely that their slogan extends to the entire material order.

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<sup>390</sup> See ch.3.

<sup>391</sup> The following MSS, amongst others, have μέν instead of the article: κ<sup>1</sup> B D<sup>2</sup> F G Ψ ℞ 1881.

<sup>392</sup> Most commentators regard this as a Corinthian slogan. See e.g. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary On The First Epistle To The Corinthians*, ed. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), p.110; Witherington, *Conflict And Community*, p.167.

**Table 4.1: Paul's Cosmological Terms In 1 Corinthians<sup>393</sup>**

	<i>Material/Spatial Terms</i>				<i>Temporal Terms</i>		
	κόσμος	οὐρανός	γῆ	[τὰ]πάντα	αἰών	καιρός	ἡμέρα
1:1-1:9							1
<i>Wisdom And Divisions (1:10-4:21)</i>							
1:18-2:16	6			2	5		
3:1-3:22	2			2	1		1
4:1-4:21	2					1	
<i>Boundaries With The κόσμος (5:1-11:1)</i>							
5:1-5:13	2						1
6:1-6:11	2						
6:12-6:20				3			
7:1-7:39	4					1	
8:1-8:13	1	1	1	2	[1]		
10:14-10:22					1		
10:23-11:1			1	4			
<i>Order Within The ἐκκλησία (11:2-14:39)</i>							
11:2-11:16				1			
11:17-11:34	1						
<i>Resurrection (15:1-15:58)</i>							
15:12-15:58		1	1	4			

From the table above, one can see that κόσμος is the most frequently used cosmological term in 1 Corinthians with a total of 20 occurrences, and that [τὰ] πάντα is a close second with 18.<sup>394</sup> In terms of distribution, Edward Adams is correct that κόσμος predominates in the earlier chapters of the epistle, tailing away significantly after chapter 8.<sup>395</sup> However, [τὰ] πάντα is somewhat more evenly spread, occurring several times in the later chapters. Rather than simply replicate Adams' very comprehensive work with respect to all the other terms noted here, I propose instead an analysis of what I consider to be particularly illuminating texts. I shall first examine Paul's engagement with the Corinthian πάντα ἔξοστιν (1 Cor

<sup>393</sup> The divisions in this table are heuristic and derived from the divisions of subject matter in the epistle.

<sup>394</sup> There are another two instances of πάντα (1 Cor 15:27) which I have not counted since they constitute the biblical reference (Ps 8:6) that informs Paul's language in the subsequent verse.

<sup>395</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.108.

6:12; 10:23) slogan. Then I shall briefly consider three further passages in 1 Corinthians in which Paul addresses matters of cosmological significance – 1 Corinthians 3:21-22, 7:29-31 and 8:4b-6.

#### 4.3.2 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23: ‘All Things Are Allowed’

That the Corinthians used πάντα ἔξεστιν (‘all things are allowed’ 1 Cor 6:12; 10:23) as a slogan is widely acknowledged, although there is some division regarding the provenance of the expression. Rudolf Bultmann<sup>396</sup> treats it as one element of a nexus of Gnostic motifs that constitute the theology of the Hellenistic Churches. He suggests that Paul responds to the Corinthians’ use of this statement in a ‘dialectical or paradoxical’<sup>397</sup> manner, on the one hand affirming their freedom from ‘the Law’, but on the other hand imposing obligations upon them by his qualifying statements. Whilst Bultmann’s analysis of Paul’s *rhetorical* direction is quite close to the mark, his analysis of the purportedly Gnostic provenance of the slogan has been comprehensively challenged, with alternative proposals suggesting a background in Jewish Wisdom speculation, Cynicism, Stoicism and an over-realised eschatology.<sup>398</sup>

What is known about this slogan is that similar expressions featured in a range of philosophical discourses of this general period. Diogenes Laertius (*Diog. Laert.* 7.122-25), summarising the doctrines of Chrysippus and several other Stoics, states that they regard the wise (cf. 1 Cor 3:18) to be not only free but also kings (cf. 1 Cor 4:8)<sup>399</sup> – indeed, that being wise *only* they are kings. Accordingly, ‘all things belong to the wise’ (τῶν σοφῶν πάντα εἶναι §7.125 cf. 1 Cor 3:21-22) and, possessing all

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<sup>396</sup> Bultmann, *Theology*, pp.180-81; so also Barrett, *First Corinthians*, pp.144-45.

<sup>397</sup> Bultmann, *Theology*, pp.341-43.

<sup>398</sup> See e.g. Thiselton, ‘Realised Eschatology At Corinth’, *NTS* 24 (1978), 510-26; and especially the summary of the various alternative proposals in Martin, *Corinthian Body*, pp.69-73.

<sup>399</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.122: οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐλευθέρους εἶναι τοὺς σοφοὺς, ἀλλὰ καὶ βασιλέας.

virtues, they have a privileged position vis-à-vis the law/convention, since only they understand how to use the things of the world correctly (cf. 1 Cor 6:12; 10:23). Terence Paige<sup>400</sup> notes a similar set of correspondences in Plutarch (*Stoicos Abs.* 1058.B-C), in which the Greek historian somewhat sarcastically recounts the principal tenets of Stoic views concerning the wise. Despite the critical tone, the same contours are discernable; the wise are able to say πάντα σοι γενήσεται ('all things will be yours') and once again they are described using royal language.

None of this is to suggest that either the Corinthians or Paul would have self-designated as Stoics. Quite apart from any other consideration, the ideas I describe are evident also in Cynic thought and, as Dale Martin observes, echoes can be discerned in Philo (*Quod Omn.* 41 esp.).<sup>401</sup> However, given the similarity between these Stoic notions and the Corinthian slogans it is reasonable to posit some limited form of philosophical influence.<sup>402</sup> Indeed, the analogy with Stoic and Cynic thought makes excellent sense of the apparent Corinthian laxity regarding issues of sex and food; Diogenes Laertius (*Diog. Laert.* 7.188) recounts that in the treatise entitled 'On Polity' Chrysippus tells people that they are at liberty to marry their mothers, daughters or sons (cf. 1 Cor 5:1ff.), and in the treatise entitled 'On Justice' he urges them to eat even the dead. The reason for these statements is given in the subsequent section; the wise know that only virtue is 'sufficient in itself to happiness' (αὐτάρκης αὕτη πρὸς εὐδαιμονίαν §7.189) – all other matters, whether means of bodily satisfaction or life itself, are ἀδιάφορα ('matters of indifference').

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<sup>400</sup> Paige, 'Stoicism, Ἐλευθερία And Community At Corinth' in *Christianity At Corinth: The Quest For The Pauline Church*, ed. Adams and Horrell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 207-18, p.211.

<sup>401</sup> See Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.71.

<sup>402</sup> By way of analogy see Malherbe, 'Determinism And Free Will In Paul: The Argument Of 1 Corinthians 8 And 9' in *Paul In His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Engberg-Pedersen (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1994), 231-55; also the many examples in Downing, *Cynics, Paul And The Pauline Churches* (London: Routledge, 1998).

It is easy to imagine this argument on the lips of the Corinthian self-styled ‘strong’, which they derive perhaps from philosophical influences in their formative education. Reasoning that since they have the Spirit, they are σοφοί, or perhaps more precisely πνευματικοί (1 Cor 3:1),<sup>403</sup> they would quite naturally conclude that they are complete (τέλειοι cf. 1 Cor 2:6) and able to discern ‘all things’ (πάντα 2:10). What they claim to discern principally concerns their status; all things are theirs, they are kings, consequently, πάντα ἔξεστιν (6:12; 10:23). Concomitantly, they adopt a particular stance towards material matters: (i) an idol is a nothing (8:4); (ii) idol foods are simply meat (8:8); (iii) sex is an area of freedom (6:12) – it is ‘food for the belly’ (6:13a). Indeed, issues of corporeality are of particularly low significance to the Corinthian ‘strong’ for eschatological reasons, because ‘God will abolish both one and the other’ (6:13b)<sup>404</sup> – the ‘belly’ and ‘food’, the body and sexual gratification.

Paul offers four responses to these slogans: (i) ‘I will not be under the authority (οὐκ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι) of anything’ (1 Cor 6:12). (ii) ‘Not everything benefits (συμφέρει)’ (6:12; 10:23). (iii) ‘Not everything builds up (οἰκοδομεῖ)’ (10:23). (iv) ‘For the body is not for fornication (πορνεία) but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body’ (6:13). These responses are interesting for several reasons, not least because, in addressing a divided congregation (1 Cor 1:10) they illustrate the pastoral skill by which Paul attempts to foster an ethos of concord.<sup>405</sup> However, in terms of the present discussion, they are interesting because they help situate Paul with respect to the view of the material world informing the stance of the ‘strong’.

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<sup>403</sup> See ch.3.

<sup>404</sup> I take 1 Corinthians 6:13b as part of the Corinthian slogan and Paul’s reply. See Thiselton, ‘Realised Eschatology’, p.517; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.264n3.

<sup>405</sup> See Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, p.118ff.

It is significant that Paul nowhere contradicts the ‘strong’ directly; he nowhere states οὐ πάντα ἔξεστιν. He could have done so, if he wished, since he proves more than willing to contradict and criticise beliefs and practices elsewhere in the epistle (e.g. 1 Cor 3:1; 11:17ff.; 15:12ff.). However, as Gordon Fee and Terence Paige correctly observe, there is a cardinal difference between the stance of the Corinthian ‘strong’ on the one hand and Paul on the other;<sup>406</sup> whereas the former appear to regard freedom in terms of autonomy, Paul regards it in the context of *communal* edification. This difference however does not represent a difference between the logical structure of Paul’s argument and that of the ‘strong’. Both reason that nothing in the material cosmos is intrinsically impure for members of the group designated πνευματικοί, but the ‘strong’ define this group somewhat differently from Paul,<sup>407</sup> and underpin their conclusions with a view of the body’s transience, whereas Paul offers both a caution and a correction.

Paul cautions that, although ‘all things are allowed’, some things possess the potential to ensnare and dominate (1 Cor 6:12). Thiselton’s paraphrase hits the mark perfectly; “‘liberty to do anything’; but I will not let anything take liberties with me.’<sup>408</sup> Once again, similar arguments are well-known in philosophical and moral materials; Epictetus (*Disc.* 3.12.4-6), in the discourse ‘On Training’ (περὶ ἀσκήσεως), argues that if one allows one’s desires to turn to ‘things that are not deliberate’ (τὰ ἀπροαίρετα) one will end up neither desiring what one ought nor able to avoid desiring what one ought not. This suggests that Paul, in fact, draws

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<sup>406</sup> Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.154n17; Paige, ‘Stoicism’, p.215ff.

<sup>407</sup> See ch.3.

<sup>408</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.458.

upon a similar matrix of ideas to his interlocutors.<sup>409</sup> However, Paul goes beyond this and corrects not the logic of the Corinthian ‘strong’ but one of their premises. It is their belief in the transient significance of the body that allows them to infer that what Paul terms πορνεία is simply ἀδιάφορα. By contrast, Paul insists that the body is ‘for the Lord’ (6:13) and that resurrection will make this exclusive form of union a permanent state of affairs (6:14).<sup>410</sup>

The preceding analysis of Paul’s response to the Corinthian slogan ‘all things are allowed’ is important to the argument of this chapter since it demonstrates two features of Paul’s attitude to the created order. (i) It shows that Paul does not disagree with the Corinthians for their use of philosophical categories and arguments, popular or otherwise; indeed, he appeals to overlapping traditions. (ii) Neither does Paul disagree with the basic outline of their argument that the wise/spiritual alone know how to put the created world to good use; he simply argues that it is not unambiguously beneficial to those who are not yet complete (1 Cor 2:6). These are important points since they indicate that whilst Paul may, as Adams suggests, be engaged in a process of defamiliarising standard cosmological terminology, he may, in fact, be doing so from a position within the discourses that he seeks to destabilise.

### 4.3.3 1 Corinthians 3:21-3:22: ‘All Things Are Yours’

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul concludes the argument regarding knowledge and factionalism that he began in the preceding two chapters. He has only just deconstructed the Corinthians’ twofold ecclesial hierarchy of lower and higher ways of knowing, by applying the terminology not to two types of Christian (πνευματικός,

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<sup>409</sup> Indeed, the reverse might be true if the slogan derives from Paul’s preaching. See Conzelmann, *1 Kor.*, p.109.

<sup>410</sup> Hays offers an excellent analysis of Paul’s logic in these verses. Hays, *First Corinthians*, p.102.



ψυχικός 2:14-15), but to those who possess the Spirit and those who do not – Christians and non-Christians.<sup>411</sup> Nevertheless, he does not abandon the notion of maturity within this unified group; indeed, he argues that the Corinthians themselves are behaving like ‘infants in Christ’ (νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ 3:1 cf. τέλειοι 2:6). The reason for this diagnosis is their factionalism, which Paul does not at first address directly. Rather, he regards their factionalism as symptomatic of a more general malaise – in aligning themselves with one figure or another they are behaving as if they were human beings without the Spirit (3:4), unable to exercise spiritual discernment of spiritual things (πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες 2:13). Were they to do so, they would discern what Paul goes on to tell them, namely ‘all things are yours’ (πάντα ὑμῶν 3:21-22)

Paul addresses this problem thus. First, he reminds the Corinthians that both he and Apollos are merely ‘servants *through whom* you came to faith’ (διάκονοι δι’ ὧν ἐπιστεύσατε 3:5). This suggests that he attributes the agency in his ministry entirely to God; indeed, Paul explicitly later attributes the operation of gifts and ministries in the Church (1 Cor 12:4-7) to God ‘working all in all’ (ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν 12:6). Here, however, he aligns himself with Apollos as θεοῦ συνεργοί (‘God’s co-workers’ 3:9) in contradistinction to the Corinthians who as God’s ‘field’ (γεώργιον) and ‘building’ (οἰκοδομή) are the somewhat inactive recipients of someone else’s labours (cf. 4:7). This exposes the folly of the Corinthians; it is not they but God who will appraise the work of those who build them up, and that only on the Day of the Lord (3:13). This means that they not only judge wrongly, but also before time (cf. 4:4-5).

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<sup>411</sup> See ch.3.

This eschatological reference serves to reintroduce the topic that Paul has been addressing since the first chapter. He states that anyone who regards himself or herself as ‘wise in this age’ (ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ 1 Cor 3:18) ought in fact to ‘become a fool in order (ἵνα) to become wise’ (3:18). Evidently, the notion of ‘wise in this age’ and becoming a fool refer to wisdom and folly ‘according to the standards of this age’,<sup>412</sup> which means that this statement turns once again upon the antithesis between the ‘wisdom of the world’ (σοφία τοῦ κόσμου 1:20) and that of God (1:24, 30, 2:7). Those who regard themselves as wise *by current standards* ought to relinquish their dependence upon these standards, since they are a pointless capitulation to a κόσμος dominated by the ‘rulers of this age’ (οἱ ἄρχοντες τοῦ αἰῶνος 2:6), whom God has confounded by the mystery of the Gospel (2:7). They ought instead to embrace the wisdom of the age to come.

For Paul, if they had embraced this wisdom, the Corinthians would neither have described themselves as ‘of’ one person or another (ἐγὼ εἰμι Παύλου... Ἀπολλῶ... Κηφᾶ 1:12), nor have eschewed all leaders apart from Christ (ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ 1:12b). Instead, they would have recognised that, being wise, all things were theirs (3:21-22), and this includes the leaders about whom they are so exercised. The logic here is similar to that in the discussion of the Corinthian slogan πάντα ἔξεστιν, and once again turns on popular philosophical beliefs concerning the status of the wise vis-à-vis the things of the material cosmos (cf. Seneca, *Ben.* 7.3.2-7.4.3).<sup>413</sup> Richard Hays argues that Paul makes a ‘concession to the Corinthians’ self-identification as *sophoi*’ and he suggests that it is for ‘tactical and ironic’ purposes.<sup>414</sup> Whilst it is indeed ironic that the Corinthians describe themselves as ‘of’ their chosen

<sup>412</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.118.

<sup>413</sup> I owe this reference to Richard Hays.

<sup>414</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, p.61.

leader when in fact the leaders are 'of' them, I remain unconvinced that this argument is merely a tactical ploy. Paul does not seem to be arguing that 'you claim to be wise, when by your own *incorrect* logic you should regard all things as yours', but rather that 'your factions belie your claim to wisdom, but if you embrace God's wisdom then you will *correctly* realise that all things are yours, including the leaders you boast in'. This is because, claims Paul, 'you are Christ's, and Christ is God's' (3:22b).

What this textual analysis illustrates is that, once again, the differences between Paul and the Corinthian 'strong' turn on quite subtle distinctions. Both he and they concur in different ways with the philosophical commonplace that the 'wise possess all things', and their slogan that 'God will abolish both one and the other' (6:13b) suggests that they, like Paul, have an eschatology, albeit one which envisages a somewhat different notion of bodily destiny (cf. 1 Cor 15:12ff.).<sup>415</sup> The difference appears to lie in the ideological stance of Paul's eschatology. Paul's ideological stance in these chapters is governed by an epistemological and sapiential dualism. The gospel is a μυστήριον (2:1) that could not be recognised beforehand, and its very unintelligibility to those who are wise according to the wisdom of the world constitutes, for Paul, God's negation of the ideology of κόσμος identified by Edward Adams.<sup>416</sup> This negation, however, does not constitute an invalidation of the *logic* of cosmic ideology, but a denial that this logic applies to ὁ κόσμος οὗτος; in short, the gospel reveals that the world is not in fact as ordered, united, beautiful, paradigmatic and praiseworthy as the Corinthian 'strong' believe it to be.

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<sup>415</sup> The Corinthians themselves may not have regarded this as an eschatology. See Barclay, 'Thessalonica And Corinth: Social Contrasts In Pauline Christianity' in *Christianity At Corinth: The Quest For The Pauline Church*, ed. Adams and Horrell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 183-96, p.190.

<sup>416</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.120.

#### 4.3.4 1 Corinthians 7:29-31: 'The Form Of The World'

Τοῦτο δέ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν· τὸ λοιπόν, ἵνα  
καὶ οἱ ἔχοντες γυναῖκας ὡς μὴ ἔχοντες ὣσιν  
καὶ οἱ κλαίοντες ὡς μὴ κλαίοντες  
καὶ οἱ χαίροντες ὡς μὴ χαίροντες  
καὶ οἱ ἀγοραζοντες ὡς μὴ κατέχοντες,  
καὶ οἱ χρώμενοι τὸν κόσμον ὡς μὴ καταχρώμενοι·  
παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.<sup>417</sup>

Coming as they do towards the end of a discussion of marriage, these verses are significant because they underpin the discussion cosmologically. In this chapter Paul negotiates the issues of (i) continence and conjugal obligations within Christian marriages (1 Cor 7:1-9), (ii) mixed unions (7:10-16), (iii) remaining generally in the circumstances in which one was called (7:17-24), and (iv) 'On virgins/maidens' (περὶ παρθένων)<sup>418</sup> and whether it is good for them to marry/to marry them (7:25-40). Verses 29-31 are almost parenthetical, coming at the end of this final discussion and before Paul's summing up, which begins in verse 32. Paul sets the scene for this by recapitulating his advice to remain as one is (7:26). However, he advises this not on the basis of one's circumstances at the time of one's call, as he did previously, but on account of the exigencies of the present age of distress (διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην 7:26).<sup>419</sup>

These verses are very tightly argued and can be divided into three parts – 1 Corinthians 7:29a, 29b-31a, and 31b. (i) First, Paul notes that 'the time is shortened' (ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν 7:29a), and this is followed by (ii) a series of

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<sup>417</sup> I have presented the verse in this way to bring out its logical structure.

<sup>418</sup> C. K. Barrett observes that M. Black's reading of παρθένοι as *male* celibates is possible but unlikely given its use vis-à-vis females in verses 36ff. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.174. Schrage applies it to betrothed couples. Schrage, *Erste Brief*, p.155f. See also Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, pp.568-72.

<sup>419</sup> In view of Prof. John Barclay's comment about the surprising 'absence of conflict in the relationship between Christians and 'outsiders'' in Corinth, it is unlikely that Paul here refers to troubles *viz.* persecutions. I take it instead to mean that the present eschatological age is a period of conflict. Barclay, 'Thessalonica And Corinth', p.184.

clauses in the general form καὶ οἱ...X...ὡς μὴ...X ('and those doing/having X as if not doing/having X'), which Paul applies to marriage, mourning, rejoicing, possessions and lastly the κόσμος: (iii) Finally, Paul states that the 'pattern (σχῆμα) of this world' is passing away. The logical sequence between these three sections is heavily influenced by the prepositions Paul uses. The presence of ἵνα with the subjunctive (ὥσιν 7:29b) at the beginning of the second section signals that the statement regarding the brevity of the current time is the premise for the five clauses that follow. The causal conjunction γάρ (7:31b) after these clauses indicates that the third section is the reason for what precedes. This effectively brings the statement regarding the time being shortened into a relationship of functional, if not semantic, equivalence with the statement regarding the pattern of the world passing away.

There is a certain incongruity between the verb tenses in these two functionally equivalent statements, the time is shortened designating a completed act, whereas the pattern of the world passing away designating an ongoing process.<sup>420</sup> Gordon Fee goes some way to resolving this tension by observing that 'the future which was set in motion by the event of Christ and the Spirit, has been shortened so that it is now in plain view'.<sup>421</sup> In fact, more than this is occurring; the event of the cross has already undone the wisdom of the world (1 Cor 1:20) and begun the abolition of the Rulers of this Age (2:6). For Paul, this constitutes more than a bringing of the present *into view* – the gospel begins the abolition of ὁ κόσμος οὗτος, a process that will be materially consummated at the eschaton – the ends of the ages *have* arrived (κατήντηκεν 10:11).

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<sup>420</sup> Cf. συνεσταλμένος (1 Cor 7:29a) and παράγει (7:31b).

<sup>421</sup> Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.339. Some commentators miss this point, e.g. Richard Hays: 'the present order of the world is going to pass away in the very near future'. Hays, *First Corinthians*, p.127.

There is also the sense of the term σχῆμα to consider. Edward Adams<sup>422</sup> observes that many commentators use the presence of this term to differentiate between the passing of the current pattern of the κόσμος and the passing of the κόσμος itself. Barrett illustrates this well; he writes, 'Paul's point is not the transiency of creation as such, but the fact that its outward pattern...has no permanence'.<sup>423</sup> In effect, this is to say that Paul uses κόσμος non-cosmologically, not describing the κόσμος *per se* but its institutions, such as marriage and commerce (7:29b-31a) – what Schneider terms the 'world in its distinctive manifestation'.<sup>424</sup> Against this, Adams observes that the overall framework of this passage is apocalyptic and that in such discourses the stage tends to be cosmic in scope, with a focus upon either the renewal or the destruction and renewal of the entire creation.<sup>425</sup> Whilst it is appropriate to note here Barry Matlock's<sup>426</sup> caution that the epithets apocalyptic and apocalypticism are somewhat indexical notions, not least because the definitions are rarely based solely upon apocalypses, Adams' observation remains basically sound. Paul's eschatology in this passage generates a *prima facie* presumption in favour of κόσμος as a cosmological rather than simply anthropological term, which the absence of textual cues to the contrary supports.

What I find particularly interesting about these two verses however, is the sequence of καὶ...ὥς μὴ... clauses. Although in grammatical terms all five clauses are identical, the first three are simpler interpretatively, since in these cases the ὥς μὴ sub-clause is a straightforward reversal of the verbal idea in the καὶ sub-clause. Vis-

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<sup>422</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.132.

<sup>423</sup> Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.178.

<sup>424</sup> Schneider, 'σχῆμα, μετασχηματίζω' in *TDNT*, vol. 7, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 954-58, p.957.

<sup>425</sup> See the substantial lists of parallel literature in Aune and Adams. Aune, 'Apocalypticism', p.30; Adams, *Constructing The World*, pp.132-33.

<sup>426</sup> Matlock, *Unveiling The Apocalyptic Paul* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), p.261.

à-vis the final two clauses the verbal idea changes in the ὡς μὴ sub-clause. Hence, those who purchase (ἀγοράζοντες) might be as if they do not possess (κατέχοντες), and those who use the world (χρῶμενοι τὸν κόσμον) might be as if they do not use it fully (καταχρῶμενοι).<sup>427</sup>

That Paul uses καταχράομαι in the ὡς μὴ sub-clause is significant, since if he had intended to use the same verbal idea as he does in the καὶ sub-clause he could have conformed to the pattern of the first three statements in the sequence and used the same verb twice.<sup>428</sup> The difference here cannot be one of ‘using’ in contradistinction to ‘abusing’, since καταχράομαι typically bears the sense ‘misuse’ only with the dative (cf. acc. τὸν κόσμον).<sup>429</sup> However, the verb appears only two other times in the entire Bible, in 1 Corinthians 9:18 and 3 Maccabees 5:22, neither of which is particularly illuminating as a parallel. Edward Adams offers a helpful comparison with the statement χρῆσώμεθα τῇ κτίσει (‘let us make use of creation’) in Wisdom 2:6, in which the ungodly talk about making ‘full and unhindered use of creation’s resources’.<sup>430</sup> Indeed, this is a better comparison than Adams himself admits. As with Paul, in Wisdom 2 it is the brevity of the allotted ‘time’ (καιρός Wis 2:5), in this case human mortality, which determines one’s attitude to the things of the world. The ungodly do not know the ‘mysteries of God’ (μυστήρια θεοῦ Wis 2:22, cf. 1 Cor 2:1,4:1), and hence are ignorant of the fact that God’s purpose for humanity is incorruption (ἀφθαρσία Wis 2:22, cf. 1 Cor 15:50). Paul knows this; indeed, he regards the process as having already begun (1 Cor 7:29). As a result, he finds

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<sup>427</sup> I have followed Fee here, but I prefer the definition ‘use to the uttermost, use up’, defn. 2. in Liddell and Scott, ed., *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1889), p.419.

<sup>428</sup> See Héring, *The First Epistle Of Saint Paul To The Corinthians* (London: Epworth, 1962), p.59.

<sup>429</sup> See Liddell and Scott, ed., *Intermediate Lexicon*, p.419. Allo also makes this point. Allo, *St. Paul: Première Épitre Aux Corinthiens* (Paris: Gabalda, 1956), p.179.

<sup>430</sup> See Adams, *Constructing The World*, pp.131-32.

himself in the somewhat paradoxical position of having to counsel those to whom 'all belongs' and 'all is allowed' to use creation but not to use it fully.

#### 4.3.5 1 Corinthians 8:4b-6: 'One God...One Lord...'

οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὐδέν εἰδωλὸν ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ ὅτι οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς.  
καὶ γὰρ εἶπερ εἰσὶν λεγόμενοι θεοὶ εἴτε ἐν οὐρανῶ εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς,  
ὥσπερ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοὶ,  
ἀλλ' ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ  
ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν,  
καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς  
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι' αὐτοῦ.<sup>431</sup>

In this, the final passage to be examined, Paul addresses food associated with 'idol sacrifices' (τά εἰδωλόθυτα 1 Cor 8:1,4).<sup>432</sup> He evidently does so in response to a request for arbitration (cf. περὶ δὲ 8:1), perhaps even due to confusion over his own conduct.<sup>433</sup> The congregation, it seems, was divided into those who objected to the consumption of such food, and those who did not.<sup>434</sup> Paul here addresses this latter party, since his argument throughout concerns the impact of behaviour upon the 'weak' (cf. 8:7ff). The 'strong' believe that their γνώσις (8:1) of the true nature of reality renders (i) no food intrinsically impure and (ii) idols as irrelevant. Accordingly, they consider themselves at liberty to eat such food, perhaps even considering it to be a visible manifestation of their knowledge.<sup>435</sup>

Analysis of these verses is difficult for several reasons: (i) The grammar is difficult to render. (ii) Lexically, there is also the question of the way in which the

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<sup>431</sup> I have followed the arrangement in NA<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>432</sup> I do not think that it is *absolutely* clear whether Paul has only cultic feasts in mind or indeed any food that has been sacrificed. See Horrell, *Social Ethos*, p.145.

<sup>433</sup> See Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.362.

<sup>434</sup> More precisely there were those who believed that to consume such food was to participate in the cult with which it was associated and those who drew the boundary line differently. See Borgen, 'Yes,' 'No,' 'How Far?': The Participation Of Jews And Christians In Pagan Cults' in *Paul In His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Engberg-Pedersen (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1994), 30-59.

<sup>435</sup> Cf. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.6.3; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.622.



various cosmological terms (κόσμος, οὐρανός, γῆ, τὰ πάντα) interrelate. (iii) There are also different reconstructions of the composition of these verses, with some scholars (e.g. Willis)<sup>436</sup> attributing very substantial sections of the material to Paul's interlocutors. (iv) The theological and philosophical content of the verses is also disputed, there being debate not only with regard to whether Paul's apparent cosmological statements here are actually cosmological,<sup>437</sup> but also with regard to the relationship between the prepositional phrases he uses and similar expressions in the philosophy and religions of antiquity.<sup>438</sup> If, however, we begin by addressing the grammatical difficulties, some of these other problems diminish in importance.

The argument begins with a statement of the topic (1 Cor 8:4a), which is immediately followed by what are, by general consent, Corinthian slogans or maxims (8:4b). The logical position of the Corinthian 'strong' could be summarised as 'there is no idol in the world'<sup>439</sup> since 'there is no God but One'. This is more than a statement of strict monotheism, since the logic of monotheism would function just as well, with or without the additional ἐν κόσμῳ. This suggests that the Corinthian position incorporates not only a view of God, but also a positive appraisal of the κόσμος vis-a-vis God.<sup>440</sup> Given the resemblance between Stoic and Cynic popular philosophical expressions and some of the other Corinthian maxims, it is possible that the stance here reflects similar 'Stoicising' influences. One could easily imagine their theological stance towards the material world being couched in a popular philosophy expressed in terms akin to those used by ps.-Aristotle (*Mund.* 6.397.B), ἐκ θεοῦ

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<sup>436</sup> Willis, *Idol Meat In Corinth* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 83ff.

<sup>437</sup> E.g. Murphy-O'Connor, '1 Cor viii.6', p.260f.

<sup>438</sup> E.g. Conzelmann, *1 Kor.*, p.144; Sterling, 'Prepositional Metaphysics', pp.236-38; Dunn, *Theology*, pp.38-39.

<sup>439</sup> I have rendered the slogan thus because it parallels the predicative use of οὐδεὶς in the complementary slogan οὐδεὶς θεὸς ('there is no God...').

<sup>440</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.141.

πάντα καὶ διὰ θεοῦ συνέστηκε ('all things are from God, and through God have been put together') or Marcus Aurelius (*Med.* 4.23), ἐκ σοῦ πάντα, ἐν σοὶ πάντα, εἰς σὲ πάντα ('from you all things, in you all things, unto you all things').

Ostensibly, the subsequent two verses (1 Cor 8:5-6) constitute a single, (apparently) conditional, three-clause sentence of the following form:

*Protasis:* καὶ γὰρ εἴπερ εἰσὶν ('even if indeed there are')...

*Confirmation:* ὡσπερ εἰσὶν ('as indeed there are')...

*Apodosis:* ἀλλ' ἡμῖν ('but for us *there is*')...

With or without the confirmatory clause, the 'but' with which the apodosis commences is somewhat incongruous with the preceding conditions.<sup>441</sup> Strictly speaking the sentence is an anacolouthon; the apparent condition is never really completed.<sup>442</sup> There is however a topical progression through the verses with the θεοὶ πολλοί and κύριοι πολλοί of the confirmatory clause contrasting on the one hand with the θεὸς εἷς of the Corinthian slogan and on the other with the εἷς θεὸς...εἷς κύριος of the apodosis. Since the confirmatory clause is integral to this progression, and without it the verses would read more poorly, it is unlikely on structural grounds that verse 6 is a Corinthian formulation.<sup>443</sup> It may very well be a pre-Pauline confessional or hymnic fragment, since it has a somewhat strophic quality and a distinct metre. Accordingly, since sense must be made of the grammar of these verses, I have followed Barrett and Héring in positing the initial conditional as a hypothetical concession – *even if* (for the sake of argument).<sup>444</sup> When read in this way, the logical problems in this verse do not disappear, but they are considerably diminished.

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<sup>441</sup> A few MSS (P<sup>46</sup> B 33 I<sup>rLa1</sup>) correct this by excluding ἀλλ' but this is an amendment. Cf. NA<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>442</sup> This point is also made by Fee and Thiselton. Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.371; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.631.

<sup>443</sup> Pace Willis, *Idol Meat*

<sup>444</sup> Héring, *First Corinthians*, p.68; Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.191.

In terms of the cosmological lexicon in this passage, there are four principal terms – κόσμος, οὐρανός, γῆ, τὰ πάντα. Given that Paul formulates the protasis of his conditional in response to the Corinthian maxim regarding the existence of idols, the invitation to concede that there are things ‘called Gods’ whether ἐν οὐρανῶ or ἐπὶ γῆς (1 Cor 8:5a) implies the functional synonymy of οὐρανός καὶ γῆ and κόσμος. At the very least this illustrates that Paul acknowledges the traditional cosmological sense of the term κόσμος as the material order, but in electing to use a different designation, it may perhaps show that he seeks to defamiliarise the term.<sup>445</sup> Moreover, since the θεοὶ πολλοὶ and κύριοι πολλοί (8:5b) of the confirmatory clause correspond in some way to the λεγόμενοι θεοί (8:5a) of the protasis, and also contrast with the εἷς θεὸς...εἷς κύριος of the apodosis, this also implies some correspondence between οὐρανός καὶ γῆ and τὰ πάντα. This weighs against Murphy-O’Connor’s argument that τὰ πάντα here is not cosmological, but is exclusively soteriological.<sup>446</sup>

In brief, I think that the argument here turns on three contrasts. (i) There is the one-many-one contrast. Both Paul and the Corinthians concur that there is only *one* God; Paul invites them to remember that there are *many* things acknowledged as gods and lords, but insists on the contrast with the *one* God and *one* Lord of the Christian proclamation. (ii) There is the theological and cosmological contrast. The idol is ἐν κόσμῳ; the many gods and lords are ἐν οὐρανῶ or ἐπὶ γῆς – but since οὐρανός καὶ γῆ maps the same physical arena as κόσμος these expressions are synonymous. The Christian God and Lord, however, are not ἐν κόσμῳ; they are formally prior to the κόσμος, God being the one ἐξ οὐ and the Lord the one δι’ οὐ τὰ πάντα. (iii) Finally,

<sup>445</sup> See Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.141.

<sup>446</sup> Pace Murphy-O’Connor, ‘1 Cor viii.6’, p.260f.

there is the communitarian contrast. Paul begins the apodosis of his sentence ἄλλ' ἡμῖν ('but for us'), which implies that what precedes is 'for them' viz. the devotees of the λεγόμενοι θεοί (8:5a).<sup>447</sup> This is important since, as Adams has noted, Paul is especially concerned with a Corinthian attitude to the κόσμος as emblematic of weak group boundaries.

It remains to explore the significance of the prepositions that Paul uses to describe God (ἐκ, εἰς) and Christ (διὰ) vis-à-vis τὰ πάντα/ἡμεῖς (1 Cor 8:6). Prepositional expressions in the New Testament (e.g. Rom 11:36, Col 1:15-20, Heb 2:10) have been a matter of some considerable debate ever since Eduard Norden<sup>448</sup> proposed that such formulae borrowed a *technical* philosophical usage from the Stoics. This debate is not about whether Paul's terminology resembles that of Stoicism, since commentators who would ordinarily press the Jewish background for this material, readily include the lists of Hellenistic parallels assembled in the first instance by Norden.<sup>449</sup> The first major objection comes from Albert Schweitzer, who observes that the narrative structure implied in Paul's use of prepositions has far less to do with what he characterises as the static Hellenistic worldview<sup>450</sup> and far more to do with 'late Jewish Eschatology'.<sup>451</sup> Vis-à-vis Romans 11:36, Schweitzer notes that unlike the Stoics, Paul's somewhat apocalyptic perspective means that he cannot

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<sup>447</sup> Gordon Fee notes this point. Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.373

<sup>448</sup> Norden, *Agnostos Theos: Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), p.240ff.

<sup>449</sup> The most frequently cited texts are Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* 4.23; Seneca, *Epistulae Morales Ad Lucilium* 65.8; Aristotle, *Mund.* 6.397.B.

<sup>450</sup> This is not to state that Hellenistic philosophies and cosmologies were solid-state systems. The Stoic cycles of διακόσμησις ('cosmic ordering') and ἐκπύρωσις ('conflagration') are good examples of this. See further Wright, *Cosmology In Antiquity*, pp.141-44; Reydams-Schils, *Demiurge And Providence*, ed. Lévy (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp.71-78.

<sup>451</sup> Schweitzer, *The Mysticism Of Paul The Apostle* (London: A.&C. Black, 1931), p.11.

describe the cosmos as ἐν God. For the interim, believers must be content with 'being-in-Christ'.

Significantly later studies by Richard Horsley<sup>452</sup> and James Dunn<sup>453</sup> suggested that Paul's use of mediatorial language to describe Christ alongside the strict affirmation of the oneness of God coheres best with the matrix of Jewish wisdom conceptuality (e.g. Prov 3:19; Wis 7:26; Sir 24:9) and not in the first instance the Hellenistic terminology that it superficially resembles. Recently, however, Gregory Sterling has gone some way towards a qualified rehabilitation of Norden's initial hypothesis of a technical sense to this terminology. He posits a background in Stoicism and Middle-Platonism, mediated by philosophically literate Judaism (e.g. Philo, *Cher.* 125-27; *Leg. All.* III.7; *Spec. Leg.* I.208), and this indicates that the first Christians need not have been philosophers in order to use the technical sense of these prepositions. Sterling's hypothesis is in some places speculative, especially with respect to (i) 1 Corinthians 8:6, which he regards as a mixed text evincing both Stoic and middle Platonic influences,<sup>454</sup> and (ii) the provenance of this terminology in synagogue liturgies.<sup>455</sup> Given the preceding sections of this chapter, I am minded to offer qualified agreement to his proposal and suggest that Paul's usage here is at least *semi-technical*, insofar as the views of his interlocutors require him to address certain Stoicising influences and, as Adams notes, a Hellenistic cosmos ideology.

In terms of the semi-technical use of διὰ[+gen.] in 1 Corinthians 8:6 to describe the instrumental agency of the Lord, the scholarly debate has been dominated

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<sup>452</sup> Horsley, 'The Background Of The Confessional Formula In 1 Kor 8:6', *ZNW* 69 (1978), 130-35; Horsley, 'Gnosis At Corinth: I Corinthians 8.1-6' in *Christianity At Corinth: The Quest For The Pauline Church*, ed. Adams and Horrell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 119-28.

<sup>453</sup> Dunn, *Christology In The Making* (London: SCM, 1989), p.168ff; Dunn, *Theology*, p.267ff.

<sup>454</sup> Sterling, 'Prepositional Metaphysics', p.235f.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*, p.236f.

by questions of pre-existence, and whether the verse constitutes a departure from the traditional Jewish confession of God's unity, the *Shema* (Deut 6:4).<sup>456</sup> It is not my intention here to attempt to resolve this discussion, merely to observe the similarities between the language of intermediate agency here and the notion of the λόγος in Philo. The role of the λόγος θεοῦ (*Cher.* 127) in cosmogenesis is described using technical causal language; it is analogous to the tools by means of which (διά[+gen.]) a builder builds a house. This usage, however, is not consistent throughout Philo. Elsewhere (*Op.* 25), the λόγος corresponds to the model (παράδειγμα) according to which (κατά) God creates.<sup>457</sup>

Returning to the first half of the confession, it is notable that Paul (if indeed it was formulated by Paul) disrupts the traditional symmetry of the ἐκ and εἰς clauses in prepositional formulae of this type (cf. Rom 11:36) by stating ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν ('from whom *all things* and *we* unto him' 1 Cor 8:6a). Symmetry between the clauses is a particularly longstanding and common tendency in expressions of this type in Greek philosophy, being manifest in at least two forms:<sup>458</sup>

Form 1: X from Y and X unto Y

e.g. ἐκ κόσμου πάντα καὶ εἰς κόσμον (Philo, *Leg. All.* III.7)<sup>459</sup>  
ἐκ σοῦ πάντα...εἰς σὲ πάντα (M. Aurelius, *Med.* 4.23).

Form 2: X from Y and Y from X

e.g. ἐκ πάντων ἓν καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα (ps.-Aristotle, *Mund.* 5.396.B)<sup>460</sup>  
ἐξ ἑνὸς πολλὰ καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν ἓν (Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.199.B)

Both of these patterns of expression derive, in the final analysis, not from the Stoic acclamations, but from pre-Socratic explanations of the physical world, in

<sup>456</sup> On this debate see Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion And Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (London: SCM, 1988), pp.93-124; Wright, *The Climax Of The Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp.120-36 (ch.6); Dunn, *Theology*, p.28ff., p.267ff.

<sup>457</sup> Cf. the *id ad quod* in Seneca, *Ep.* 65.8; also Gen 1:26-27 LXX (κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ).

<sup>458</sup> Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 1.208.A exhibits both forms.

<sup>459</sup> This forms part of a reference to the doctrines of Heraclitus, i.e. the Stoic physics.

<sup>460</sup> This is, in fact, a Heraclitan fragment. Heraclitus, *Fr.* 10.

particular the role of the elements in generation and corruption and the relationship between the one and the many.<sup>461</sup> They tended to describe a ‘zero-sum’ procession and return/exchange of ‘all things’ ἐκ one element and back εἰς the same element or another (e.g. Thales, water; Xenophanes, earth; Heraclitus, fire).<sup>462</sup> In subsuming the basic model of Heraclitan physics into early Stoic philosophy, it is therefore no surprise that the Stoics carried over this basic symmetrical description of coming-to-be and passing-away, unity and plurality, into their cosmological and religious expressions; applying it for instance to statements about God, the cosmos, nature and, in terms of the doctrine of conflagration, fire.

Against this background, it is somewhat surprising that Paul should use a non-symmetrical acclamation formula, describing ‘all things’ here as ἐκ God but ‘not all things’ (‘we’ viz. the church) εἰς God. It has been something of an exegetical commonplace to press this into a distinction between the soteriological and cosmological uses of these prepositions.<sup>463</sup> Indeed, I do not deny the soteriological reference, since the statement ‘and we through him’ (καὶ ἡμεῖς δι’ αὐτοῦ 1 Cor 8:6b) manifestly refers to the saving act of God through Christ, and sets the scene for the ethical inference regarding the ‘[weak] brother for whom Christ died’ (8:11). Nevertheless, I see no reason to press for a firm distinction between soteriology and cosmology here, since it is arguable that in several places in Paul soteriology itself is either a cosmological occurrence or is couched in cosmological language (e.g. Rom 8:18-23, 2 Cor 5:17, Gal 4:1-10).<sup>464</sup> Given this, the expression ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν (1

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<sup>461</sup> Rosemary Wright cites Empedocles, *Fr.* 17.1-2: ‘one from many...many from one’. Wright, *Cosmology In Antiquity*, p.64.

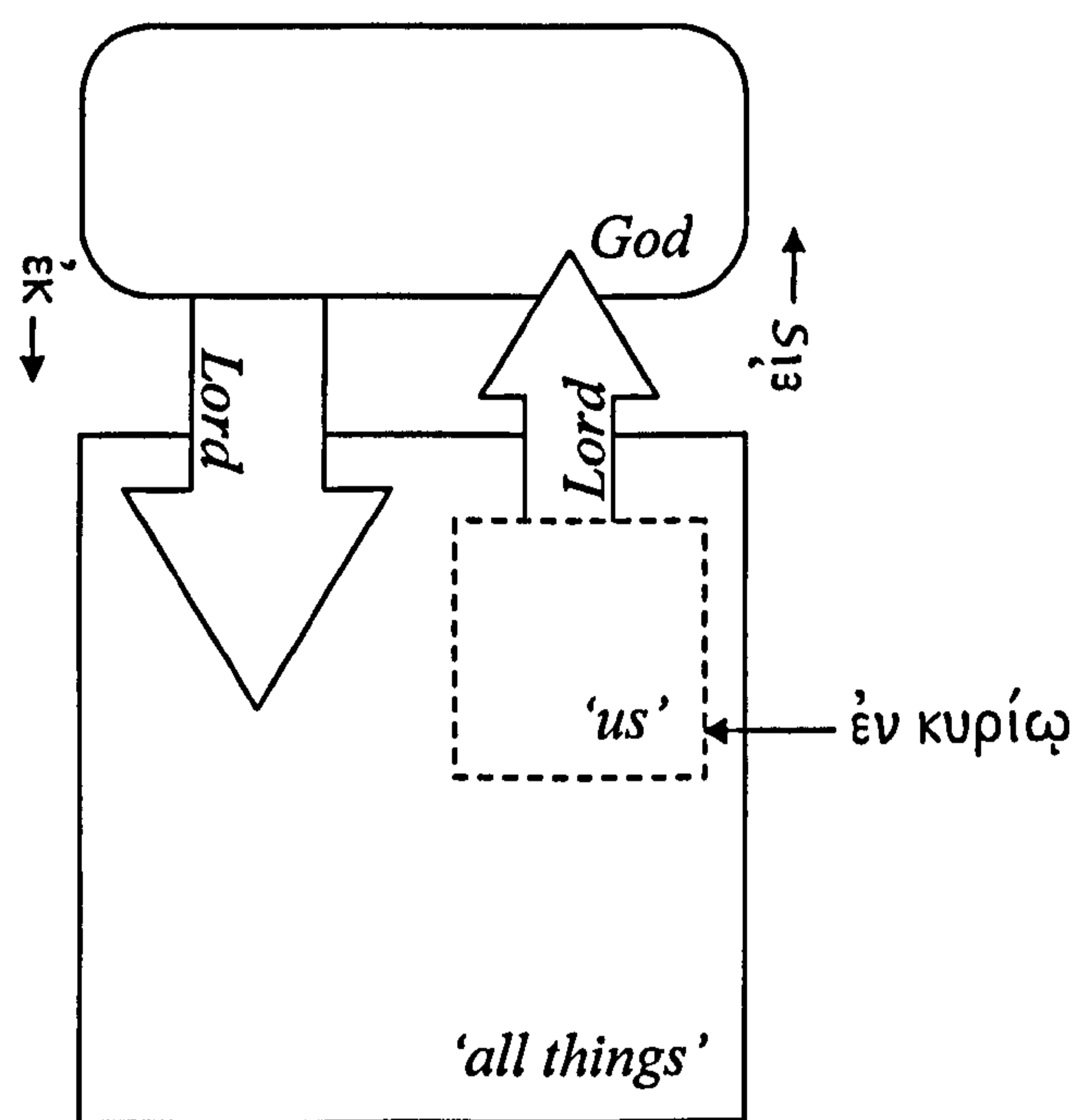
<sup>462</sup> E.g. Xenophanes, *Fragments* 27: ἐκ γαίης πάντα, καὶ εἰς γῆν πάντα τελευτᾶ.

<sup>463</sup> With the exception, as has already been noted, of Murphy-O'Connor, ‘1 Cor viii.6’ who treats the whole verse as soteriological.

<sup>464</sup> This recapitulates Markus Barth’s point. Cf. section 4.2.4; Barth, ‘Christ’, pp.160-72.

Cor 8:6a) ought not to be understood as a soteriological statement *not* a cosmological one, but rather as soteriology *expressed by means of* cosmology, perhaps even cosmological salvation (cf. 1 Cor 15:23-28). If this is the case, then it marks out the Church (cf. ἡμεῖς) as cosmic space; for Paul, the boundaries of the Christian community circumscribe that part of the κόσμος that is ordered correctly εἰς God (see Figure 4.2 below).

Figure 4.2: Paul's Prepositions In 1 Corinthians 8:6<sup>465</sup>



The bearing that this has upon the principal topics of the passage, the status of an idol *in the world* (1 Cor 8:4) and the consumption of idol food, is that it allows Paul to negotiate a very fine distinction between on the one hand maintaining his basic qualified agreement with some of the Corinthian slogans, and on the other dissuading the 'strong' from continuing along their assimilationist path. Although 'all things are allowed' (6:12), the statement ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν ('we to him' 8:6a) is important materially and cosmologically because it implies that *not* 'all things' in the

<sup>465</sup> This diagram is repeated in the final discussion of ch.5.



cosmos are well; through a clever piece of ‘linguistic defamiliarization’<sup>466</sup> it introduces an element of dystopia. A cosmos worthy of integration would be one in which τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν, whereas Paul’s statement reaffirms his insistence that the Corinthians ought to be careful in their interaction with those on the outside who are *not* εἰς God. This will, of course, be especially the case with respect to Graeco-Roman religions, which are, *par excellence*, *not* εἰς God.

#### 4.3.6 Section Summary

Following an initial terminological survey, this examination of four significant texts, in which Paul either articulates a relationship to the material world/cosmos or engages with his interlocutors’ use of this register, has demonstrated the following: (i) The slogan πάντα ἔξεστιν (‘all things are allowed’ 1 Cor 6:12; 10:23) resembles certain traditions in Stoic and Cynic moral philosophies,<sup>467</sup> suggesting perhaps that the Corinthian ‘strong’ (and Paul?) were influenced by what Paige terms a ‘Stoicising’ popular philosophy.<sup>468</sup> Paul offers qualified agreement with the maxim but, betraying similar influences (cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 116.5; Epict., *Disc.* 3.12.4-6),<sup>469</sup> advocates avoiding things that can enslave the will. Where he differs from his interlocutors is in his insistence upon the good of the community and the eschatological significance of the body. (ii) The possible influence of popular philosophies is apparent with respect to the statement πάντα ὑμῶν (‘all things are yours’ 3:21-22). That the wisdom of the wise allowed them to live according to nature and thereby to be kings and owners of all was a fairly common notion (cf. Seneca, *Ben.* 7.3.2-7.4.3) and the same ideas

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<sup>466</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.113.

<sup>467</sup> On the many such similarities see Downing, *Cynics*.

<sup>468</sup> Paige, ‘Stoicism’, p.210.

<sup>469</sup> I owe the Seneca reference to Malherbe, ‘Determinism’, p.234.

are observable in Paul's response. Once again, he does not dispute the logic of the Corinthian position, but its premises and application; they fail to take account of the fact that the wisdom of the world has been abolished in the cross and that the world is not as ordered as it seems.

(iii) The somewhat ambiguous relationship with the material cosmos is again repeated in 1 Cor 7:29-31 in Paul's statements that the 'time is shortened' and the 'pattern of the world is passing away'. The incongruity between the verb tenses in these two statements suggests that Paul's eschatology is inaugurated; the gospel does not merely announce the abolition of the cosmic rulers (2:6), it commences the process. As such, even for those to whom 'all things are allowed', the incursion of the future into the present involves not using creation as if it might be either possessed or fully used (7:30). (iv) The argument leading up to and including the confessional formula of 1 Corinthians 8:6 involved several interpretative issues. Principally concerning the exercise of liberty regarding the consumption of idol food, it touches upon two key issues – the question of God's relationship to the material world and the boundaries of the Christian community. It was seen that Paul utilises a prepositional formula similar to those used in several religious and philosophical contexts in Graeco-Roman antiquity. What makes his confessional statement notable is the way in which his language regarding the relationship of the cosmos to God subverts the traditional expectations of this form. Whilst 'all things' are ἐκ God, it is the Church that is εἰς God. This implies that the Church itself is, for Paul, a form of cosmic space defined by its separation from the κόσμος.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

In this concluding section of the chapter, I seek to draw together the strands of the ongoing discussion between Paul and his interlocutors in 1 Corinthians as to the relationship between God, the Church and the world. The purpose of this is to situate the subsequent chapter's discussion of gender in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 in a suitable context. The chapter began with an analysis of Rudolf Bultmann's, Hermann Sasse's and Edward Adams' studies of the Greek term κόσμος. It was observed that, whilst both Bultmann's and Sasse's studies remain important, there are significant shortcomings that affect their usefulness. In particular, their tendency to reduce the cosmological to the purely anthropological proved to be unwarranted, as did their exegetical fallacy of mistakenly applying the entire semantic range of a term to all of its occurrences. Edward Adams' approach to the term κόσμος proved to be a significant step forward. Arguing on the basis of a more nuanced linguistic theory, Adams addresses Pauline uses of κόσμος on a case-by-case basis and concludes that the term is not generally anthropological but is a proper cosmological term. Going beyond both Bultmann and Sasse, Adams argues that Paul changes the way in which the term is used for socio-rhetorical purposes, namely the inversion of the ideology associated with an ordered, united, beautiful, paradigmatic, and praiseworthy world.

The exegetical section of the chapter began with a survey of Paul's cosmological terms, and this was condensed into an examination of four significant texts. The purpose of this investigation was not, as in the case of Adams, to discover what Paul puts into the terms he uses; it was instead to attempt to delineate a basic notion of the relationship between God, Christ, Church and cosmos in 1 Corinthians. It was seen that at several points both the Corinthians and Paul's discourses regarding the cosmos are punctuated by 'Stoic-like' sapiential arguments, and that whilst Paul

qualifies the way in which these arguments are applied, he does not dissent from them altogether. Nevertheless, Adams is correct when he suggests that Paul also punctuates his cosmological discourses with apocalyptic notions, and that these tend to undermine the somewhat harmonious relationships the Corinthian 'strong' appear to envisage between themselves, the cosmos and God. However, that Paul only qualifies their arguments, appearing to agree in various places with both their assumptions and their logic, seems to suggest that his theoretical stance is perhaps closer to theirs than Adams' analysis indicates. Since the argument regarding the exalted status and freedom of the wise is connected in Stoicism to the notion of living in conformity to nature (cf. *Diog. Laert.* 7.87-9, 122-5; *Epict., Disc.* 3.1.25), and by implication to the notion of humanity as a microcosm, this perhaps suggests that Paul's response to the Hellenistic ideology is somewhat more subtle than straightforward opposition.

To express this slightly differently; although Paul is clearly opposed to the practical outcomes of this ideology – assimilationism and compromise with a sinful κόσμος – it is not immediately apparent whether his theoretical objection to it concerns: (i) the ideals associated with the notion of a world that is ordered, united, beautiful, paradigmatic and praiseworthy, or (ii) the fact that these ideals cannot correspond to the world as it happens to be. Adams seems to acknowledge both of these positions. On the one hand he observes that 'the standard positive links are turned into adverse ones: κόσμος is the "ordered" and "unified" world of opposition to God'.<sup>470</sup> Here, it would seem, Adams believes Paul has in his sights the ideals themselves. On the other hand, he observes that 'κόσμος is no longer the well-ordered, beautiful, praiseworthy and ever-enduring world to which humans are

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<sup>470</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.147.

microcosmically linked'.<sup>471</sup> Here, by contrast, Adams implies that Paul affirms the *ideal* embodied in the κόσμος ideology, even if he denies its applicability to this particular world (ὁ κόσμος οὗτος).

I find it difficult to imagine Paul being opposed to the ideal of a world that is ordered and united in a harmonious relationship towards (εἰς 1 Cor 8:6) God. Indeed, his notion of the cosmic victory of Christ over his 'enemies', the rulers of the present cosmic age (2:6) and even death itself (15:26), seems to presume this ideal, insofar as it regards the victory of Christ in terms of making possible the correct ordering of the cosmos towards God, who will then be τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν (15:28). What I think that this suggests is that Paul is working on the basis of notions regarding the cosmos that overlap his Corinthian 'strong' interlocutors. It is not that his opposition to their cosmic ideology entails a thoroughgoing rejection of its logic or its ideals; it is rather that opposition to God eschatologically ruptures Paul's view of the harmony of the world. The cosmos presently is not a suitable candidate for integration, because that which ought to be εἰς (1 Cor 8:6) God is *not* εἰς God, with the major exception being the Christian community (ἡμεῖς 8:6).

#### 4.4.1 Paul's Characterisation Of The Church

It is in this connection that Paul's characterisation of the Church as a *body* into which one ought to integrate in 1 Corinthians is particularly interesting. Dale Martin, in his study of body discourses in this epistle, notes that the rhetoric of social embodiment – the *homonoia* speech – is particularly important in constructing a social ethos of concord.<sup>472</sup> He cites the account of such a speech in Livy (*Urb.* 2.32.7-11), which includes a parable in which the various members of the body refuse to work, on

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<sup>471</sup> Ibid., p.148. Italics mine.

<sup>472</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, pp.92-94.

account of the fact that the belly does not share in their labours (§9). Intending to ‘subdue the belly by famine’ (§10), the various members of the body actually starve themselves. The purpose of the parable is to commend an ethos of harmonious cooperation and concord. Paul’s application to the Church of what Martin terms the ‘society-as-body topos’ is clearly motivated by similar concerns – although the body comprises many members it remains a single body (τὸ σῶμα ἓν ἐστὶν καὶ μέλη πολλὰ ἔχει 1 Cor 12:12). However, in Stoic thought the city-as-body topos was in fact construed in terms of the cosmos. In Cicero (*Off.* 3.5.21ff)<sup>473</sup> there is a descending continuity between the order of the cosmos, the city, the individual and the body, in which the ‘bonds of human society’ analogously correspond to the bonds within the body (and within the cosmos), being subject to the same Laws of Nature (§27). Accordingly, failure to integrate is ‘contrary to Nature’ (§21).<sup>474</sup>

Paul’s insistence that the Corinthians must not assimilate the values of wider Graeco-Roman culture ought to be held alongside his portrayal of the Church as a suitable social body into which one ought to integrate. Together with the cosmological language by which he articulates the Christian community’s relationship to God in 1 Corinthians 8:6, this suggests that his logic resembles an eschatologically deferred variant of the Stoic argument noted above. That is to say, I think that Paul’s cosmological reference points are the κόσμος-as-it-was-originally and the κόσμος-as-it-will-be. However, he cannot regard the κόσμος-as-it-is as paradigmatic for Christians;<sup>475</sup> it is subject to the rulers of the age (2:6) and its inhabitants are led astray to idols (πρὸς τὰ εἰδῶλα 1 Cor 12:2 cf. 8:6; Thess 1:9) and enslaved to those things which by nature are not gods (Gal 4:8).

<sup>473</sup> Martin (*Ibid.*, p.268n15) cites this passage, but does not make the same inference I make here.

<sup>474</sup> I deal with the relationship of these issues to gender discourses in ch.6.

<sup>475</sup> So Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, p.11.

By contrast, the Church becomes the site in which 'things' can be redirected back towards (εἰς) their proper *telos* in God (1 Cor 8:6). Of necessity, this implies that the conduct of meetings ought to be characterised by good order (14:40), mutual advantage (12:7) and the affirmation of the intrinsic goodness of the structures and relationships that God placed within the κόσμος at the beginning (11:7-15). Given also that the Church is the location in which God, by the various gifts and ministries of the one Spirit and one Lord, works 'all in all' (τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν 12:6), it also anticipates the final consummation of all things.

#### 4.4.2 The Application To 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

How then does this prepare the ground for an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16? As I shall argue in the next chapter, these verses comprise a coherent, although very complicated, logical structure. In the first instance, the passage relates female attire to the ancient Mediterranean notion of females as repositories of male honour (11:3-6).<sup>476</sup> However, one does not need to dig very deeply before one unearths an argument from creation by which Paul naturalises, or roots in creation, what would otherwise be an arbitrary concession to prevailing social mores (11:7-12).<sup>477</sup> What one discovers is that male and female codes of attire are, for Paul, matters of creation; they express a natural difference. This difference is described using the same prepositional distinctions (ἐκ, διὰ[+gen.]), that one finds in Paul's prepositional confession in 1 Corinthians 8:6, and Paul himself makes the connection to cosmology by stating 'all things are from God' (τά δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ 11:12b). This alone constitutes a significant enough parallel to warrant the question of how Paul situates his model of human sexual differentiation in relation to his cosmology.

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<sup>476</sup> See ch.5.3.2.

<sup>477</sup> See ch.5.3.3.

Moreover, this passage also contains the only instance of the Greek term φύσις (1 Cor 11:14) in the entire epistle.<sup>478</sup> This again is significant because, as has been seen, the Stoicising influences to which the Corinthian 'strong' appear to be subject make it intrinsically likely that this word would have been part of their repertoire of material and cosmological terminology. It will be seen that Paul's response to the dilemma of whether females ought to be covered or uncovered in Church meetings falls squarely into Stoic discourses concerning natural sexual differences and living in accordance with nature. This of course begs the question of why Paul enjoins integration into the gendered structures of the cosmos when he elsewhere rejects assimilationism and integration into the cosmos outright; does he speak out of both sides of his mouth? In the next chapter, I will suggest that Paul argues the way that he does regarding veiling because he believes females to be metaphysically inferior to males,<sup>479</sup> and that in the final analysis his view of the sexes is conditioned by two factors. On the one hand, Paul seems to see males and females vis-à-vis one another as microcosms of God and Christ vis-à-vis the cosmos.<sup>480</sup> On the other hand, this too is conditioned by the apocalyptic eschatology that frames Paul's cosmology throughout this epistle.<sup>481</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> See ch.5.3.4.

<sup>479</sup> See ch.5.4.1.

<sup>480</sup> See ch.5.4.2(i).

<sup>481</sup> See ch.5.4.1(ii).



## 5. GOD, GENDER AND COSMOLOGICAL LANGUAGE IN 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16

### 5.1 Introduction

#### 5.1.1 Summary Of Previous Chapters

Chapter 2 of this thesis introduces the question of how to understand Scripture in relation to gender by first examining the discourses of a particular dispute within predominantly Anglophone evangelicalism regarding gender roles– the headship controversy. After an initial literature survey, the analysis concentrates upon one strand of the debate – the gender and Trinity argument – chiefly because this argument concerns the interpretation of a single biblical passage (1 Cor 11:2-16) and thus constitutes a definable case study. On the basis of 1 Corinthians 11:3, parties to this dispute regard the relationship between the first and second persons of the Trinity as paradigmatic of the relationship between men and women. Whereas evangelical feminists construe both relationships in non-subordinationist terms, evangelical traditionalists argue that the *functional* subordination of the Son to the Father and, by extension, of females to males is to be affirmed. This debate is interesting because it illustrates the hermeneutical axioms and principles upon which evangelical readings of Scripture are based. In chapter 3 my analysis of the operation of these principles demonstrates that the gender and Trinity argument is both unsuccessful and incoherent. It is unsuccessful because invoking the doctrine of God in this way has not resolved, but intensified, the dispute, since it now concerns not only gender and church order but also a cardinal tenet of Christian belief. It is incoherent because the hermeneutical principles brought to bear upon the text assume an epistemology at odds with that of the epistle in which the central text of this argument is situated.

### **5.1.2 The Argument Of This Chapter**

None of this is to suggest that the gender and Trinity argument is wholly mistaken. Indeed, the purpose of chapters 4 and 5 is to demonstrate that for Paul the doctrine of God and human sexual differentiation *are* related matters. However, it is my contention that God and gender are connected by cosmological discourse in Paul. Chapter 4 explores Paul's cosmological register in 1 Corinthians, including terms that appear in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. It also shows that the cosmos was commonly regarded as an ordered system constituted by hierarchical participatory relationships of microcosm to macrocosm, the cosmic role of macrocosmic entities being paradigmatic for microcosmic realities such as human society, family and biology. Paul's apocalypticism leads him to regard the pattern of the present age to be passing away (1 Cor 7:31), and the cosmological language he applies to the Church indicates that it is the microcosm of a future cosmological order (1 Cor 12:6; 15:28) which stands in opposition to the present age. This chapter is concerned with the application of this understanding to Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. To this end, the main body of the chapter is divided into three sections. The first (5.2) considers pre-exegetical matters such as textual variance, authenticity and basic rhetorical divisions. The second (5.3) is an exposition of Paul's argument. The third (5.4) relates 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 to the cosmological language explored in chapter 4 of this thesis.

### **5.2 Preliminary Considerations**

Formally prior to my exegesis are the tasks of (i) deciding between variant readings of the text, (ii) determining its authenticity and integrity and (iii) delineating its basic rhetorical structure. These tasks are especially important given my contention that Paul's cosmological notions in 1 Corinthians are the appropriate context within which

to understand his view of human gender in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, since questions regarding the authenticity and integrity of the passage necessarily reflect upon the question of its relationship to the rest of the epistle. As shall be seen, none of this passage's textual variants is sufficiently attested or significant enough to alter Paul's argument substantially, and in terms of its literary characteristics, I argue that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is authentic, and I identify the basic rhetorical divisions around which my exegesis of the passage will be structured.

### 5.2.1 The Text

There are several variants relating to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, the majority of which would, if sufficiently attested, be of little significance to the overall argument.<sup>482</sup> However, four are potentially significant<sup>483</sup> – (i) αὐτῆς (v.5) is rendered ἐαυτῆς by some manuscripts,<sup>484</sup> (ii) ἄνδρα (v.9) is rendered ἄνθρωπον in a single important witness,<sup>485</sup> (iii) a few secondary witnesses<sup>486</sup> attest to the variant reading κάλυμμα instead of ἐξουσίαν (v.10), and (iv) the order of the clauses γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς and ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς (v.11) is reversed in some significant witnesses.<sup>487</sup> Of these four variants, the second (v.9) is insufficiently attested to be warranted. Whilst the fourth has significant support, it is unattested in all of the significant earlier manuscripts, and it also breaks the obvious chiasmic arrangement of the section in

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<sup>482</sup> (i) ἀδελφοί included after ὑμᾶς (v.2) in D F G Ψ 33 ℵ latt sy; Ambst.; (ii) πανταχοῦ (v.2) included after παρέδωκα in F G b d.; (iii) ὁ before χριστός (v.3) omitted in B\* D\* F G.; (iv) ἡ (v.14) included before οὐδὲ in D<sup>1</sup> ℵ sy<sup>hms</sup> sa.; (v) αὐτῆ (v.15) omitted in ℘<sup>46</sup> D F G Ψ ℵ b; Ambst. See NA<sup>27</sup> critical apparatus.

<sup>483</sup> See the relevant sections below.

<sup>484</sup> B D<sup>2</sup> 6. 629. 945 pm.

<sup>485</sup> ℘<sup>46</sup>

<sup>486</sup> vg<sup>mss</sup> bo<sup>pt</sup>; Ptol<sup>lr</sup>. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.8.2. Irenaeus cites this version of 1 Cor 11:10 in a section recounting Valentinian exegesis.

<sup>487</sup> D<sup>2</sup> K L vg.

which it is situated (vv.8-9,11-12).<sup>488</sup> The final two variants (i and iii) are, in my view, probably best explained as later clarifying glosses, since on the one hand the replacement of αὐτῆς with the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτῆς clarifies which ‘head’ is being disgraced in verse 5,<sup>489</sup> and on the other hand the very poorly attested κάλυμμα evidently clarifies what is meant by the term ἐξουσία in verse 10. For this reason, these variants are probably not authentic, since the replacement of unclear terms with clear terms is more easily explicable than the replacement of clear with unclear.<sup>490</sup> As such, the text here corresponds to NA<sup>27</sup>, with the one exception being that I have followed Thiselton in excluding the disputed αὐτῆ in verse 15b.<sup>491</sup>

### 5.2.2 Authenticity And Integrity

The notion that Paul’s cosmological language in 1 Corinthians is a suitable matrix within which to read 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 presumes (i) the literary integrity of the epistle and (ii) the authenticity of the passage. In terms of the epistle, several scholars have argued that in its present form it is a redaction of several inextant letters.<sup>492</sup> For several reasons I am unconvinced by these proposals. First, these partition hypotheses depend not upon text-critical evidence but upon their usefulness in explaining perceived conflicts of content.<sup>493</sup> Second, the proliferation of mutually exclusive partition hypotheses suggests that none of them is particularly successful in explaining comprehensively the phenomena of the text. Finally, the principle of economy would

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<sup>488</sup> See section 5.3.3.

<sup>489</sup> See Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.498n25.

<sup>490</sup> *Lectio Difficilior Potior*.

<sup>491</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.843. NA<sup>27</sup> brackets the term.

<sup>492</sup> E.g. Weiss, Goguel, Schmithals, Héring. See Héring, *First Corinthians*, pp.xii-xv; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, pp.36-37.

<sup>493</sup> E.g. Jean Héring on tensions between 1 Cor 8 and 1 Cor 10:1-22. Héring, *First Corinthians*, pp.xiii. Also the tensions between 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 1 Cor 14:33-36.

suggest that if apparent conflicts of content in 1 Corinthians can be explained without recourse to partition hypotheses then the simpler explanation will suffice. Since recent rhetorical commentaries have been able to explain the content of the epistle without partitioning it<sup>494</sup> I assume at the outset the integrity of 1 Corinthians.

In terms of the passage, whilst most commentators treat 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 as authentic, some regard it as an interpolation and question its compositional integrity. William Walker<sup>495</sup> is perhaps the most prominent advocate of the interpolation theory, offering literary, contextual, linguistic and theological arguments in favour of his stance. Since in my view the strongest of his arguments is theological, I shall summarise it here. Regarding 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 as a post-Pauline gloss, Walker argues that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 constitutes the sole evidence in the authentic Paulines of gender subordinationism. Given that there is little dispute regarding the authenticity of Paul's more egalitarian statements (cf. Gal 3:28), and that Walker follows Garry Trompf<sup>496</sup> in positing theological similarities between 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 1 Timothy 2:13-15, he argues that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is theologically more characteristic of post-Pauline than Pauline thought. On this basis he infers that it is an interpolation.

In terms of Walker's theological argument, it is far from clear that the disjunction he posits between 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and apparently egalitarian passages actually exists; Dale Martin and Wayne Meeks have each demonstrated that notions of gender unity, even androgyny, in passages such as Galatians 3:26-28 are by

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<sup>494</sup> Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*; Witherington, *Conflict And Community*.

<sup>495</sup> Walker, '1 Corinthians 11:2-16 And Paul's Views Regarding Women', *JBL* 94:1 (1975), 94-110; Walker, 'The Vocabulary Of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16: Pauline Or Non-Pauline', *JSNT* 11:35 (1989), 75-88.

<sup>496</sup> Trompf, 'On Attitudes Towards Women In Paul And Paulinist Literature: 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 And Its Context', *CBQ* 42 (1980), 196-215.

no means inimical to the hierarchical pattern of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.<sup>497</sup> Moreover, recent rhetorical studies emphasising the unity of the epistle tend generally to weigh against the interpolation theory, since they provide plausible synthetic accounts of its language and content.<sup>498</sup> Finally, David Horrell<sup>499</sup> makes some pertinent observations regarding Walker's linguistic and literary arguments. He argues that variations in vocabulary and rhetorical pattern between 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and the rest of the epistle are not evidence of interpolation, since such variation is explicable as Paul adapting his rhetorical style and vocabulary to the topic he addresses. Additionally, Horrell observes that the absence of any textual evidence for interpolation makes Walker's thesis speculative at best and therefore methodologically suspect. On account of this, I remain unconvinced that this passage is an interpolation.<sup>500</sup>

### 5.2.3 Rhetorical Divisions

There has been little consensus regarding the rhetorical structure of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, or indeed whether it is a single argument or a series of arguments. At the outset, William Walker's<sup>501</sup> argument that the passage is a synthesis of three conceptually incompatible pericopae (A, vv.3,8-9,11-12; B, vv.4-7,10,13,16; C, vv.14-15) must be rejected on logical grounds, since it turns on the passage being an interpolation and this stance has been rejected. Nevertheless, even among those commentators who assume the integrity of the passage there are disagreements over

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<sup>497</sup> Meeks, 'The Image Of The Androgyne: Some Uses Of A Symbol In Earliest Christianity', *HistR* 13:3 (1974), 165-208; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.229ff.

<sup>498</sup> E.g. Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, pp.261-62.

<sup>499</sup> Horrell, *Social Ethos*, pp.168-69

<sup>500</sup> See also Murphy-O'Connor, 'The Non-Pauline Character Of 1 Cor 11:2-16', *JBL* 95:4 (1976), 615-21; Murphy-O'Connor, '1 Cor 11:2-16 Once Again', *CBQ* 50 (1988), 275-74.

<sup>501</sup> Walker, *Interpolations In The Pauline Letters*, ed. Porter (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), pp.121-26.

how to divide its content. Jean Héring<sup>502</sup> divides the main body of the passage (vv.7-16) into arguments from creation order (1 Cor. 11:7-10a), angelology (v.10b), and social propriety (v.13ff.), whereas Gregory Lockwood<sup>503</sup> divides exactly the same material into a creation (1 Cor. 11:7-10), redemption (vv.11-12), creation (vv.14-15) pattern. Alan Padgett further complicates this picture by attributing verses 4-7 of the passage to the Corinthians, whom Paul cites only to refute (vv.7-16). He derives this reading from the apparent contradiction between a woman's hair as ἄντι περιβολαίου in verse 15 and the initial material which commends covering.<sup>504</sup> Nevertheless, other than this apparent contradiction, there is little signal in the text that Paul cites the Corinthians as extensively as Padgett proposes.

Notwithstanding this interpretative diversity, I think that the basic contours of Paul's argument are discernable. At the level of a structural analysis, the chiasmic arrangement identified throughout by both Gordon Fee<sup>505</sup> and Wolfgang Schrage<sup>506</sup> strongly suggests rhetorical unity,<sup>507</sup> although Fee is correct in identifying within this structure a tripartite division of subject matter – culture and shame (vv.3-6), creation (vv.7-12) and propriety (vv.13-16).<sup>508</sup> Close attention to the textual cues in the passage indicates that the logic of each of these thematic divisions turns upon a basic male-female contrast, the first concerning the way in which inappropriate attire dishonours the person who happens to be one's head (vv.4-5), the second concerning attire and the created differences between males and females (vv.7,10) and the last

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<sup>502</sup> Héring, *First Corinthians*, p.102.

<sup>503</sup> Lockwood, *1 Corinthians* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2000), pp.369-79.

<sup>504</sup> I address this point in section 5.3.4 below.

<sup>505</sup> Fee arranges the entire passage according to a chiasmic interplay of ἀνὴρ and γυνή. Fee, *First Corinthians*, pp.493-94.

<sup>506</sup> Schrage, *Erste Brief*, p.490.

<sup>507</sup> E.g. Table 5.1 below.

<sup>508</sup> Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.498ff.

concerning honour and natural patterns of coiffure (vv.14-15). Whereas in the first of these divisions the contrast is implied in the close parallelism of the statements, in the second and third it is made explicit by the use of the particles μέν...δέ ('on the one hand...on the other' vv.7,10; vv.14-15).

Two observations pertain to Paul's use of male-female parallelism in these divisions. (i) The pattern is always to argue from male attire (vv.4,7) or coiffure (v.14) to female attire (vv.5,10) or coiffure (v.15), which suggests that Paul's directives regarding men are in fact premises for his directives regarding women.<sup>509</sup> (ii) This notion is somewhat confirmed by the extensions and excurses which expand or modify the statements regarding female attire or coiffure. First, there is the dilemma in verses 5b-6 in which female uncovering and shaving are equated in order to support the directives regarding covering (v.5a). Second, there is the unexpected use of ἐξουσία ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς (v.10) as a parallel to κατακαλύπτω (v.7), and the extra comment concerning the angels. Finally, in verse 15, Paul extends the antithetic parallelism between long male and long female hair (vv.14-15a), with the additional statement that female hair is ἀντὶ περιβολαίου (v.15b).

Finally, Schrage's<sup>510</sup> use of the categories of classical rhetoric may be useful for understanding the thematic shifts in this passage, since the different parts of an argument or oration perform different functions. Schrage maps the passage onto the typical rhetorical divisions of classical rhetoric of this general period, verse 2 comprising the introduction (*exordium*), verse 3 the thematic statement (*propositio*), verses 4-12 the argument (*argumentatio*), and verses 13-16 the final appeal (*peroratio*). This analysis is helpful insofar as it provides a coherent framework

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<sup>509</sup> Pace Murphy-O'Connor, 'Sex And Logic In 1 Cor 11:2-16', *CBQ* 42 (1980), 482-500.

<sup>510</sup> Schrage, *Erste Brief*, p.490.



within which to explain both the thematic divisions in this passage *and* the rhetorical unity of the whole argument. However, in my view Schrage's divisions are not entirely correct, since verse 3, which he identifies as the *propositio*, hardly seems to be the point to which the argument of the entire passage is directed or upon which it is based. Rather, the threefold κεφαλή formula is the premise of Paul's directives regarding attire (vv.4-6) – and it is these directives which he restates (cf. v.7,10,13).

For this reason, I have modified Schrage's divisions. Verse 2 is the *exordium*, and verses 3-6 are a *partitio* (cf. Cicero, *Inv. Rhet.* I.xxii.31-33) in which Paul presents the argument in outline. Verses 7-12 are his *argumentatio*, within which verses 8-9 are a *confirmatio* (*Inv. Rhet.* I.xxiv.34ff.) or warranting argument and verses 11-12 resemble a *reprehensio* (*Inv. Rhet.* I.xlii.78ff.) or qualifying section in which possible counter-arguments or unwarranted interpretations are anticipated. Verses 13-16 are a *peroratio* or final appeal. This modified structure maps onto the thematic divisions of the passage very well. The *partitio* introduces the connection between attire, honour and headship. The *argumentatio* attempts to justify this connection theologically, presenting in the *confirmatio* warrants from the creation accounts, and in the *reprehensio* qualifications drawn from ancient models of reproduction. The *peroratio* restates the case by relating honour and propriety to notions of natural difference.

#### 5.2.4 Section Summary

This section of the chapter has briefly considered the text, the literary integrity, authenticity and rhetorical divisions of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. *Vis-à-vis* the text, there were no variants both sufficiently significant and attested to alter the basic sense of Paul's argument. *Vis-à-vis* the passage's literary integrity, the theory that it is an

interpolation was considered and, due to the lack of direct textual evidence, rejected. It therefore followed that the passage compositionally is a unity and its basic rhetorical divisions were discussed and mapped. On this basis, and on account of the literary integrity of the epistle, it follows that it is entirely appropriate to regard this passage in the light of theological and cosmological notions elsewhere in the epistle.

### 5.3 Exposition

Having argued for the authenticity, integrity and rhetorical unity of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, I now turn to an exposition of Paul's argument in this passage. To this end, this section of the chapter considers the argument according to my modified version of Schrage's rhetorical divisions. These are: (i) *Exordium* (1 Cor 11:2), (ii) *Partitio* (vv.3-6), (iii) *Argumentatio* (vv.7-12) and (iv) *Peroratio* (vv.13-16).

#### 5.3.1 Exordium: 1 Corinthians 11:2

2. ἐπαινῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς ὅτι πάντα μου μέμνησθε καί, καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε.

This verse addresses none of the principal themes of this passage explicitly, but it is important as it begins a new section of the epistle (chs.11-14), in which Paul addresses issues of church order. Significantly, Paul refers to plural traditions (παραδόσεις), and if he had in mind only the traditions relevant to 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 – liturgical attire or the 'eschatological inclusion of men and women as active participants in prayer and prophetic speech'<sup>511</sup> – then he would have been more likely to have used the singular παράδοσις. Perhaps his use of the plural reflects a citation, albeit non-ironic, of a Corinthian claim<sup>512</sup> to be faithful to the παραδόσεις, which the

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<sup>511</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.811; also Hays, *First Corinthians*, p.182-83.

<sup>512</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, p.182-83.

use of other technical vocabulary concerned with the maintenance and transmission of traditions (παράδίδωμι, κατέχω) may support. In either case, his point is rhetorical; he mentions the traditions so as to praise the Corinthians for keeping them.

The repeated occurrence of the language of shame and dishonour (vv.4-6,13-15) gives the impression that the tone of verses 3-16 is at odds with the note of praise (ἐπαινω) here. Some commentators<sup>513</sup> attempt to reconcile this disjunction by suggesting that Paul is being ironic, indeed Moffatt suggests that Paul quotes the Corinthians sarcastically.<sup>514</sup> However, if this praise is ironic, then it is poor irony, since Paul's previous non-ironic engagement with Corinthian correspondence renders quotation alone inadequate as a signal of ironic or sarcastic intent. This verse makes better sense as an appeal to the audience's good will (*captatio benevolentiae*), and if the particle δέ at the beginning of verse 3 is taken as mildly adversative then the relationship with the rest of the passage is understandable without the need to posit irony ('I praise you...but...'). This is the stance of most commentators.<sup>515</sup>

The point of the *captatio benevolentiae* is in my view related to Paul's construction of his own authority. He is not 'buttering up' his audience, but setting the scene for verses 3-16, in which he corrects them. Praise confers honour,<sup>516</sup> but this touches not only the recipient, it also reflects upon the giver, since some acts of praise mark one out as having sufficient prestige to be able to confer honour. That Paul is concerned with his status here is apparent in his directive 'become imitators of me' (1 Cor 11:1). Vis-à-vis these directives (1 Cor 4:16, 11:1), Deitmar Neufeld has recently argued that they are indirect speech acts that tacitly appeal for recognition.

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<sup>513</sup> Pace Allo, *Ire Épitre*, p.255.

<sup>514</sup> Moffatt, *The First Epistle Of Paul To The Corinthians* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), p.149.

<sup>515</sup> E.g. Conzelmann, *1 Kor.*, p.182; Hays, *First Corinthians*, p.182.

<sup>516</sup> See Thiselton on this point. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.809.

He writes, “‘Imitate me’ presupposes that Paul has the required honor...to demand emulation’.<sup>517</sup> Accordingly, Paul’s praise (v.2), which follows his request for emulation (v.1), serves as a tacit reminder to the Corinthians that they have already accorded Paul the prestige that he has just mentioned – it establishes their obligation to continue recognising his authority. This is important, since if Paul’s interlocutors have a high view of their own status he must first remind them that he has more than enough social capital<sup>518</sup> to correct (1 Cor 11:3-16), and rebuke (1 Cor 11:17-22) them.

### 5.3.2 Partitio: 1 Corinthians 11:3-6

Having established that he has the prerequisite prestige to adjudicate upon matters of attire during prayer and prophecy, Paul commences with a programmatic statement of his position in verses 3-6. He opens his argument in verse 3 with a threefold statement of headship.

3. θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι ὅτι παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἡ κεφαλὴ ὁ χριστὸς ἐστίν, κεφαλὴ δὲ γυναικὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ, κεφαλὴ δὲ τοῦ χριστοῦ ὁ θεός.

This metaphorical use of κεφαλή has been discussed at some length,<sup>519</sup> and scholars remain divided as to whether it denotes ‘in authority over’,<sup>520</sup> ‘source/origin’,<sup>521</sup> or ‘preeminent’.<sup>522</sup> Whilst I favour the traditional reading, Paul’s logic in this section hangs less upon the sense of this metaphor than recent debates might indicate. Whatever it denotes, the following basic points pertain: (i) It constitutes the analogy between three relationships (Christ-Man, Man-Woman, God-

<sup>517</sup> Neufeld, ‘Acts Of Admonition And Rebuke: A Speech Act Approach To 1 Corinthians 6:1-11’, *Biblical Interpretation* 8:4 (2000), 375-99, p.392

<sup>518</sup> See ch.1 ‘Honor and Shame’ of Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights From Cultural Anthropology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), pp.27-57, esp. 40-43.

<sup>519</sup> Ch.2 above.

<sup>520</sup> Grudem, ‘Κεφαλή: 2,336 Examples’; Fitzmyer, ‘*Kephalē*’.

<sup>521</sup> Murphy-O’Connor, ‘Sex And Logic In 1 Cor 11:2-16’; Kroeger, ‘Head’.

<sup>522</sup> Cervin, ‘Κεφαλή’, p.112; Perriman, ‘Head’, pp.621-22.

Christ). (ii) These relationships are strictly non-reversible – man is κεφαλή of woman, but woman is not κεφαλή of man. (iii) They interlock to form a larger series (God→Christ→Man→Woman), which is hierarchical, since God is κεφαλή *par excellence* whereas woman is κεφαλή of no one.<sup>523</sup> However, the question of whether the κεφαλή hierarchy is a hierarchy of authority, origination or pre-eminence is ultimately less significant to Paul's argument in verses 4-5a than the fact that by occupying different positions in this sequence, man and woman each relate to a different κεφαλή.

4. πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ. 5a. πᾶσα δὲ γυνὴ προσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς

These verses concern a person who attires his or her physical head incorrectly during prayer or prophecy. In the case of a female, incorrect attire constitutes being 'with uncovered head' (ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ), whereas in the case of a male the nature of the breach of convention is somewhat less clear. Some commentators regard the expression κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων (Lit. 'having down from/against the head') as a designation for a formal headcovering such as a Jewish *tallith* or a Roman liturgical covering,<sup>524</sup> whereas others regard it as a designation for long, perhaps effeminately styled, hair.<sup>525</sup> Whilst the question of whether Paul is concerned with attire or coiffure in this passage is important, in particular to verses 13-15, the basic form of his argument here is unaffected by this question. Here, his point is that

<sup>523</sup> So Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.232.

<sup>524</sup> On a Roman background see Oster, 'When Men Wore Veils To Worship: The Historical Context Of 1 Corinthians 11:4', *NTS* 34 (1988), 481-505, p.487; Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp.95-96. On a Jewish background see Allo, *Ire Épitre*, pp.257-58; Oepke, 'καλύπτω' in *TDNT*, vol. 3, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 556-92, esp. pp.561-63; Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.249.

<sup>525</sup> Hurley, 'Did Paul Require Veils Or The Silence Of Women? A Consideration Of 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 1 Cor 14:33b-36', *WTJ* 35:2 (1973), 190-220; Murphy-O'Connor, 'Sex And Logic In 1 Cor 11:2-16', p.482ff.

anyone, man or woman, with an inappropriately dressed physical head<sup>526</sup> ‘disgraces his/her head’ (καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ/αὐτῆς). Evidently a play on words, this expression refers back to the list of metaphorical heads<sup>527</sup> in verse 3.

That the way in which one attires one’s κεφαλή(*lit.*) should reflect upon one’s κεφαλή(*met.*) is generally intelligible in terms of the relationship between propriety codes and the nature of honour and shame in agonistic cultures. As Halvor Moxnes<sup>528</sup> rightly observes of such societies, individual identity is commonly a function of the kinship group. As such, on the one hand, one derives one’s own honour from ‘the general honor status that the family possesses’,<sup>529</sup> whilst on the other hand, one’s honourable or dishonourable conduct reflects an improved or diminished prestige upon the group, and upon the head of the group *par excellence*. Accordingly, for Paul, impropriety generates dishonour which accrues to one’s κεφαλή(*met.*). Hence, a man with an inappropriately dressed κεφαλή(*lit.*) shames *Christ*, whereas a woman who is uncovered during pneumatic speech shames her *husband*. This results in the following general form of the argument in verses 3-6:

Y is the κεφαλή(*met.*) of X

X incorrectly attires X’s κεφαλή( <i>lit.</i> ) during pneumatic speech	⇒	X shames X’s κεφαλή( <i>met.</i> ) [i.e. Y]
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This reading – that καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν (vv.4,5a) refers to one’s κεφαλή(*met.*) (v.3) – is not explicitly given in the text, but it is a reasonable inference from the immediate context. First, the juxtaposition of the sentences in verse 3 and 4 without any conjunction suggests a close relationship between the verses. This

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<sup>526</sup> Hereafter, κεφαλή(*lit.*).

<sup>527</sup> Hereafter, κεφαλή(*met.*).

<sup>528</sup> Moxnes, ‘Honor And Shame’ in *The Social Sciences And New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Rohrbaugh (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 19-40, pp.20-22.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.

impression is strengthened by the terminological connection between the list of persons in verse 3 and the discussion of attiring one's κεφαλή and shaming one's κεφαλή in verses 4-5. This is hardly coincidental, being instead a play upon words. Finally, unless verse 4 refers back to verse 3, verse 3 serves no rhetorical purpose, and verses 4-16 become detached from the passage introduction in verse 2.<sup>530</sup>

5b. ἔν γάρ ἐστιν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῆ ἐξυρημένη. 6. εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνή, καὶ κειράσθω· εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω.

In these verses Paul widens his focus from the shameful nature of female uncovering (v.5a), to the shameful nature of cropped or shaven hair (v.6). Indeed, he argues that they amount to 'one and the same thing' (ἐν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ v.5b). Since uncovering and shaving are manifestly different actions, the comparison evidently turns upon their significance. Both are shameful, indeed as dress-code violations they both incur the shame of impropriety. However, that each involves the removal of something from a female head that Paul regards as obligatory suggests that they are also somehow analogous. For the moment, it suffices to say, with Barrett, that for Paul 'veiling, cutting the hair, shaving, all belong together'.<sup>531</sup>

Whereas in verses 4-5a one's shame reflects upon someone else, in verses 5b-6 the shame of female cropping or shearing accrues to the woman (αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ) and not to her κεφαλή(*met.*). Although Paul expresses this in conditional terms ('if [εἰ] shaving or cropping is shameful to a woman *then...*'), he evidently assumes that shaving or cropping *is* shameful to a woman since the apodosis of this sentence (κατακαλυπτέσθω) reflects his principal directive (vv.5a,10,13). This assumption is

<sup>530</sup> Gordon Fee discusses these points in Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.506.

<sup>531</sup> Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.251.

likely to be shared by the Corinthian women.<sup>532</sup> As such, Paul's identification of female shaving with uncovering is a clever rhetorical manoeuvre that forces their hands. They are likely to be cognisant that their uncovering shames their husbands, given that Mediterranean societies frequently associate female propriety with the idea of women as repositories of male honour.<sup>533</sup> However, since they do uncover, they apparently regard themselves to be free from the obligation to adhere to these conventions. Paul's response is to argue that the shaming of another can never be cost-free; if the Corinthian women insist upon shaming their husbands then the logic of uncovering requires them to remove their hair and bear their own shame. Since Paul anticipates that they will be averse to this, he directs them to cover.

As the basic contours of Paul's argument are intelligible, it remains only to identify the precise nature of the conventions of attire to which he refers. Are these general conventions of propriety or do they relate specifically to a cultic setting? Plutarch (*Quaest. Rom.* §10, 266C-E) notes that Romans<sup>534</sup> covered their heads during worship but uncovered them as a sign of honour during ordinary human interaction (cf. Pliny, *HN* 28.17).<sup>535</sup> Whereas for Plutarch these conventions derive from (i) the specific nature of religious devotion, and (ii) the need for a visible distinction between ordinary human interaction and divine service, Paul's directives have a different rationale. Paul requires men to be uncovered not covered during liturgical events (v.4), and he is concerned not with the signification of piety during ordinary human

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<sup>532</sup> On the association of cropping with social stigma for the woman see Bruce Winter on punitive conventions in Roman society. Winter, *Roman Wives*, pp.82-85.

<sup>533</sup> See Moxnes, 'Honor And Shame', p.21; Malina, *New Testament World*, p.48. Re: the modern Mediterranean see Pitt-Rivers, 'Honour And Social Status' in *Honour And Shame: The Values Of Mediterranean Society*, ed. Peristiany (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965), 9-18.

<sup>534</sup> This convention would presumably hold in Roman Corinth. See also Gill, 'The Importance Of Roman Portraiture For Head-Coverings In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16', *Tyndale Bulletin* 41:2 (1990), 245-60, p.246.

<sup>535</sup> Pliny's rationale for uncovering is health and not deference.



interaction, but with the signification of human relationships during liturgical action (vv.4a,5a). However, both regard attire as a symbolic medium by which two distinct yet related economies of honour (divine and human) are made manifest.

Nevertheless, Roman conventions of covering were not consistent – in certain cults only the one performing the sacrifice was covered, and this person could be male or at times female.<sup>536</sup> It is for this reason that Witherington defines the principal question in this passage as ‘why does Paul want to maintain for women, but not for men, the Roman practice of covering the head when engaging in a religious act?’<sup>537</sup> Phrasing the question thus is in my view a mistake. As noted above, the relationship between a woman’s attire and the honour or shame of her κεφαλή(*met.*) is best understood against the backdrop of a man’s honour being linked to the sexual propriety of his female relatives. Since females constitute a risk to male prestige, the typical response is to divide private and public spheres, with women covered in *all* public contexts. Paul’s directives appear to reflect the grammar not of liturgical *piety* but of sexual *propriety*; he does not apply Roman liturgical custom to Christian women, but rather argues for modesty in ecclesial (*viz.* public) settings.<sup>538</sup>

Why certain Corinthian women were not complying with customary propriety admits multiple explanations. Some commentators posit a group of ‘emancipated Corinthian ladies’,<sup>539</sup> and Richard Hays in particular suggests that Paul’s own catechesis (1 Cor 11:2 cf. Gal 3:28) leads them to express unity in Christ in terms of

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<sup>536</sup> The Cn. Domitus Ahenobarbus altarpiece depicts a covered female priest surrounded by both uncovered devotees. See Witherington, *Conflict And Community*, p.233. Plutarch regarded the cult of Saturn to be an exception to the normal pattern of liturgical attire (cf. Plutarch, *Quaestiones Romanae* §11).

<sup>537</sup> Witherington, *Conflict And Community*, p.235.

<sup>538</sup> *Pace* Witherington, *Ibid.*

<sup>539</sup> Grosheide, *Commentary On The First Epistle To The Corinthians* (London/Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., 1954), p.258. Also Morris, *1 Corinthians*, ed. Tasker (London: Tyndale Press, 1958), p.151; Héring, *First Corinthians*, p.102.

the erasure of traditional signs of gender.<sup>540</sup> Other commentators suggest that pneumatic speech at Corinth mirrored the ecstatic practice of Graeco-Roman cults in which dishevelled hair signified prophetic inspiration.<sup>541</sup> Paul's directives thus operate to restrict and correct this emphasis. Stephen Barton's analysis of the tension between household *per se* (οἶκος) and household-used-as-church (ἐκκλησία) in 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 provides a third possible background to the refusal to cover.<sup>542</sup> The Corinthian women may, inadvertently or deliberately, have failed to acknowledge the transition from private to public involved in household space becoming ἐκκλησία. Finally, Bruce Winter<sup>543</sup> identifies a background in Roman law and custom. He sees the problem as high-status women, in the semi-public context of the ἐκκλησία, behaving like so-called 'new' women, and damaging the reputation of the Church.

Whatever situation might have prompted the Corinthian women to uncover and occasioned Paul's response, the argument of verses 3-6 can be summarised as follows; (i) a covered man shames Christ, (ii) an uncovered woman shames her husband, and (iii) unless a woman is prepared to bear the shame of her uncovering herself by removing her hair, she ought to cover. Since Paul uses male attire as a premise for his directives regarding female attire<sup>544</sup> this begs the question of whether Corinthian males were actually covering themselves during pneumatic speech. Certainly, for the argument to work the conventions to which Paul refers must be

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<sup>540</sup> Hays, *First Corinthians*, p.182-83.

<sup>541</sup> Fiorenza, *In Memory Of Her*, p.226ff; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.97. Also the paper by Richard and Katherine Kroeger, 'An Inquiry into the Evidence of Maenadism in the Corinthian Congregation', (1978), cited in Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.498n23; Stuckenbruck, 'Why Should Women Cover Their Heads Because Of The Angels (1 Corinthians 11:10)', *Stone-Campbell Journal* 4:2 (2001), 205-34, p.211n19.

<sup>542</sup> See further Barton, 'Paul's Sense Of Place: An Anthropological Approach To Community Formation In Corinth', *NTS* 32 (1986), 225-46, pp.232-33, also n29

<sup>543</sup> Winter, *Roman Wives*, pp.77-96 (ch.5).

<sup>544</sup> See Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.300n73.

known to his audience, but little hangs upon an actual infringement of the codes by the men. In fact, Paul's point would be stronger if they were being compliant, since their behaviour would throw the non-compliance of the women into an even more negative light. Whatever the specific nature of the covering and coiffure conventions Paul refers to in these verses, their basic grammar is readily discernable in terms of sexual propriety and honour. As shall be seen, Paul does not regard these categories as simple conventions – that men should be uncovered and women covered is natural (v.14) and written into creation itself (vv.7-12).

### 5.3.3 Argumentatio: 1 Corinthians 11:7-12

In this section Paul frames his directives regarding attire theologically. This is necessary because verses 3-6 give no indication as to *why* uncovering in a woman or covering in a man should be shameful to another – it simply asserts that they are (vv.4-5a) and deduces certain directives on the basis of other analogous conventions (vv.5b-6). However, given that the uncovered Corinthian women certainly dispute the obligation to cover and quite possibly also the man-woman element of Paul's κεφαλή hierarchy,<sup>545</sup> it is necessary for Paul to warrant his directives if they are to prove persuasive. To this end, he offers an argument from creation. On account of the complexity of this argument, I begin with a tabulation and analysis of its structure.<sup>546</sup>

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<sup>545</sup> See Hays, *First Corinthians*, p.182-83.

<sup>546</sup> Due to this complexity I address the passage according to the subdivisions I identify here.

**Table 5.1: The Structure Of 1 Corinthians 11:7-12**

<i>Main Argument (vv.7,10)</i>	
A	7. ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν
B	εἰκῶν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων
B'	ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστίν
<i>Confirmatio (vv.8-9)</i>	
a	8. οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς
a'	ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός·
b	9. καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα
b'	ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα.
A'	10. διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἄγγέλους
<i>Reprehensio (vv.11-12)</i>	
c'	11. πλὴν οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρός
c	οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς ἐν κυρίῳ·
a'	12. ὡσπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός,
a	οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικός· τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

The chiasmic structure of this passage has long been noted<sup>547</sup> and in verses 7-12 this is especially pronounced. The section has a threefold pattern: (i) The main body (vv.7,10 A,B,B',A' in Table 5.1) concerns the obligations to be either uncovered (A) or covered (A'), which turn upon whether one is God's (B) or man's (B') δόξα. (ii) This chiasmic structure is interrupted in verses 8-9 by a branching argument arranged according to a tight step-parallelism (a,a',b,b' in Table 5.1). Because of its position between verses 7 and 10, this argument is evidently intended as a warrant for the statement that woman is δόξα ἀνδρός (v.7). Arguing from the second creation narrative, Paul states that woman is 'from' man (a,a') and 'for' him (b,b'). (iii) Paul's second branching argument (vv.11-12) closely corresponds to the structure of the first (c',c,a',|a| in Table 5.1). This argument is concerned with the mutual necessity of the sexes (c',c), and uses human sexual reproduction to warrant this – whilst woman may

<sup>547</sup> Fee, *First Corinthians*, pp.493-94; Schrage, *Erste Brief*, p.490.

be ‘from’ man (a’), he is ‘through’ her (|a|). The position of this argument after the main body (v.10), the adversative πλὴν with which it begins, and the fact that Paul is careful not to contradict himself, suggests that it is intended to qualify or delimit the interpretation of his earlier warrant (vv.8-9). This pattern is common in rhetorical material of this period (e.g. Cicero, *Inv. Rhet.* I.xxiv.34, I.xlii.78),<sup>548</sup> hence my identification of verses 8-9 as a *confirmatio* and verses 11-12 as a *reprehensio*.

(i.) *Main Argument (vv.7,10): Gender, Attire And Glory*

- A 7. ἀνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν  
 B εἰκῶν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων  
 B' ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστίν...  
 A' ...10. διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς  
 διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους

Once again (cf. vv.4-5a), Paul uses a statement regarding male attire as a basis for a corresponding statement regarding female attire. On the one hand (μὲν) a man ought not to cover his head (v.7a), whereas on the other (δέ) a woman ought to have authority upon hers (ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς v.10). The statement regarding man presents considerably fewer interpretative difficulties than that regarding woman, with the most significant being whether οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι is permissive (‘is not obliged to be covered’) or proscriptive (‘is obliged not to be covered’).<sup>549</sup> The proscriptive reading appears to me correct, since it corresponds better than the permissive reading to the previous argument on male attire and shame (v.4).

Vis-à-vis Paul’s directive to the Corinthian women (v.10), a preliminary consideration is whether διὰ τοῦτο refers forward to the angels (διὰ τοὺς

<sup>548</sup> A similar division is evident in Ps-Cicero, *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* I.iv, I.x.18.

<sup>549</sup> See Robertson’s and Plummer’s note to this effect. Robertson and Plummer, *First Epistle Of St Paul To The Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1914), p.231.

ἀγγέλους),<sup>550</sup> or retrospectively to the preceding verses. There are sound reasons to prefer the latter option. The chiasmic structure of the section suggests verse 10 as a natural complement to verse 7 (A, A' on Table 5.1), as is emphasised by the contrast between ὀφείλει and οὐκ ὀφείλει, ἀνὴρ and γυνή, and the implied correspondance between 'cover the head' (v.7) and 'have authority on the head' (v.10). In terms of what is denoted by ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς, the formal symmetry of the argument suggests that it is a tropic designation for a covering. Regarding the significance of this covering, it is possible that the notion of females as repositories of male honour metonymically associates a woman's headcovering with a *man's* authority and by extension *her* subjection.<sup>551</sup> Chrysostom (*Hom.XXVI* 5) makes this connection when he connects covering with subjection and sexual propriety:

[B]eing covered is a mark of *subjection and authority*. For it induces her to look down and be ashamed and *preserve entire her proper virtue*.<sup>552</sup>

Although this is a longstanding interpretation, ἐξουσία would ordinarily belong to the active subject of the verb, designating in this case the woman's rather than the man's authority.<sup>553</sup> Morna Hooker<sup>554</sup> thus regards ἐξουσία as a woman's authority to pray and prophesy. However, as I have argued, Paul's directives are best understood as propriety codes applicable to all public settings, not simply cultic settings.<sup>555</sup> As such, I remain unconvinced that ἐξουσία here refers to cultic

<sup>550</sup> Scroggs, 'Eschatological Woman', pp.299-300n68.

<sup>551</sup> E.g. Charles Hodge: 'symbol of subordination'. Hodge, *I & II Corinthians* (Edinburgh: Banner Of Truth, 1974; 1857, 1859), p.205.

<sup>552</sup> Chrysostom, *Hom.XXVI* 5. Italics mine.

<sup>553</sup> See Hooker, 'Authority on Her Head: An Examination of 1 Cor. xi,10', *NTS* 10 (1964), 410-16, pp.414-16; Wilson, 'Should Women Wear Headcoverings?' *BSac* 148:592 (1991), 442-62, p.453. Against this, Thomas Schreiner cites the statue of the mother of Osymandias, whose three crowns signified three kingdoms ruled by her male relatives (*Diodorus Siculus* 1.47.5). Schreiner, 'Head Coverings, Prophecies and the Trinity', p.136.

<sup>554</sup> Hooker, 'Authority', p.416.

<sup>555</sup> Section 5.3.2.

authorisation – the right to prophesy. Rather, it designates the veil/cover as that which empowers a woman to manage her visibility and thereby negotiate public, including cultic, settings honourably.<sup>556</sup> This is further supported by Paul’s choice of verb; she is not to be passive and compelled, but is obligated (ὀφείλει), that is responsible to be active in complying with this dress code.<sup>557</sup> However, since the notions of honour and shame implicit in this code situate females in a socially subordinate place to males, the notion of the veil/cover as a ‘mark of subjection’ (*Hom.XXVI 5*) cannot be excluded, even if Paul’s expression refers to its positive function in authorizing her. To illuminate the disparity, one needs only to observe that males need no equivalent sign of authorization (v.7). For this reason, I favour Dale Martin’s interpretation; covering does authorise female pneumatic speech, but only insofar as it corresponds somehow to her subordinate female nature.<sup>558</sup>

For both man and woman, Paul’s directives regarding covering (vv.7a,10) turn upon the question of whose δόξα one happens to be (v.7b). At a purely formal level, this use of δόξα is an elegant word play that emphasises the relationship between verses 7-12 and verses 3-6. Whereas the preceding section stated that inappropriate headgear shames one’s metaphorical head, the argument here is complementary. Being the δόξα of someone (v.7) is incompatible with being the occasion of their disgrace (vv.4-5a). Accordingly, that man is εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ (v.7b) and woman δόξα ἀνδρός (v.7b) underwrites the respective obligations for males to be uncovered (v.7) and females covered (v.10), since a man who covers shames Christ (v.4a) and a

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<sup>556</sup> See Francis Watson: ‘[covering] deflect[s] the look that would otherwise undermine her ministry’. Watson, ‘The Authority Of The Voice: A Theological Reading Of 1 Cor 11:2-16’, *NTS* 46 (2000), 520-36, p.531.

<sup>557</sup> Foerster, ‘ἐξουσία’ in *TDNT*, vol. 2, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 562-74, p.574; also Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.245.

<sup>558</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, pp.245-47; also Carson, ‘Putting Her In Her Place: Woman, Dirt And Desire’ in *Before Sexuality: The Construction Of Erotic Experience In The Ancient Greek World*, ed. Halperin *et al.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 135-70, pp.160-64.

woman who uncovers shames her husband (v.5a). This reading brings the terms δόξα and κεφαλή(*met.*) into reciprocal relationship – the one designated κεφαλή(*met.*) (v.3) being κεφαλή(*met.*) of the one designated δόξα (v.7). However, the relationship between these terms is not straightforward, the principal problem being that Christ is mentioned in verse 3, but not in verse 7 (δόξα θεοῦ). Given that in verse 3 Christ functions as a divine proxy, this difficulty is alleviated somewhat. In both cases the impression is of a hierarchy incorporating the human couple (κεφαλή: God→[Christ]→Man→Woman, δόξα: God←Man←Woman).<sup>559</sup>

If Paul's use of δόξα concerns only the pragmatic avoidance of shame, then different directives would follow in contexts governed by different assumptions regarding honour and attire. However, I think that Paul has in mind something more fundamental than this – uncovering *per se* is commensurate with the way males but not females are *created*. *Vis-à-vis* man, this is evident from the epithet εἰκῶν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ (v.7). The term εἰκῶν evidently alludes to the first creation account (Gen 1:26-27) and constitutes a biblical warrant for man as δόξα θεοῦ. The sharp contrast with woman as δόξα ἀνδρός (v.7b) means that δόξα θεοῦ must be a uniquely male trait, and this implies that, for Paul, the first creation applies to man but not woman, despite the LXX version of Genesis 1:27 mentioning the creation of 'male and female' (ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ Gen 1:27). Hence, even if, as some commentators suggest, Paul understands the first human being to have been some form of androgyne,<sup>560</sup> his application of this text to men but not women would indicate that he envisages an androgyny in which the male transcends or subsumes the female.<sup>561</sup>

<sup>559</sup> See Watson, *Agape, Eros And Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.55ff.

<sup>560</sup> See Meeke, 'Androgyne', pp.185-86; Boyarin, 'Paul And The Genealogy Of Gender' in *A Feminist Companion To Paul*, ed. Levine (London: T.&T. Clark, 2004), 13-41, p.34.

<sup>561</sup> Cf. Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.249.



The question remains as to how the expression δόξα θεοῦ follows from Genesis 1:26-27, when δόξα is absent from the LXX version of these verses. It may be a gloss upon the term εἰκῶν<sup>562</sup> or ὁμοίωσις,<sup>563</sup> given that the twofold expression εἰκῶν καὶ δόξα (1 Cor 11:7) is reminiscent of the twofold pattern ‘image (εἰκῶν) and likeness (ὁμοίωσις)’ (Gen 1:26). However, since δόξα is a poor rendering of both terms, neither interpretation is lexically satisfactory.<sup>564</sup> Gerhard Kittel suggests that as a designation for God’s ‘radiance’ or ‘reflection’, Paul’s usage derives from the LXX rendering of the Hebrew term *kābôd* (e.g. Ex 33:22). However, since the allusion here is to the creation account, a better comparison may be the various Jewish traditions (both pre and post-Pauline) that describe the first male as the bearer of the divine likeness<sup>565</sup> and a now-lost visible glory.<sup>566</sup> Indeed, as the bearer of the divine image, some traditions describe the first man as the object of angelic worship (*Vit. Ad.* 13), which may bear upon the reference to the angels (v.10b).<sup>567</sup> If Paul has this in mind, then his point would be that male heads ought to be uncovered because the primal male was physically constituted to manifest the visible glory of God. As such male uncovering is a creational norm.

<sup>562</sup> So Kittel and von Rad, ‘δόξα’ in *TDNT*, vol. 2, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 233-53, p.237; Watson, *Agape*, p.56.

<sup>563</sup> See Hurley, ‘Veils Or Silence’, p.205n29. Héring’s suggestion (from Ginsburger) that δόξα is a corruption of the Aramaic *deigma* is unnecessarily speculative. Héring, *First Corinthians*, p.104.

<sup>564</sup> See the relevant Greek and cognate Hebrew (*selem, dēmût*) in Brown *et al.*, *A Hebrew And English Lexicon Of The Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906), p.198, p.853; Liddell *et al.*, *LSL*.

<sup>565</sup> On corporeal likeness see Miller, ‘In The “Image” And “Likeness” Of God’, *JBL* 91:2 (1972), 289-304, pp.291-93. Cf. ‘thy face and likeness was made in the image of God’ *Vita Adae Et Evae* 13.

<sup>566</sup> E.g. ‘Thou hast fashioned A[dam]...in the likeness of [Thy] glory’, 4Q504 fr.8 in Vermes, ed., *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls In English* (London: Penguin, 1997). Also Gottstein, ‘The Body As Image Of God In Rabbinic Literature’, *Harvard Theological Review* 87:2 (1994), 171-95; Aaron, ‘Shedding Light On God’s Body In Rabbinic Midrashim: Reflections On The Theory Of A Luminous Adam’, *Harvard Theological Review* 90:3 (1997), 299-314; Orlov, ‘Vested With Adam’s Glory: Moses As The Luminous Counterpart Of Adam In The Dead Sea Scrolls And In The Macarian Homilies’, *Kristianskij Vostok* 4:10 (2002), 740-55.

<sup>567</sup> On the possible connection between δόξα in 1 Cor 11:7 and the angelic worship of *Vit. Ad.* 13 see Steenburg, ‘The Worship Of Adam And Christ As Image Of God’, *JSNT* 12:39 (1990), 95-109, p.99.

Vis-à-vis woman (v.7b), it is notable that she is εἰκών of no-one, since otherwise the parallelism with man would have been formally perfect. However, what this omission signifies is unclear since εἰκών is predicated of man chiefly as a biblical warrant for his identity as δόξα θεοῦ. Perhaps Paul wishes to avoid describing the first woman as εἰκών of the first man, since the creation accounts describe Adam's (male) progeny thus (Gen 5:3).<sup>568</sup> Alternatively, he may wish to avoid describing woman as εἰκών θεοῦ because he regards the notion as false or perhaps irrelevant.<sup>569</sup> Indeed, he may have in mind woman as image of God (cf. Gen 1:27b) *and* glory of man, but elects not to state this because it is extraneous to his purposes.<sup>570</sup> In any event, the central point of this statement remains intelligible since the argument turns upon Paul's use of δόξα.

At one level, Paul's point is that as δόξα ἀνδρός woman is *not* δόξα θεοῦ. Alone, this warrants the directive concerning covering (v.10); if man as δόξα θεοῦ is created to manifest the glory of God by uncovering, then woman as δόξα ἀνδρός is not. It may be that whatever is not δόξα θεοῦ is deficient, and that female covering is a remedy effected in the interests of her participation.<sup>571</sup> Alternatively, it may be that what is not δόξα θεοῦ is out of place and must be concealed in the interests of congregational purity,<sup>572</sup> although the irony of defining the ἐκκλησία as male space,<sup>573</sup> whilst simultaneously veiling man's glory is lost on Paul. Finally, it may be that 'in

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<sup>568</sup> Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, p.231; Hooker, 'Authority', p.411; Bruce, *1 And 2 Corinthians*, p.105; Hurley, 'Veils Or Silence', p.206.

<sup>569</sup> See Orr and Walther, *1 Corinthians: A New Translation* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), p.264; Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.182.

<sup>570</sup> So Hooker, 'Authority', p.411.

<sup>571</sup> See Fitzmyer, 'A Feature Of Qumran Angelology And The Angels Of 1 Cor XI.10', *NTS* 4 (1957), 48-58, pp.56-57.

<sup>572</sup> See Stephen Barton's discussion of dirt and social space. Barton, 'Sense Of Place', pp.227-28. Anne Carson's discussion of woman as 'dirt' and the connection with veiling is also useful. Carson, 'In Her Place', pp.158-61.

<sup>573</sup> So Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.173, pp.211-12.

God's presence [the glory of man] must inevitably turn to shame',<sup>574</sup> and that in order thereby to authorise her ministry the prophesying woman must cover herself. What these interpretations share is a concern for the way in which a woman as δόξα ἀνδρός relates to *God*, whereas if Paul's warrants in verses 8-9 are indicative, he is concerned here with her created status vis-à-vis man. As δόξα ἀνδρός she relates to *man* in the way that man relates to God viz. as that in which the glory/honour of another resides.<sup>575</sup> As with man, this status is not merely semiotic, it is constitutional; woman is δόξα ἀνδρός because the first woman was 'from' (ἐκ) the first man and 'for' (διά+acc.) him (vv.8-9). However, the way in which this constitutional difference underwrites the imperative to cover is largely implicit.<sup>576</sup>

*EXCURSUS: διὰ τοὺς ἄγγέλους (v.10b)*

If the ἄγγελοι here are human messengers then this reading is poorly signalled by the text. The prominence of angelic figures in creation traditions (e.g. *Jub.* 2; *Vit. Ad.* 13; Philo, *Op.* 73-74), together with the creation argument of verses 7-9, suggests instead that Paul has non-human entities in view.<sup>577</sup> There are four basic alternatives: (i) The angels may be custodians of the creation, including the order of male and female.<sup>578</sup> (ii) They may be co-participants in worship, in which case their interest is in congregational purity/propriety.<sup>579</sup> (iii) The fall of the angels in Genesis 6:1-4 and Eth. Enoch 7-8 (cf. *Jub.* 5), may suggest the sexual threat of *evil* angels,<sup>580</sup> what

<sup>574</sup> Hooker, 'Authority', p.415.

<sup>575</sup> See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, pp.834-37.

<sup>576</sup> See the concluding section of this chapter.

<sup>577</sup> Pace. Murphy-O'Connor, '1 Cor 11:2-16 Once Again', pp.271-72; Winter, *Roman Wives*, p.89.

<sup>578</sup> So Moffatt, *First Corinthians*, p.152; BeDuhn, 'Because of the Angels: Unveiling Paul's Anthropology in 1 Corinthians 11', *JBL* 118:2 (1999), 295-320, p.308.

<sup>579</sup> See Allo, *Ire Épitre*, p.261; Fitzmyer, 'Qumran Angelology'; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.840.

<sup>580</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *De Cultu Feminarum* 2-3; Tertullian, *De Virginibus Velandis* 7.

BeDuhn humourously terms Paul ‘wav[ing] the “angelic phallus”’.<sup>581</sup> (iv) It may be that the angels are not evil *per se*, but that they are not immune to the danger that an unveiled, hence sexually porous, woman presents.<sup>582</sup> Since none of these options excludes the others, and the focus in verses 8-9 is upon covering in the light of the metaphysical difference between males and females (ἐκ/διά+acc.), I follow Stuckenbruck in regarding female covering as prophylactic; she covers because she has the potential to occasion a cosmic boundary violation, to which both human males and angelic participants in shared ecclesial space are liable.

(ii.) *Confirmatio* (vv.8-9): *Creation*

- a 8. οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς
- a' ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός·
- b 9. καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα
- b' ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα.

In the opening statement of his *confirmatio* Paul presents the first of two warrants regarding woman’s identity as δόξα ἀνδρός – the first woman is derived ‘from’ (ἐκ) the first man (v.8). In the form in which it appears in this verse (ἐξ ἀνδρός) this statement constitutes an allusion to Genesis 2:23, in which woman as bone from (ἐκ) bone and flesh from (ἐκ) flesh is taken ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρός. When the expression is re-used in verse 12a, it directly corresponds to the form of the LXX. The second of Paul’s warrants (v.9), not itself a biblical citation or allusion, is an inference on the basis of the narrative sequence of the second creation narrative. Since, according to the story of Genesis 2, woman was taken from (ἐκ) man because his initial solitude was not good (Gen 2:18), she is for his sake (διά+acc.), and it follows that her *telos* is to complete his glory.

<sup>581</sup> BeDuhn, ‘Because of the Angels’, p.305.

<sup>582</sup> So Stuckenbruck, ‘Because Of The Angels’, pp.231-32.

Two observations pertain here: (i) Nowhere in this passage does Paul argue from male chronological precedence (cf. 1 Tim 2:13-14),<sup>583</sup> but rather through the chronology of the creation narratives he posits certain constitutional differences between the sexes. That is to say, temporal priority is secondary and instrumental to Paul's main concern, which is to describe the sexual differentiation of the first woman from the first man in prepositional metaphysical terms. That man preceded woman chronologically is relevant only because his prior existence is the necessary precondition of her creation 'from' (ἐκ) him. That his solitude prior to her creation was 'not good' (Gen 2:18) illuminates that she was created 'for' (διὰ+acc.) him. In that sense, in creation woman is materially (ἐκ) and teleologically (διὰ+acc.) derivative of, hence adjunct to, man – he is *her* material and final cause.<sup>584</sup> That man is 'not from' and 'not for' woman is a tacit indication of hierarchy.<sup>585</sup> (ii) Whether or not Paul's argument is a good use of Genesis, his interpretative conclusions follow *only* insofar as the creation accounts are paradigmatic of human beings generally. In other words, the aetiological significance of the creation narratives functions as an unstated minor premise for Paul. Francis Watson illustrates this point well: 'if solitude is not good for the first man then it is not good for man as such'.<sup>586</sup> Accordingly, Paul regards woman 'as such' to be presently constituted by the material (ἐκ) and teleological (διὰ+acc.) derivativeness of the first woman. It is Eve's paradigmatic status as derivative of the male which underwrites the Corinthian women's present identity as man's δόξα (v.7b) and which concomitantly warrants Paul's directive that they have ἐξουσία upon their heads (v.10).

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<sup>583</sup> Pace Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals*, pp.123-44.

<sup>584</sup> So Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, p.231. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* II.iii.

<sup>585</sup> Cf. Philo's discussion of causal hierarchy vis-à-vis bringing 'forth a man *through* (διὰ+gen.) the Lord'. Philo, *De Cherubim* 125-26.

<sup>586</sup> Watson, *Agape*, p.57.

(iii.) *Reprehensio* (vv.11-12): *Mutual Necessity And Reproduction*

c'	11. πλὴν οὔτε γυνὴ χωρὶς ἀνδρὸς	
c	οὔτε ἀνὴρ χωρὶς γυναικὸς	ἐν κυρίῳ·
a'	12. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἡ γυνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς,	
a	οὕτως καὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικὸς·	τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

The opening verse of Paul's *reprehensio*, has evident affinities with *Beresh. Rabba* 8:8; 'not man without woman, not woman without man and not both without the *Shekinah*' (cf. v.11).<sup>587</sup> Whilst these statements are sufficiently similar to permit speculation regarding a literary or tradition-critical relationship, it is perhaps unwise to press the similarity too far. Apart from the midrashic text substantially postdating 1 Corinthians, it posits the primal form of human embodiment to be *dimorphic* androgyny (cf. Plato, *Symp.* 189E-90A)<sup>588</sup> with a later partition into male and female. By contrast, in this passage, Paul clearly views primal human embodiment as male (cf. ἀνὴρ v.7), with sexual differentiation comprising not partition, but *extraction* of the female from (ἐκ v.8) a male archetype.

This observation notwithstanding, Paul's statement that ἐν κυρίῳ man and woman are not 'without' one another could indicate an eschatological transcendence of sexual differentiation, what Daniel Boyarin describes as: 'an androgyny that exists on the level of the spirit, however much hierarchy subsists and needs to subsist in the flesh'.<sup>589</sup> Boyarin suggests that an eschatological androgyny of this sort would imply a Pauline reading of creation analogous to that of Philo, for whom Genesis 1:26-27 describes the creation of a heavenly androgyne, neither male nor female, and Genesis 2 the creation of an embodied male and female (cf. Philo, *Leg. All.* I.31-32, II.4; *QG* 4). Man and woman 'in the Lord' would thus hint at the eschatological abolition of

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<sup>587</sup> Cited in Moffatt, *First Corinthians*, p.153; Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.255.

<sup>588</sup> On the similarity between primal embodiment in *Beresh. Rabba* 8:8 and *Symposium* see Meeks, 'Androgyne', pp.185-86.

<sup>589</sup> Boyarin, 'Genealogy', p.34. orig. pub. 1993.

difference, and constitute an oblique reference to the first androgyne. However, against this, Paul manifestly applies his reading of Genesis 1:26-27 (cf. v.7a) only to males, which suggests that he is highly unlikely to have regarded the passage as modelling a *neuter* form of androgyny. Boyarin himself appears to have adapted his stance, given that he subsequently argues: ‘the transcendent androgyne is male...[since] all theories of transcendence are already appropriated by the male’.<sup>590</sup>

A more common tendency has been to see a creation/new creation antithesis (cf. 2 Cor 5:17) in this verse, such that “‘in the Lord” the order of creation has been replaced by reciprocity’.<sup>591</sup> Since for Paul, the expressions ἐν κυρίῳ and ἐν χριστῷ (cf. Gal 3:28) designate participation in Christian salvation and community,<sup>592</sup> this reading has the initial merit of making good *prima facie* sense of the text. Indeed, it seems plausible if one translates χωρίς as ‘different from’ rather than ‘without’.<sup>593</sup>

Nevertheless, there are several reasons to reject it: (i) Existence ἐν κυρίῳ is unlikely to be incommensurate with protology, since Paul elsewhere (1 Cor 8:6) describes Christ the κύριος as the agent of creation, and 1 Corinthians 11:12 ends with a reference to God’s creative activity (τὰ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ). (ii) Paul’s preceding argument is hardly a theology of gender apart from the Lord, since he refers to Christ in the initial κεφαλή sequence (v.3). (iii) In any event, the present verses are unlikely to constitute a radical change of direction, since verses 13-15 resume the debate

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<sup>590</sup> Boyarin, ‘Gender’ in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Taylor (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), 117-35, p.122. Thanks to Stephen Barton for bringing this reference to my attention. See Barton, ‘Male And Female’, pp.10-11.

<sup>591</sup> Meeks, ‘Androgyne’, p.200; so also Orr and Walther, *I Corinthians*, p.263; Fiorenza, *In Memory Of Her*, p.229.

<sup>592</sup> Dunn, *Theology*, pp.396-401.

<sup>593</sup> See definitions II.1-4 of χωρίς, Liddell *et al.*, *LSL*.

concerning covering in basic continuity with verses 3-10.<sup>594</sup> Instead, this is a careful qualification of the preceding material, but not a reversal or contradiction of it.

In verse 12 Paul contrasts (ὡσπερ...οὕτως...) the derivation of the first woman from the first man (cf. v.8b) with the birth of every subsequent man by means of a woman. Evidently, his point is that human reproduction evinces the mutual necessity of the sexes (v.11) *par excellence*, but it is not apparent whether it does so as an analogue, an illustration or an instance of mutual necessity ἐν κυρίῳ. What is noticeable is the prepositional subtlety by which Paul differentiates man's reproductive dependence upon woman (διὰ+gen. v.12b) from woman's protological dependence upon man (ἐκ v.12a). This is important precisely because it is deliberate; since Paul elsewhere describes Christ as ἐκ γυναικός (Gal 4:4), the option of describing man thus was presumably available to him, but not adopted here. Once again, this confirms the impression that this material does not contradict verses 8-9.

Implicit in Paul's statement that ἀνὴρ διὰ τῆς γυναικός is a reproductive model in which children derive 'from' (ἐκ) their fathers and not their mothers. As Jorunn Økland observes,<sup>595</sup> this notion is somewhat strange to present-day readers, but it was in fact the predominant reproductive model in antiquity. It is apparent in texts as diverse as Aristotle (*Ph.* II.3; *Gen. An.* 1.19-20), Wisdom of Solomon 7:1-2, and Clement of Alexandria (*Pæd.* I.6), and it is implied in Hebrews 7:9-10 and Chrysostom (*Hom.XXVI* 5). The archetypical version is found in Aristotle (*Gen. An.* 1.20), for whom the male alone *actively* contributes to generation, the female possessing insufficient vigour to convert the inchoate material (ὑλη) of the menses into functioning sperm. It by no means commanded universal assent, being modified

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<sup>594</sup> Moffatt explains this as Paul opting for patriarchy over equality. Moffatt, *First Corinthians*, p.153.

<sup>595</sup> Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.185.



by Galen (*Sem.* 1.2) who accorded woman limited generative agency, and by the writers of the *Hippocratic Collection*, who tended to follow Graeco-Roman midwives in attributing full reproductive agency to the woman.<sup>596</sup>

Paul's use of this reproductive model is significant for three reasons: (i) His prepositional identification of woman as the instrumental (διὰ+gen.) cause of man perfectly complements his identification of man as the material (ἐκ) and final (διὰ+acc.) cause of woman. This is not an *ad hoc* or pragmatic arrangement but a model of mutual necessity in terms of a prepositional metaphysic of sexual differentiation.<sup>597</sup> (ii) This metaphysical complementarity is strictly hierarchical.<sup>598</sup> The preeminence of the male is unmistakable whether one construes this reproductive model in biological (female incapacity to produce seed e.g. *Gen. An.* 1.19-20) or causal (father as principal cause e.g. *Ph.* II.3) terms.<sup>599</sup> (iii) Paul's final statement of verse 12, τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, situates male and female generative agency in a theological and *cosmological* context.<sup>600</sup> This reference is twin-pronged: On the one hand, it reifies the position of man vis-à-vis woman, since being the one ἐξ οὗ woman and children derive (vv.8,12) evidently images (v.7) being the one ἐξ οὗ the cosmos derives (1 Cor 8:6; 11:12b). On the other hand, that man is also covered by the expression τὰ πάντα emphasises the universal priority of divine agency and indeed the *derivative* nature of man's generative and metaphysical precedence (Eph 3:15,

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<sup>596</sup> See Rousselle, *Porneia: On Desire and the Body in Antiquity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), pp.26-29.

<sup>597</sup> See Gregory Sterling on prepositions. Sterling, 'Prepositional Metaphysics'.

<sup>598</sup> Cf. Chrysostom, *Hom.XXVI* 5, 'this particular prerogative [i.e. being the one ἐκ whom] remains entire with the man'.

<sup>599</sup> See further ch.6. Also Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.186.

<sup>600</sup> That τὰ πάντα (v.12) signals Paul's cosmological register has already been demonstrated in ch.4.

Philo, *Cher.* 125-30; *Spec. Leg.* I.10).<sup>601</sup> Since he too is ἐκ someone, he too ought to remember his place and not mistake pre-eminence for independence (v.11).

#### 5.3.4 Peroratio: 1 Corinthians 11:13-16

Having articulated his stance regarding honour and attire (vv.3-6), warranted it with arguments regarding created differences (1 Cor 11:7-10) and hedged his arguments with suitable qualifications (vv.11-12), Paul now presents his final appeal. He begins with an instruction and a rhetorical question:

13. ἐν ὑμῖν αὐτοῖς κρίνατε· πρέπον ἐστὶν γυναῖκα ἀκατακάλυπτον τῷ θεῷ προσεύχεσθαι;

The use of the aorist imperative κρίνατε signals not an open-ended process of deliberation, but rather a moment of decision; it is time for the Corinthians to make up their minds – to ‘judge among themselves’.<sup>602</sup> The masculine plural pronoun αὐτοῖς, rather than αὐταῖς, signals that this is not a decision left to the uncovered Corinthian women; their attire is a matter for the entire congregation, or perhaps its leaders.<sup>603</sup> That the accompanying question is rhetorical indicates that Paul expects agreement or at least compliance.

Vis-à-vis the question itself, three observations pertain: (i) Paul does not invite the Corinthians to decide whether it is shameful (καταισχύνει, αἰσχρόν vv.5-6) to be uncovered, but whether it is fitting (πρέπον v.13). Several commentators note this,<sup>604</sup> in particular Troels Engberg-Pedersen,<sup>605</sup> who argues that here Paul’s language is less

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<sup>601</sup> One difference between Paul and Philo here is that Philo expresses divine precedence over human agency (in generation) using the expression τὸ ὑφ’ οὗ rather than τὸ ἐξ οὗ. Philo, *Cher.* 125-30.

<sup>602</sup> See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.843; cf. κρίνειν in Bultmann, *Theology*, p.215.

<sup>603</sup> Cf. the discussion of v.10 above.

<sup>604</sup> Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, p.234; Allo, *Ire Épitre*, p.262; Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.525.

<sup>605</sup> Engberg-Pedersen, ‘1 Corinthians 11:16 And The Character Of Pauline Exhortation’, *JBL* 110:4 (1991), 679-89, p.684

forceful than in preceding verses. He uses this to argue that Paul's logic has run aground – that he recognises the weakness of his previous argument and appeals to propriety out of rhetorical desperation. I am unconvinced by this. Although the notion of 'seemliness' here is less vigorous than the agonistic language of verses 4-6, verse 13 cannot be isolated from verses 14-15, and there Paul not only presumes the same matrix of propriety codes as verses 4-6 (covering/uncovering), he also expresses himself using similarly strident language (ἀτιμία, δόξα).<sup>606</sup>

(ii) The specific activity Paul addresses here is female prayer, with no mention of prophesying (cf. v.5).<sup>607</sup> Why he restricts the scope of his address is unclear, although it may be related to (iii) his inclusion of the additional case '[pray] to God' (τῷ θεῷ), which strictly speaking is unnecessary.<sup>608</sup> Gordon Fee takes this as a sign that the woman is not merely present during prayer, but is an 'active participant in the worship',<sup>609</sup> but since, presumably, non-congregational prayers are also addressed to God this is hardly Paul's point. A better explanation is found when one remembers the rhetorical purpose of this question and indeed of this section, the role of a *peroratio* being to amplify the argument and move the audience to action (cf. Cicero, *Top.* 98). Since God and woman are at opposite ends of the κεφαλή (v.3) and δόξα (v.7) sequences, the additional τῷ θεῷ amplifies the sense of impropriety and presumption – 'an inappropriately attired woman praying to God!' This perhaps also explains why prophecy is not mentioned; prayer, unlike prophecy, is 'to God'.

<sup>606</sup> Malina's discussion of honour language is useful here. Malina, *New Testament World*, pp.48-51.

<sup>607</sup> Pace Antionette Clark Wire, who reads v.16 as if this narrowing of focus in v.13 has not occurred. Wire, *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction Through Paul's Rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), pp.14-15.

<sup>608</sup> See Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, p.234.

<sup>609</sup> Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.497n22, p.525n7. Fee is compelled to adopt this stance by his engagement with Noel Weeks who argues that Paul does not permit women to lead prayer or prophecy in his churches. Weeks, 'Of Silence and Head Covering', *WTJ* 35:1 (1972), 21-27.

14. οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐὰν κομᾶ ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστίν, 15a. γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾶ δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστίν; ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται. 16. εἰ δὲ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνηκος εἶναι, ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν οὐδὲ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ.

Paul begins verses 14-15 with another rhetorical question – ‘Does not nature itself teach...?’ (v.14a). There are two difficult expressions here, the first being the pivotal term φύσις. This term is significant because Paul’s argument that long hair (κόμη) is dishonourable for a man (v.14b) but not a woman (v.15) turns on the notion that this convention is somehow natural. The structure of the previous argument (vv.3-12) and the obviously rhetorical question in verse 13 lead one quite reasonably to expect that this discussion of natural coiffure relates somehow to Paul’s argument regarding covering. The causal conjunction ὅτι (v.15b) suggests a logical relationship between coiffure and the final statement that long hair is given ἀντὶ περιβολαίου (v.15b). However, in view of the difficulties with this expression, the precise nature of this connection is difficult to ascertain.

Vis-à-vis the term φύσις, Anthony Thiselton identifies four alternative senses in the history of the interpretation of this particular verse: (i) an instinct of natural propriety; (ii) the created constitution of male and female human beings; (iii) the material constitution of the cosmos; and (iv) societal custom.<sup>610</sup> Thiselton finally settles upon Wolfgang Schrage’s rendering ‘the order of things’ (‘die Ordnung der Dinge’),<sup>611</sup> which in this setting he takes to correspond most closely to the final of these options. This interpretation of φύσις as that which is conventional – ‘what was at that time in common use by...consent and custom’<sup>612</sup> – evidently makes sense of

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<sup>610</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.844. I think Thiselton is incorrect in identifying Chrysostom as an example of (iv) rather than (iii). See Chrysostom, *Hom.XXVI* 5, ‘that thou mayest not seem to subvert the very laws of nature’.

<sup>611</sup> Schrage, *Erste Brief*, p.521; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.844.

<sup>612</sup> Calvin, *Commentary On The Epistles Of Paul The Apostle To The Corinthians*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), p.361.

the immediate context, since the surrounding verses also contain language describing convention (πρέπον v.13, συνήθεια v.16).

Nevertheless this interpretation is not wholly satisfactory. In the first instance, social convention (sense iv) in antiquity cannot easily be divorced from more fundamental notions of what is natural (senses i, ii and iii). For example, Aristotle (*Pol.* I.ii.1-10) explains what would now be regarded as *conventional differences* between cultures by appealing to *inherent differences* between Barbarian and Greek natures. Similarly, Paul warrants his directives regarding conventions of covering and honour (vv.4-6) by grounding them in a metaphysic of sexual differentiation (vv.7-12). Second, Paul's use of φύσις is formally reminiscent of a technical, philosophical register,<sup>613</sup> since he uses it in the nominative and absolute (cf. Rom 1:26; 11:21).<sup>614</sup> Moreover, Paul's other 'technical' language – the prepositional metaphysic (1 Cor 11:7-12; cf. 8:6) – resembles other Graeco-Roman prepositional formulae which in their Stoic version occasionally make reference to φύσις (e.g. Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* 4.23), albeit that the notions of 'nature' in each case are somewhat different.

A particularly close parallel with Paul's discussion of φύσις, gender differentiation and hair can be found in Epictetus (*Disc.* 3.1, cf.1.16.9-14)<sup>615</sup>, who argues that nature visibly distinguishes between the sexes in certain animals (domestic fowl, lion, human) (§45, cf. Clement, *Pæd.* III.3).<sup>616</sup> In the case of human beings one of these σύμβολα τοῦ θεοῦ (*Disc.* 1.16.14) is that women's faces and bodies are by

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<sup>613</sup> Cf Allo, *Ire Épitre*, p.262.

<sup>614</sup> Köster, 'φύσις' in *TDNT*, vol. 9, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 251-77, p.272.

<sup>615</sup> Epictetus, *Discourses* 1.16.9ff is noted by Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.256; Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.526n13; Hays, *First Corinthians*, p.189, whereas Epictetus, *Disc.* 3.1 is noted by Schrage, *Erste Brief*, p.521n208; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.845; Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), p.529. Köster notes both passages. Köster, 'φύσις', p.263.

<sup>616</sup> On this argument in early Christianity see Clement of Alexandria, *Pædagogus* III.3: 'God wished women to be smooth...but has adorned man, like the lions, with a beard, and endowed him, as an attribute of manhood, with shaggy breasts...So also cocks...with combs.'

nature smooth but men's hairy (*Disc.* 3.1.31). Since the goal of a virtuous life is acting in 'complete conformity to nature' (φύσει ὁμολογουμένως καὶ τελέως §25),<sup>617</sup> a man who depilates his body acts irrationally (§31) viz. shamefully (§45) because he obfuscates the distinctions between the sexes.

This treatment of hair as a visible marker of natural sexual differentiation evidently resonates with Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:14-15, but there is a significant difference. Epictetus' argument turns upon bodily difference, on the fact that men naturally grow more body hair than women – indeed, that to do otherwise is to be like the τέρατα ('marvels' cf. *Disc.* 3.1.27). By contrast, Paul can hardly be supposed to have assumed that male heads are physiologically incapable of growing long hair (cf. *Jud* 16; *Acts* 18:18),<sup>618</sup> rather that it is dishonourable for this to occur (1 *Cor* 11:14).<sup>619</sup> This does not mean that in Paul's argument φύσις is devoid of the physiological connotations it has in Epictetus.<sup>620</sup> It simply means that if physiological (or metaphysical) differences between the sexes inform Paul's use of φύσις, then they operate not at the surface level of phenomenological observation, but rather are an underlying framework – short male hair and long female hair are commensurate with Paul's (implicit) model of human sexual differentiation.

Vis-à-vis the second interpretative difficulty – the sense of the expression ἀντὶ περιβολαίου (v.15b) – the problem is that the term ἀντί could have several possible senses: (i) 'instead of', (ii) 'in place of', (iii) 'as'.<sup>621</sup> All of these beg the question of why, if her hair is ἀντὶ περιβολαίου, a woman should require the covering Paul

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<sup>617</sup> On the equivalence of ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν with κατ' ἀρετὴν ζῆν in Zeno, Cleanthus and Chrysippus, see Diogenes Laertius, *Diog. Laert.* 7.87.

<sup>618</sup> Aristotle discusses male baldness and sexual differentiation (Aristotle, *De Generatione Animalium* V.iii.), although the similarity between Paul and Epictetus' discussion is closer.

<sup>619</sup> Cf. the use of παρὰ φύσιν 'against nature' in *Rom* 1:26.

<sup>620</sup> *Pace* Thiselton.

<sup>621</sup> Cf. ἀντί in Liddell *et al.*, *LSL*

directs elsewhere (vv.5-6,10)? Some commentators see this difficulty as requiring a reappraisal of the entire argument. Alan Padgett argues that, for Paul, a woman needs no covering other than her own hair (v.15b) and that his argument here and in verses 10-12, is a repudiation of verses 4-7 in which he presents the Corinthian position.<sup>622</sup> Other commentators, such as Anthony Thiselton, attempt to avoid the contradiction by arguing that both coiffure and attire are simply shared cultural conventions of gender differentiation which have no essential logical relationship.<sup>623</sup> Finally, Troy Martin has recently sought an answer in ancient physiology, arguing that in antiquity περιβόλαιον was a medical term used to denote a testicle. He argues that a woman's hair is part of her genitalia – 'instead of a testicle' (ἀντὶ περιβολαίου) – therefore she ought to cover it in public.<sup>624</sup>

None of these interpretations is entirely satisfactory. In the first instance, there are no explicit textual cues to support Padgett's contention that large chunks of this passage are citations of the Corinthian position,<sup>625</sup> and as I have argued the preceding verses constitute a coherent, albeit at times difficult, argument. The merit of Thiselton's argument is that it avoids contradiction, since it posits a relationship between long hair and covering only on the basis of convention and social signification. However, as I have suggested, social codes are typically essentialised in the ancient world, which militates against this interpretation.<sup>626</sup> Martin's proposal that περιβόλαιον signifies testicle resolves the logical contradiction. However, given that he offers scant evidence to demonstrate either Paul's or the Corinthians's awareness

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<sup>622</sup> So Padgett, 'Paul On Women In The Church: The Contradictions Of Coiffure In 1 Corinthians 11.2-16', *JSNT* 7:20 (1984), 69-86.

<sup>623</sup> Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.846.

<sup>624</sup> Martin, 'Testicle'.

<sup>625</sup> *Pace* Padgett.

<sup>626</sup> *Pace* Thiselton. See also the discussion of Thiselton's interpretation of φύσις.

of the association, it is only the force of possible contradiction which supports his interpretation, especially since the topic of this passage (female covering) tends to support an interpretation of περιβόλαιον as a covering.<sup>627</sup>

By way of negotiating a route through these interpretative difficulties, I want to suggest that Paul, unlike Epictetus, regards the conventions of coiffure he describes not as natural signs of sexual differentiation, nor as issues of social convention. Rather, they are conventional practices taught (διδάσκει v.14) or necessitated by natural *viz.* created differences between the sexes. Such differences perhaps involve the customary associations of heat, air and boundedness with the male, and moisture, fluidity, porosity, unboundedness, and potential pollution with the female.<sup>628</sup> Alternatively, as both Dale and Troy Martin have suggested, they may involve an understanding of female physiology that associates her hair with her genitalia.<sup>629</sup> Certainly, the body taxonomy implied by Paul's view of reproduction (v.12) and his general sexual metaphysic (vv.7-12) situate him squarely in the gender discourses of antiquity.<sup>630</sup> Accordingly, the logic behind the expression ἀντὶ περιβολαίου is not that hair could conceivably be a substitute for the covering which Paul elsewhere commends; it is that male and female bodies are constituted differently and the conventions of long hair and covering are both commensurate with female bodily nature (cf. vv.5b-6).<sup>631</sup> In this sense the natural covering of hair anticipates completion in certain patterns of attire. As such, neither hair nor covering is solely a

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<sup>627</sup> *Pace* Martin. This is not to say that there is no physiological – even genital – connection here, just that I doubt the testicle connection cf. Dale Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.237.

<sup>628</sup> See Carson, 'In Her Place', p.153ff; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.230ff; Stuckenbruck, 'Because Of The Angels', p.229f.

<sup>629</sup> See Tertullian, *De Virg. Vel.* 12 'Let her whose lower parts are not bare have her upper likewise covered'. See also Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.237; Martin, 'Testicle'.

<sup>630</sup> See ch.6.

<sup>631</sup> Stuckenbruck makes the connection between covering and hair in this way but does not make the connection with female constitution quite so explicit. Stuckenbruck, 'Because Of The Angels', p.213.



matter of ‘seemliness’ (v.13) or ‘custom’ (v.16) – even if the customs are those of the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ (v.16)<sup>632</sup> – they are κατὰ φύσιν.

### 5.3.5 Section Summary

In summary, Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 addresses the situation of certain Corinthian women who are uncovering their heads whilst praying or prophesying. Their reasons for doing so are not given, but their refusal violates the dress code suitable to the public nature of the ἐκκλησία. Paul’s basic argument (vv.3-6) is that anyone with an incorrectly attired head disgraces his or her metaphorical head (Christ/one’s husband). Since a woman should not expect her husband to bear her opprobrium, she should remove her hair, since this would cause her to bear the opprobrium herself. If she rejects this, then she should cover.

These directives follow from man and woman being the ‘glory’ of another (vv.7,10), since shaming someone is inconsistent with being that person’s ‘glory’. Paul seeks to do more than warrant the obligation not to shame, he also offers warrants for the dress code. Man ought to be *uncovered*, since God created male heads to be seen, as the story of the first male bearing the visible radiance of God evinces. However, why the first woman being ἐκ and διό[+acc.] (vv.8-9) the first man is relevant to female *covering* is left to the reader to infer. Since Paul’s use of prepositions is reminiscent of causal and metaphysical language, it is probably that covering is commensurate with some form of metaphysical difference between the sexes. This notion is complemented by Paul’s observation that in reproduction man comes διό[+gen.] (v.12) woman, a point that proves her necessity and significance even if it leaves her subordinate position unchallenged. Paul completes the

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<sup>632</sup> Pace Engberg-Pedersen, who argues that Paul has in mind the custom of contentiousness.

prepositional discussion by situating both male and female causal agency in the larger context of God and the cosmos (v.12b).

Rounding off the argument, Paul suggests that female covering during prayer is commensurate with the patterns of coiffure taught by nature (vv.13-15). Since he regards long female hair as natural, it is rooted evidently in something more fundamental than social convention, despite the fact that the complementary pattern of short male hair evidently requires intervention in the form of cutting. The statement that long female hair is ἀντὶ περιβολαίου (v.15b) appears to indicate that long hair and covering are part of the same nexus of issues. The implication is that there is something in female nature that necessitates a covering, whether in the form of long hair, or the more complete form of a 'wrapper' (περιβόλαιον).

#### 5.4 Discussion

According to the preceding argument, although 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 turns upon social conventions of attire, honour and shame, at several points (vv.8-9,11-12,14-15) Paul nevertheless goes beyond pragmatic concerns for convention, and roots his dress codes in certain fundamental constitutional differences between the sexes.<sup>633</sup> In view of the similarity between the language he applies to the sexes (1 Cor 11:7-12) and to God, Christ and the cosmos (1 Cor 8:6),<sup>634</sup> it is a reasonable supposition that Paul's notion of sexual difference is related to this nexus of theological and cosmological issues. Accordingly, this section seeks: (i) to explicate Paul's notion of sexual differentiation and to see how this warrants his veiling imperatives; and (ii) to explore the relationship between this and the cosmological and eschatological themes in 1 Corinthians.

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<sup>633</sup> Section 5.3 above.

<sup>634</sup> See ch.4.

#### 5.4.1 Sexual Differentiation In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

As I have argued, some notion of essential sexual difference is implied by Paul's argument in three places: (i) the statements that woman is ἐκ and διό[+acc.] man (vv.8-9); (ii) the statement that man is διό[+gen.] woman (v.12); and (iii) the statement regarding φύσις and coiffure (v.14a). In terms of the nature and significance of this difference, I want to suggest three points: (i) Paul has in mind human sexual differentiation as a cosmological/metaphysical matter – males and females quite literally perform different functions and occupy different positions in the natural causal scheme.<sup>635</sup> (ii) The structure of this model is broadly coterminous with other, more commonly articulated, ancient models of sexual difference. (iii) As a consequence, it is likely that Paul's veiling imperatives rest upon comparable assumptions regarding male and female constitutional differences between the sexes.

(i) In terms of Paul's cosmological/metaphysical notion of human sexual differentiation, it is not my intention at this stage to delineate the way in which ancient worldviews inscribed human sexual differentiation upon the cosmos.<sup>636</sup> Certainly, this was evident in some ancient theologies roughly contemporary with Paul's period; for example, Augustine (*Civ. Dei* 7.28) cites Varro's principle of assigning as cosmological principles 'the male gods to heaven, the females to earth'.<sup>637</sup> By contrast, the focus here is upon exploring the significance of Paul's language – in particular the prepositions he uses to differentiate the sexes (ἐκ, διό[+acc.], διό[+gen.]). As was noted in chapter 4, prepositional schemes such as this are integral to notions of causation in Stoic and Middle-Platonic thought and

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<sup>635</sup> See Jorunn Økland's note on the difference between this mode of description and more modern notions of male and female essences or ontologies. Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.188.

<sup>636</sup> See ch.6.

<sup>637</sup> Augustine's purpose in citing this material is to demonstrate the incoherence of Varro's theology.

feature in Philonic exegeses of passages concerned with creation and divine agency.<sup>638</sup> That Paul uses a similar set of terms (ἐκ, εἰς, διὰ[+gen.]) in 1 Corinthians 8:6 to delineate the interrelationship between God, Christ and the cosmos signals that his use of these prepositions, or perhaps the use to which the tradition he inherits has put them, is continuous in some way with this debate.

That Paul regards the sexual use of these prepositions to be a cosmological/metaphysical matter is signalled by the fact that throughout the central section of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (vv.7-12)<sup>639</sup> there is an evident connection between protology and his directives. In the first instance, this is evident in the double allusion to the biblical creation narratives (vv.7,8) and the inference from the narrative sequence of the second passage to which he alludes (1 Cor 11:9). However, in the context of these prepositions, the clearest and most significant cosmological reference is the statement that τὰ δὲ πάντα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (v.12). This is significant for two reasons, the first being that ‘all things’ is a standard metaphysical or cosmological term,<sup>640</sup> and the second being that its use here connects the discussion of sexual differentiation with Paul’s discussion of God and Christ vis-à-vis ‘all things’ (1 Cor 8:6). Accordingly, it is reasonable to infer on this basis some form of continuity or analogy between Paul’s cosmological and sexual use of these prepositions. Paul’s language here suggests a ‘physical’ basis for sexual differentiation in causal and agential primacy – somehow, man as woman’s material and final cause and woman as

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<sup>638</sup> See also Sterling, ‘Prepositional Metaphysics’, pp.34-36; Runia, ‘Plato’s *Timaeus*, First Principle(s), And Creation In Philo And Early Christian Thought’ in *Plato’s Timaeus As Cultural Icon*, ed. Reydams-Schils (Notre Dame: University Of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 133-51.

<sup>639</sup> Section 5.3.3.

<sup>640</sup> See ch.4. Also Sterling, ‘Prepositional Metaphysics’, pp.34-36.

man's instrumental cause correspond to God as material and final cause of the cosmos and Christ as God's instrumental agent.<sup>641</sup>

(ii) In terms of the overlap between Paul's sexual prepositions and other ancient gender discourses, it is worth noting at the outset that, as far as aetiologies are concerned, ancient notions of gender were hardly uniform. Jorunn Økland<sup>642</sup> cites four aetiologies – the story of Adam and Eve, the story of Pandora, the metaphor of woman as fertile land, and the philosophical-physiological notion that male and female are relative positions on a unisex (*viz.* male) scale of perfection.<sup>643</sup> What I think is particularly significant is Økland's observation that these aetiologies share two features. First, they are strictly androcentric, not only defining the world (including women) entirely from a male human point of view, but valorising the male. Second, they are concerned to explain the reproductive necessity of women to men.<sup>644</sup> Paul's use of prepositions places him squarely among these discourses, the first woman being defined wholly with respect to the first man (vv.8-9) and the subsequent necessity of women to men in reproduction (v.12).

Whilst I agree with Økland that all of these models would in some way have contributed to the narrative matrix that formed Paul's thought, it is notable that in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 only the first, the story of Adam and Eve, is explicitly mentioned. This is not to state that other aetiologies and ideas are absent, but rather to point out that, if present, they are filtered through the biblical narratives. Certainly, if later exegetical practice is any guide, Paul's interpretation of the creation narrative and his

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<sup>641</sup> Section 5.3.3.(ii)-(iii). For the application of this terminology to the sexes see Robertson and Plummer, *First Corinthians*, p.231.

<sup>642</sup> Økland, *Women In Their Place*, pp.39-49.

<sup>643</sup> See Thomas Laqueur on the 'one-sex' model of sexual differentiation. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body And Gender From The Greeks To Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp.4-6, esp. p.26ff.

<sup>644</sup> Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.41.

matrix of inherited assumptions are very likely to have been mutually informing. For example, ancient Graeco-Roman physiological notions manifestly frame Clement of Alexandria's interpretation of the biblical creation aetiologies in this way, given that he describes the creation of the first woman in terms of the extrapolation of the smooth, soft, passive and cool parts of the first man. He writes:

Whatever *smoothness* and *softness* was in him He abstracted from his side when He formed the woman Eve...And to him has been assigned *action*...Wherefore males have both more hair and more *heat* than females, animals that are entire than the emasculated, perfect than *imperfect*. (*Pæd.* III.iii)<sup>645</sup>

What is more, although Paul's prepositional language implies both the woman's metaphysically subordinate status and her reproductive necessity, that these notions are filtered through the Genesis story implies subtly different ideological conclusions than if another aetiology had been the dominant narrative. There is, for instance, no notion in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 that a woman's subordinate status is anything other than a created *good*, whereas in Plato's aetiology of gender (*Ti.* 91.A) the metaphysical inferiority of woman is explained in terms of a *fall* from an ideal male state. This is, of course, not to minimise the potential the biblical narratives have for androcentric, even misogynistic, interpretation, but it is to observe that this narrative structure is closed to certain possibilities to which other narrative structures are open and *vice versa*.<sup>646</sup>

Despite the continuity between Paul's prepositions and ancient gender aetiologies, it was more usual in antiquity to describe the physical or physiological

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<sup>645</sup> Italics mine. Two notes: First, Clement here evidently alludes to Epictetus, *Disc.* 3.1ff, which is significant given its usefulness in interpreting 1 Cor 11:13-16. Second, he also discusses female fluidity and porosity in the later passage (Clement of Alexandria, *Pæd.* III.ix) concerned with male and female bathing regimens. See also Ps.-Ignatius, *Epistle To Hero* IV: 'For the body of Adam was made out of the four elements, and that of Eve out of the side of Adam'.

<sup>646</sup> See Eco, *The Role Of The Reader*, ed. Seboek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), p.5ff.

basis of sexual difference in terms other than causal agency.<sup>647</sup> Commonly, sex differences were a function of physical properties such as porosity, heat, motion, or elemental composition.<sup>648</sup> Women as more porous, colder, more passive, and predominating in the lower elements were, as such, metaphysically imperfect males, a notion that lends itself particularly to the unisex model of sexual differentiation. These notions of the physics of gender underwrote, in turn, ancient notions of physiology and psychology. For example, in terms of physiology, Galen (*Usu Part.* 14.6) regarded female genitalia as male structures expressed internally due to female coolness,<sup>649</sup> and whilst he differed from Aristotle regarding female ‘seed’, both thinkers agreed that females could not concoct the blood of the menses into semen with the same efficiency as males (Aristotle, *Gen. An.* I.19-20; Galen, *Sem.* 1.2). In terms of psychology, Aristotle (*Pol.* I.xiii.1-20) regarded a woman’s deliberative faculty to be ‘without authority’ (ἄκυρος), and incapable of (male) ‘self-control’ (σωφροσύνη). This inability of a woman to control herself properly was a feature of gendered ideologies generally; Anne Carson<sup>650</sup> observes that it commonly associates with notions of her moister hence less-bounded elemental constitution.

Whilst Paul’s prepositional metaphysic is not the customary way in which ancients described sexual difference, his mode of description (causal agency) is, I think, fundamentally coterminous with these other modes of explanation. In short, I suspect that Paul and his audience would quite naturally have understood the prepositional distinctions of 1 Corinthians 11:7-12 as continuous with notions of

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<sup>647</sup> See also ch.6.

<sup>648</sup> See Lloyd, ‘Right And Left In Greek Philosophy’, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 82 (1962), 56-66; Lloyd, ‘The Hot And The Cold, The Dry And The Wet In Greek Philosophy’, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 84 (1964), 92-106.

<sup>649</sup> See further Rousselle, *Porneia*, p.26.

<sup>650</sup> Carson, ‘In Her Place’, p.142ff.

female porosity, coolness, passivity and elemental constitution, whether or not these assumptions were articulated explicitly.<sup>651</sup> That these discourses are commensurable is evident in Paul's near-contemporary Philo. Philo is quite content to describe the substance of human constitution in terms of the four elements (*Heres* 282-83; *Somn.* 1.15-16), whilst elsewhere (*Cher.* 125ff.) using human reproductive agency to illustrate a prepositional scheme similar to Paul's. Moreover, the model of reproduction Paul adopts in verse 12 (children ἐκ fathers and διὰ[+gen.] mothers) implies a similar set of biological and physical assumptions to ancient medical writers. Certainly, in 1 Corinthians 11:12 woman occupies a passive role vis-à-vis the male reproductive agent, in the same way as the instrumental agent (διὰ[+gen.]) occupies a subordinate rank within the echelons of causes.<sup>652</sup>

(iii) In terms of the relevance of this to veiling, I want to suggest that the continuity between Paul's sexual prepositions and other ancient expressions of sexual difference is strong evidence that the rationale for veiling in each case is similar. Construed in terms of her elemental makeup, a woman is judged to be more porous, fluid and less bounded; *hence* she is weaker and more vulnerable constitutionally. As more vulnerable, she is a sexual and social risk – she potentially pollutes and is polluted, *because* she cannot control herself. Since she lacks control, she is an occasion for boundary violation and its corollary, shame (cf. 1 Cor 11:4-5,13-15). As Anne Carson observes, female veiling is thus a form of therapeutic intervention – 'since [being more fluid] woman does not bound herself, she must be *bounded*.'<sup>653</sup>

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<sup>651</sup> Dale Martin makes a similar point with respect to female pollution. Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.248.

<sup>652</sup> Instrumental agency is subordinate to the formal (τὸ ὑφ' οὗ) and material cause (τὸ ἐξ οὗ), hence beneath God's dignity. See Philo's critique of the expression διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ. Philo, *Cher.* 125ff.

<sup>653</sup> Carson, 'In Her Place', p.156 (italics original).



That, for Paul, a woman is a potential boundary violation derives from the ideological matrix of the aetiology he cites, since although the first woman is a created good (Gen 2:18-25), she remains irrevocably linked to the notion of boundary violation by the story of Genesis 3:1-7. This connection is certainly evident in Tertullian's comment, 'you are the devil's *gateway*: you are the *unsealer* of that forbidden tree' (*De Cul. Fem.* I.i., cf. 1 Tim 2:14).<sup>654</sup> Paul's veiling directives suggest that he has a similar concern to maintain proper boundaries. That he chooses to express his rationale for veiling in terms of the metaphysically secondary place of woman vis-à-vis man indicates that he sees this boundary danger in analogous terms to his contemporaries. Women, as metaphysically secondary, are 'not quite men'; hence, they are vulnerable and require a veil to ameliorate the danger. Dale Martin<sup>655</sup> notes that this veiling discourse may be related to the notion of prophecy as a moment of particular porosity for women, and relates this to the idea of female bodies as a particular threat to the purity of the ecclesial body. Jorunn Økland<sup>656</sup> relates it to an understanding of sanctuary space as male space. However, the concern in the remaining sections of the chapter is not with veiling, embodiment or ecclesial space, but with the theological significance of the similarity between Paul's sexual prepositions and the language he uses of God, Christ and the cosmos.

#### 5.4.2 Cosmology, Eschatology And Sexual Differentiation

Given therefore that Paul posits a model of sexual difference that overlaps other more customary ways of describing sexual differentiation in the ancient Mediterranean, it remains to explore the significance of his chosen terminology. In short, the question

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<sup>654</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>655</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.239ff.

<sup>656</sup> Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.211.

is what additional significance is there in Paul's prepositions, given that these other expressions of sexual difference are adequate to warrant his veiling directives? As has been noted, the prepositions in 1 Corinthians 11:8-9 and 11:12 resemble Paul's language vis-à-vis God, Christ and the cosmos (1 Cor 8:6); indeed, this correspondence is an important piece of evidence for my contention that Paul has in view an *essential* difference between the sexes. However, the nature of this relationship, and thus the additional significance of the sexual prepositions, becomes apparent only in the light of the discussion of chapter 4.

To recapitulate, chapter 4 argued that: (i) Paul has an identifiable cosmological register in 1 Corinthians, which overlaps standard vocabulary elsewhere in ancient literature. (ii) One of the governing motifs evoked by this cosmological terminology is the microcosm-macrocosm analogy, which posits an ascending series of *participatory* correspondences between elemental, bodily, societal and cosmic entities and processes. (iii) Paul's use of this terminology, however, is eschatologically conditioned and, to the extent that his discourses are situated on the turning of the ages (1 Cor 7:31), the relationship between God and humanity turns on the question of participation in Christ. Accordingly, Christians inhabit the tension between being part of the cosmos-presently-constituted, and being also (collectively) the microcosm of a future order in which God will be πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν (1 Cor 12:6; 15:28). (iv) This apocalyptic tension is particularly evident in the incomplete symmetry of the prepositional formula of 1 Corinthians 8:6, in which 'all things' (τά πάντα) are ἐκ God, but only 'we [i.e. the Church] are to him' (καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν).

Applying these conclusions to Paul's use of prepositions in 1 Corinthians 11:7-12 is not straightforward; whilst the material (ἐκ) and instrumental (διὰ[+gen.]) causes in 1 Corinthians 8:6 and 11:7-12 (see Table 5.2 below) are identical, the terms

denoting final causes are different, εἰς corresponding to God (1 Cor 8:6) and διὰ[+acc.] to man (1 Cor 11:9). On the one hand, the use of διὰ[+acc.] is attributable to the narrative framework within which Paul works, the Genesis 2 story hardly lending itself to the interpretation that the first woman is *to* the first man, rather than *for* him. On the other hand, the terminology used to denote final causes in prepositional schemes tends to vary in relation to the mode of discourse. Formally, expressions describing the procession of everything ἐκ and εἰς some cosmic-level entity have a long heritage in Greek philosophy,<sup>657</sup> albeit that analogous religious expressions occasionally use διὰ[+acc.] to denote the final cosmic cause.<sup>658</sup> By contrast, theoretical discussions of causation tend to use mundane examples (e.g. human generation, a building, a statue), which by virtue of being mundane have a final cause best expressed in terms of purpose (διὰ[+acc.]) rather than motion (Seneca, *Ep.* 65.4-6; Philo, *Cher.* 127).<sup>659</sup> As a cosmic doxological formula 1 Corinthians 8:6 quite naturally makes use of εἰς, whilst in 1 Corinthians 11:7-12, the more mundane issue of human creation and reproduction suggests διὰ[+acc.].

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<sup>657</sup> (i) The elements, e.g. Xenophanes, *Fr.* 27: ἐκ γαίης πάντα, καὶ εἰς γῆν πάντα τελευτᾶ. In our own era see the citation from Suidas (10<sup>th</sup> C) in Delling, 'στοιχέω' in *TDNT*, vol. 7, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 666-87, p.673; (ii) The cosmos, e.g. Philo, *Legum Allegoriae* III.vii.: ἐκ κόσμου πάντα καὶ εἰς κόσμον ἀνάγων. Philo attributes this to unnamed Heraclitans, though no Heraclitan fragment clearly matches. The context suggests Philo has Stoics in mind. (iii) Nature, e.g. Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* 4.23. (iv) God, e.g. the Pauline expressions. See Table 5.2.

<sup>658</sup> See Aelius Aristides 43.9 in Sterling, 'Prepositional Metaphysics', pp.224-25: ἐκ Διός...δι' αὐτόν.

<sup>659</sup> Philo refers to buildings and cities, whereas Seneca borrows from Aristotle the illustration of a bronze statue. Both describe the final cause as the 'because of which' (τὸ δι' ὃ ≈ *id propter quod*), although Seneca attributes the notion to Plato (§65.8).

**Table 5.2: Prepositional Formulae In Paul, Philo And Marcus Aurelius**

	Agent	Material	Instrument	Place	End
<i>Med.</i> 4.23		Nature: ἐκ		Nature: ἐν	Nature: εἰς
<i>Cher.</i> 125-6	ὑφ' οὐ	ἐξ οὐ	δι' οὐ		δι' οὐ
Rom 11:36		God: ἐξ	God: διὰ [+gen.]		God: εἰς
1 Cor 8:6		God: ἐξ	Lord: διὰ [+gen.]		God: εἰς
1 Cor 11:7-12		Man: ἐξ/ἐκ	Woman: διὰ [+gen.]		Man: διὰ [+acc.]
<i>gender</i> <i>Cosmos/church</i>		God: ἐκ		Lord: ἐν	

*(i.) The Microcosm-Macrocosm Analogy*

In the light of this, I want to suggest that the presence of characteristic Pauline cosmological terminology (πάντα 1 Cor 11:12) and the relative ubiquity of the microcosm-macrocosm analogy in antiquity provides a suitable context for understanding the correspondences between the prepositions of 1 Corinthians 11:7-12 and 1 Corinthians 8:6. The prepositions Paul uses to describe the material and teleological priority of the male in creation and the instrumentality of the female in reproduction do more than simply warrant the veiling argument; they indicate that the human pair is *in some sense* a microcosm of God and Christ. That human generation and reproduction should be regarded thus should come as no surprise. As Peter Brown<sup>660</sup> has observed, it was common in antiquity to regard human beings as 'little fiery universes' in which 'there pulsed the same heat and vital spirit as glowed in the stars'. As such, human beings simply reflect the macrocosm in which they are

<sup>660</sup> Brown, *The Body And Society: Men, Women And Sexual Renunciation In Early Christianity* (London: Faber, 1989), p.17

situated, being related to it as parts to the whole, just as in the *Timaeus* there is a participatory correlation between the embodied rationality of the human being and that of the universe (*Ti.* 30.C-D).<sup>661</sup> Indeed, within the *Timaeus* cosmogony, the analogy reaches beyond and behind the universe to the ‘maker and father of all’ (*Ti.* 28.C), the ‘intelligible God’ of whom the cosmos as ‘perceptible god’ is itself merely a tangible image (εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ θεὸς αἰσθητός) (*Ti.* 92.C).

However, the intermediary significance accorded to the cosmos in such a theology of creation<sup>662</sup> is underplayed in 1 Corinthians 11:7-12, since the analogy in this passage is not between humans and the cosmos, but between human agency *within* the cosmos and divine agency *upon* it. God is to the cosmos what man is to woman (material cause), whereas Christ is to the cosmos what woman is to man (instrumental cause). This is reminiscent of Philo’s (*Cher.* 125-27) discussion of causes in which he compares the agency of a human builder (δημιουργός) to that of God. Just as a builder, by means of tools (ὄργανα), assembles stones and timber into a building for the purpose of shelter, so too God, by means of the λόγος, fashions the four elements (τὰ τέσσαρα στοιχεῖα) into a cosmos that will display God’s goodness. What is particularly interesting about this analogy is that it implies a radical contingency to human agency, seeing as, in the latter case, the cosmos contains all of the agents, tools and materials described in the former. Indeed, Philo elsewhere (*Ebr.* 107-08)<sup>663</sup> lauds Abraham for recognising this point; that all good

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<sup>661</sup> Cf. Philo, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres* 155; also Louth, ‘The Body In Western Catholic Christianity’ in *Religion And The Body*, ed. Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 111-30, p.112.

<sup>662</sup> I.e. that humanity is to the cosmos as part to whole, and the cosmos is to God as image to reality.

<sup>663</sup> I owe this reference to Prof. John Barclay. See Barclay, ‘By The Grace Of God I Am What I Am: Grace And Agency In Philo And Paul’ (paper presented at the annual *British New Testament Conference*, Sheffield, UK, September 2006), p.4.

things are from God and that in the last analysis human, and indeed cosmic (§105-6), agents are mere instruments (ὄργανα) of divine grace.

This picture of contingent human agency located within a stratified model of causation also appears in 1 Corinthians 11:12, albeit that the prepositions Paul uses do not lend themselves to the fourfold distinction of agent, material, instrument and purpose that appears in Philo (cf. *QG* I.58).<sup>664</sup> Although Paul designates the principal agent as the material (ἐκ) and not the efficient (ὑπό) cause, he nevertheless operates with an agent-instrument notion that overlaps that of Philo and Middle-Platonism.<sup>665</sup> However, Paul does not prioritise divine agency by suggesting that ἐκ is in the last analysis an inaccurate designation for a human agent (cf. *Ebr.* 107), still less that human agency in reproduction is not true agency (cf. *Heres* 171; *Spec. Leg.* I.10-12).<sup>666</sup> Rather, at the very moment at which Paul reaffirms the material priority of the man and confirms the instrumental necessity of the woman, he situates both with respect to the fact that all things are ἐκ God (v.12b).<sup>667</sup> This is technically different from Philo, but the basic point is similar; male and female agencies within the cosmos that God has made are contingent upon the agencies of God and Christ who, as joint first principles,<sup>668</sup> are formally prior to everything (cf. *Conf.* 98). This has been pictorially represented below (Figure 5.3).

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<sup>664</sup> In *QG*. Philo uses a threefold causal system.

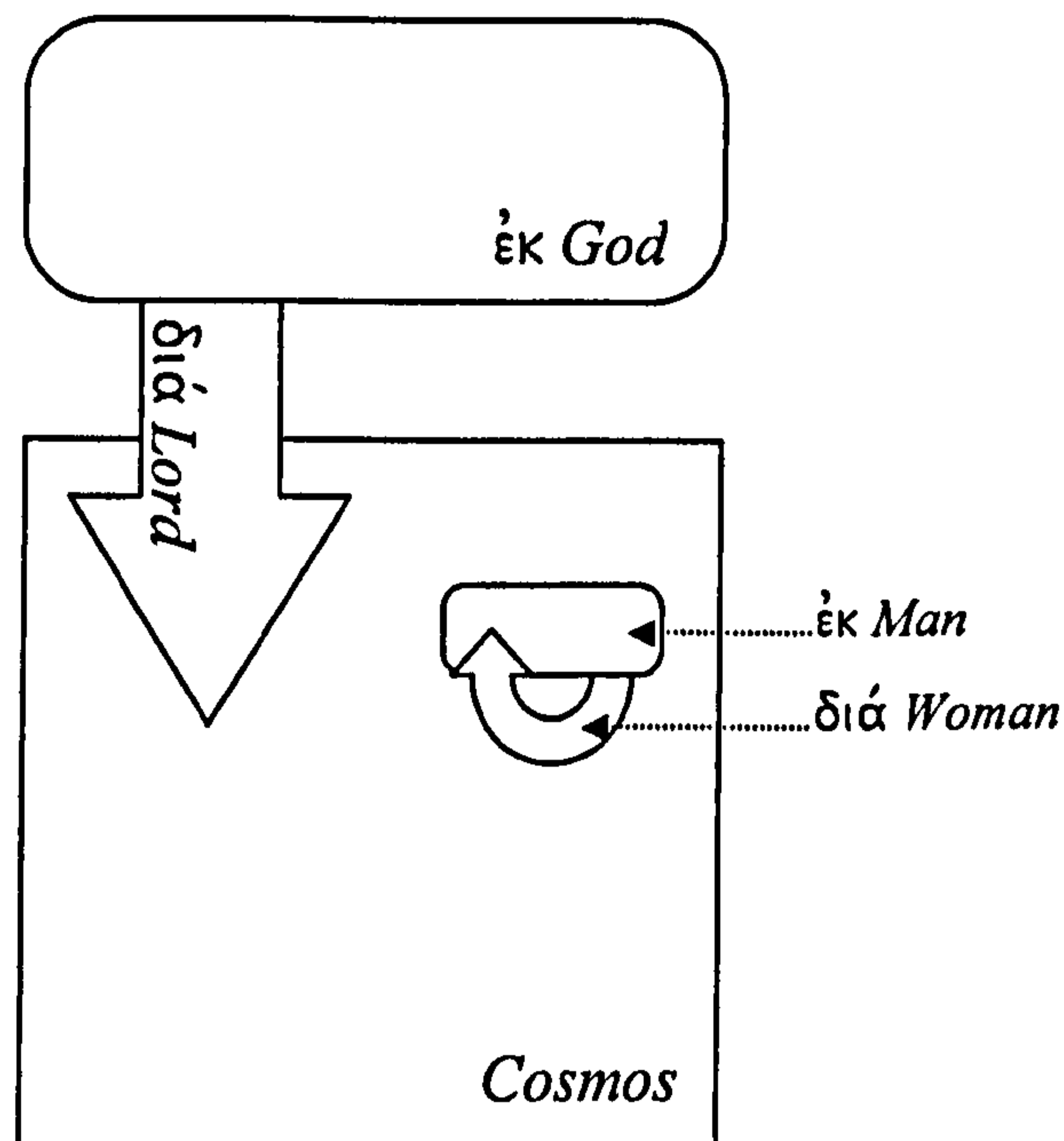
<sup>665</sup> See Sterling, 'Prepositional Metaphysics', pp.236-38; also Norden, *Agnostos Theos*, p.240ff.

<sup>666</sup> Thanks to Prof. Barclay for the *Spec. Leg.* reference.

<sup>667</sup> See 5.3.3.(iii)

<sup>668</sup> I think 'first principles' is justified given the analogy with other prepositional schemes. See Runia, 'First Principle(s)', pp.134-35.

**Figure 5.3: Sexual Differentiation As A Theological Microcosm**



*(ii.) Sexual Differentiation And Eschatology*

One of the more significant observations Albert Schweitzer makes about the prepositional language considered here is that it is thoroughly conditioned by an apocalyptic eschatology. He writes:

[It is] a mysticism which can assert that all things are *from* God and *through* God and *unto* God. But what it can never assert is that all things are *in* God.<sup>669</sup>

Schweitzer argues that Paul differs from the Stoics on the question of ‘being-in-God’ because his worldview is structured around a narrative of creation, alienation and return; union with God is precluded until the eschaton and for the present, there is ‘being-in-Christ’.<sup>670</sup> However, one feature of 20<sup>th</sup> century exegesis, including that of Schweitzer, has been the tendency to reinterpret the cosmological aspect of Paul’s apocalyptic view of history so as to emphasise its present-day theological, historical,

<sup>669</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, p.11. Italics original. Note that Schweitzer here comments upon Romans 11:36, whereas in 1 Corionthians 8:6 (see below) Paul does not regard ‘all things... unto God’.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid.

or existential relevance.<sup>671</sup> This tendency is in my view a mistake. As Edward Adams has demonstrated, Paul uses cosmological terminology *cosmologically*, the terms κόσμος and κτίσις denoting amongst other things the way in which the world is constituted.<sup>672</sup> For Adams, where Paul's cosmological language differs from that of many of his contemporaries is that his apocalyptic framework leads him to reject the assimilationist ideology implied by the standard Graeco-Roman view of the cosmos as an ordered and beautiful system.

As was noted in chapter 4, Paul's apocalyptic perspective is no indication that his view of the world is devoid of order – it is rather a question of determining what in the world is ordered as it ought to be. This is illustrated well by the prepositional formula in 1 Corinthians 8:6. In this verse, Paul modifies a traditional oneness acclamation formula by (i) introducing the Lord as mediator in creation, and (ii) introducing an element of asymmetry between the ἐκ and εἰς clauses. As such, although τὰ πάντα is *from* God, only 'we' (ἡμεῖς) are *to* God (see Figure 5.4 below). In this sense, the Christian community functions like a cosmos, being the location in which the Lord correctly orders 'things' in relation to God. As such, I think that Schweitzer's initial observation regarding the connection between 'being-in-Christ' and the ἐκ...διὰ...εἰς formula is close to the mark.<sup>673</sup> Paul cannot state that all things are in God; that is a condition which may only be satisfied at the eschaton, when God becomes τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν (1 Cor 15:28). For the meantime, God works τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν (1 Cor 12:6) for and through those who are *in Christ*.

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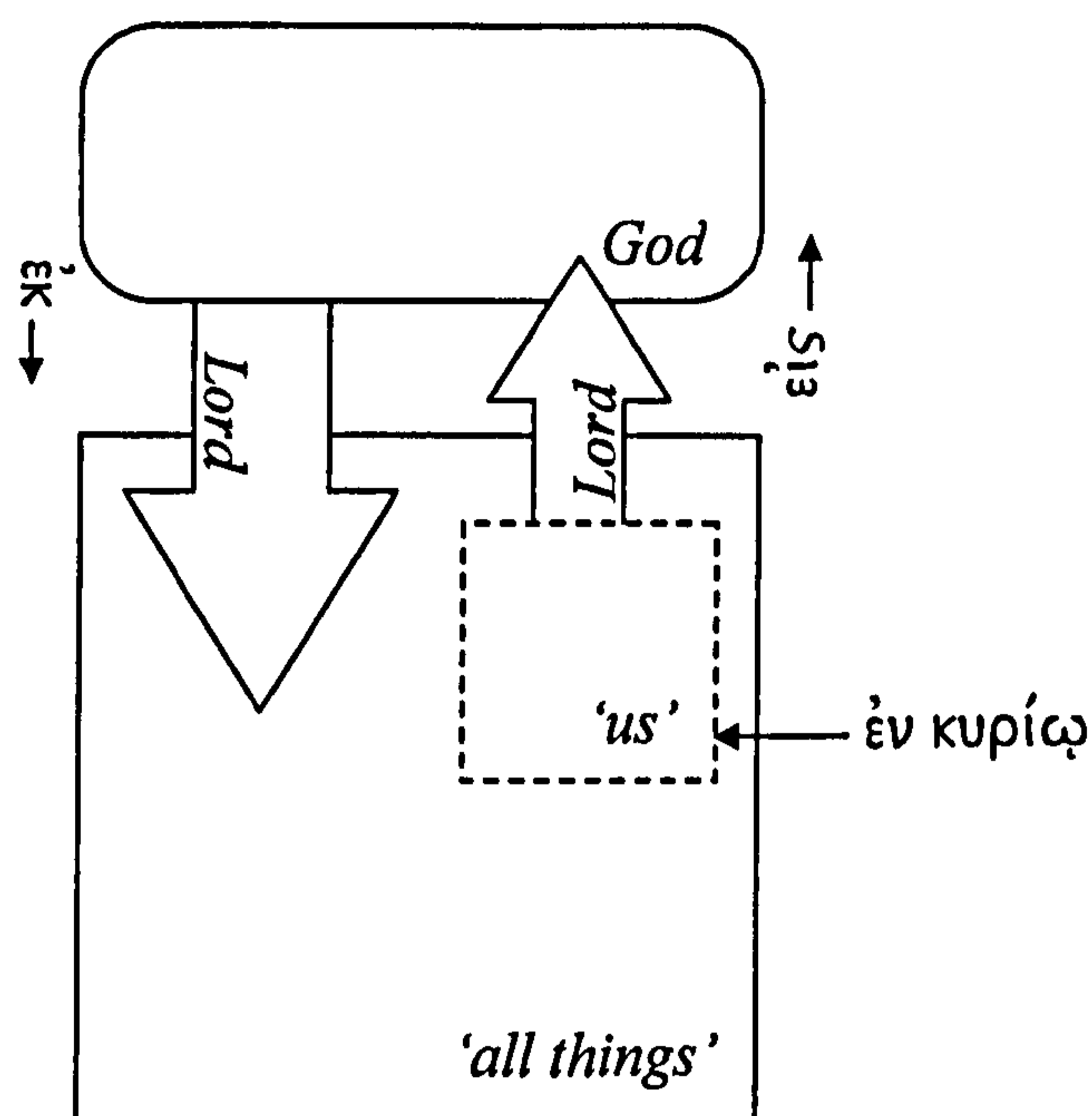
<sup>671</sup> Rudolf Bultmann is a good example of this tendency. See Bultmann, *Theology*, pp.229-30.

<sup>672</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.241. Also useful here is Markus Barth's essay on the scope of the term τὰ πάντα, Barth, 'Christ'.

<sup>673</sup> See Dunn's excellent evaluation of Schweitzer and participation. Dunn, *Theology*, pp.390-93.



**Figure 5.4: Paul's Implied Eschatology In 1 Corinthians 8:6**



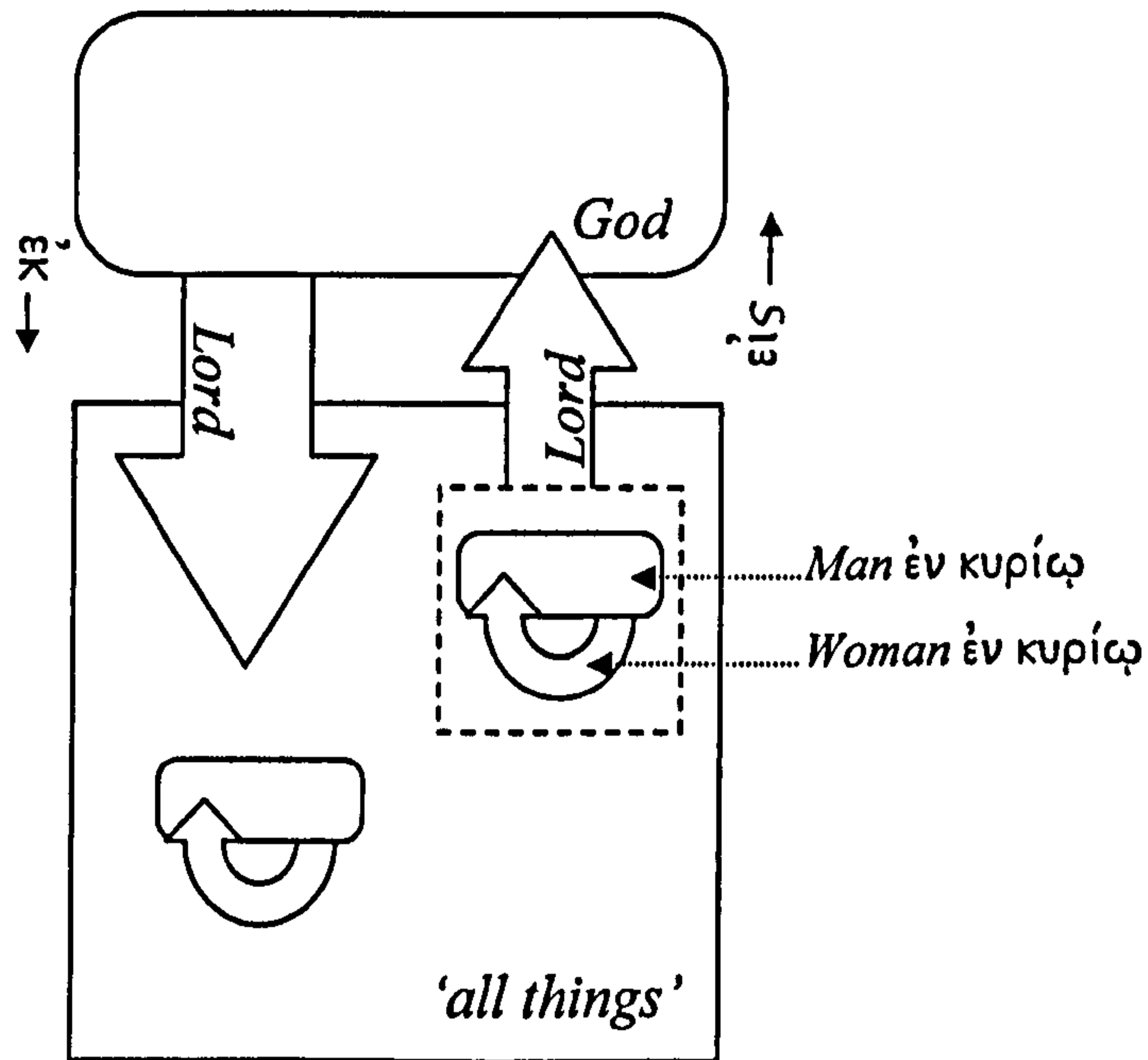
The question remains as to how this bears upon sexual differentiation. What I propose is that the notion of the Church as a cosmic space reflecting the correct order of creation is a useful model for addressing this question.<sup>674</sup> Logically, since human beings are either in Christ or not in Christ, their sexual agency is either circumscribed by their being in the Lord or otherwise (see Figure 5.5 below). This dichotomy is implicit in several texts, but it is especially apparent in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5. Paul here contrasts those who are able to control their bodies in holiness and honour (ἐν ἁγιασμῷ καὶ τιμῇ), with those on the outside who are in a passion of desire (ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας).<sup>675</sup> In short, constituted with reference to the elemental rulers (1 Cor 2:6) of an age that is passing away (1 Cor 7:31),<sup>676</sup> those outside of Christ are, despite their best efforts, intrinsically liable to sexual disarray.

<sup>674</sup> On this notion of Church see Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.225.

<sup>675</sup> Dale Martin's discussion of this passage is useful here. Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.216.

<sup>676</sup> On the elements see Martyn, 'Christ And The Elements Of The Cosmos' in *Theological Issues In The Letters Of Paul* (London: T.&T. Clark, 1997), 125-40; Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.142.

**Figure 5.5: Sexual Differentiation And Paul's Eschatological Cosmology**



This notion of sexual agency 'in Christ' is different from Schweitzer's notion of a 'quasi-physical "being-in Christ"'.<sup>677</sup> Rather, 'in Christ' here is a corollary of a cosmological understanding of Paul's prepositions. That is to say, I think that Paul was of the opinion that within the boundaries of the Christian community sexual agency can be rescued from its initial disarray and redirected towards (εἰς) God. As such, it is able to operate within its correct parameters. As to what these parameters happen to be, Dale Martin argues convincingly on the basis of ancient medical theory that Paul is at heart an ascetic, for whom the heat of desire itself is a dangerous source of potential pollution to the individual, and by extension to the social body of the Church.<sup>678</sup> Forever threatening to overwhelm the body and exhaust its reserves of πνεῦμα, according to this model, sexual desire *as desire* constitutes a symptom of a fallen world. Citing Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* III.vii.57-58) – 'our ideal is not to

<sup>677</sup> Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, p.285.

<sup>678</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, pp.200-19.

experience desire at all,<sup>679</sup> – Martin suggests that Christian marriage was itself prophylactic, a way of quenching desire by making possible *agapic* unions rather than *epithymic* ones.<sup>680</sup> Theologically, this tends to support Francis Watson’s contention that for Paul the veil is concerned with establishing relations between the sexes on a non-erotic basis.<sup>681</sup>

However, Paul’s argument exceeds the predominantly prophylactic function of arranging human sexuality appropriately. As I have argued, human sexual agency vis-à-vis one other is a microcosm of God and Christ vis-à-vis the cosmos. Any discussion of human beings as a microcosm of God is necessarily to invite speculation upon the nature of the *imago Dei*, indeed, 1 Corinthians 11:7 itself connects our argument to this notion. What I suggest is that, for Paul, a correctly ordered human sexuality constitutes *par excellence* the participation of the male in the creative agency of God and the female in the instrumental agency of Christ.<sup>682</sup>

### 5.4.3 Section Summary

The conclusions of this section of the chapter can now be summarised: (i) The language that Paul uses to differentiate the sexes in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is metaphysical causal language. Although it articulates sexual differentiation in different terms to other ancient discourses, at a structural level it is continuous with these other discourses. Accordingly, Paul’s rationale for veiling probably rests upon similar assumptions regarding female vulnerability and liability to pollution. (ii) In terms of the theological significance of Paul’s sexual prepositions, comparison with

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<sup>679</sup> This is Martin’s translation.

<sup>680</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.216.

<sup>681</sup> Watson, *Agape*, p.55ff.

<sup>682</sup> Jorunn Økland cites Bernadette Brooten to precisely this effect. Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.185.

similar terminology in 1 Corinthians 8:6 shows that Paul regards human sexual agency as a microcosm of God and Christ in creation. When Paul's eschatological cosmology was added to the picture it became somewhat more complicated. Paul envisages a dysfunctional cosmos; that which ought to be ordered correctly vis-à-vis God is not. As such, human sexual agency is in thrall to passion. In the Lord this situation is ameliorated, with human generation when correctly ordered potentially fulfilling its purpose as a microcosm of God's creative agency.

## 5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been an exercise in 'drilling-down' beneath the surface of Paul's argument concerning honour, shame and female attire to the substratum of his theological understanding of the constitutional differences between the sexes. As was seen, the basic form of his argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 belongs firmly in the discourses of the ancient Mediterranean, in which females function as repositories of male honour. Since the ἐκκλησία is, amongst other things, a public space, a woman who uncovers in this setting exposes her husband to public shame (vv.3-6). However, for Paul, the issue is more fundamental than this. His position is not assimilationism, whereby local conventional patterns of honour and attire ought to command assent within the Church. Rather, he argues that created differences between the sexes mean that uncovering is uniquely commensurate with male and covering with female constitutions (vv.7-15). As God's image and glory (v.7), man is constituted to be beheld, as the traditions concerning the luminous body of the first man illustrate. That woman is from and for man (vv.8-9) illustrates her difference from him.

Since Paul's prepositions differentiate woman from man along the lines of ancient models of causation, it was judged that he has in mind a notion of sexual

difference in terms of an active-passive, agent-instrument dichotomy. As such, the notion of female nature implied here is of a subordinate metaphysical status. In short, Paul's view of the sexes overlaps other ancient models of sexual differentiation in which the subordinate status of the female finds its basis in a constitutional hierarchy of male and female bodies. It is therefore probable that, given this overlap, Paul has in mind covering as a prophylactic or therapeutic response to female fluidity, porosity and vulnerability.

In terms of the application of the themes in Pauline cosmology and eschatology identified in chapter 4, it was noted that his use of the same prepositional terminology to denote God and Christ vis-à-vis creation as he uses to differentiate man and woman vis-à-vis one another is comprehensible in terms of the microcosm-macrocosm analogy. His view appears to be that male and female generative agencies (cf. 1 Cor 11:12) are contingent upon the creative agencies of God. When the apocalyptic eschatology of 1 Corinthians 8:6 is overlaid onto 1 Corinthians 11:7-12, however, it becomes apparent that Paul has more in mind. There is within this model a fundamental asymmetry between that which God has created and that which is being re-ordered correctly vis-à-vis God. Since the fundamental identifier of whether one is εἰς God is whether one is in Christ or not in Christ, this identifies the Church as in some sense a cosmic space – a representative site within a cosmos hostile to God in which things are ordered as they ought to be.

This potentially explains why Paul has become so exercised about female attire. He is not concerned simply with questions of honour and social esteem, nor is his preoccupation with female covering his main concern. Rather, his concern for covering is emblematic of his more fundamental concern for order within the ἐκκλησία, and this concern for order is not an end in itself, it demonstrates that the

ἐκκλησία is a cosmos directed to God. In short, for Paul, living (and dressing) according to nature (cf. v.14) is one of the means by which Christian men and women assume their correct position within the cosmos. This is why the Corinthian women must participate in their own covering – ‘to have authority on their heads’ (v.10). As more fluid and vulnerable, women were traditionally (e.g. Aristotle, *Pol.* I.xiii.1-20) regarded as incapable of ‘self-control’ (σωφροσύνη), uninclined to restrain themselves and thus in need of strong male tutelage. By instructing the women to cover themselves Paul invites them not to abandon their rightful place in the scheme of things, but to demonstrate that because they have σωφροσύνη they do not need to be put in their place – in short, Paul wants them to demonstrate that they have been transformed.

### **5.5.1 The Gender And Trinity Dispute**

How then does this argument relate to the gender and Trinity dispute, which occasioned this exegetical study? First, it must be noted that the contributors to this controversy are correct in positing a relationship between the doctrine of God and gender; there *is* a correspondence in this passage between the God-Christ relationship and the man-woman relationship. However, the correspondence described by Paul maps somewhat uncomfortably upon the later Trinitarian disputes, in which the emphasis is less to do with the respective agencies of God and Christ vis-à-vis the cosmos and more to do with the question of how to differentiate three hypostases within one divine essence. This can be seen in the discomfort some Patristic writers have regarding the interpretation of Paul’s prepositions in 1 Corinthians 8:6. In particular, Basil of Caesarea (*Spir. Sanct.* 4), criticising Aetius of Antioch for

suggesting that ‘things expressed in unlike terms are naturally unlike [viz. of different natures]’, makes the following statement:

By the term “of whom” they wish to indicate the Creator; by the term “through whom,” the subordinate agent or instrument; by the term “in whom,” or “in which,” they mean to shew the time or place. The object of all this is that the Creator of the universe [i.e. Christ] may be regarded as of no higher dignity than an instrument, and that the Holy Spirit may appear to be adding to existing things nothing more than the contribution derived from place or time.

Nevertheless, in this chapter I have argued that Paul does utilise technical prepositional distinctions to differentiate both God and Christ and the sexes and that, as such, the categories of the subordinationism debate are essentially alien (and anachronistic) to his argument. This is not to say that Paul would have agreed with Aetius that the different designations for God and Christ are evidence of different natures; in fact, I suspect that the way in which he interrupts the Stoic acclamation formula might suggest otherwise. However, it is not to suggest that Paul was, as Barrett<sup>683</sup> states, an ‘innocent’ subordinationist, the category of subordinationism being meaningful principally in the context of these later debates, in which the interpretation of this text was framed by a set of theological and canonical relationships that its author could not possibly have envisaged.

If it is difficult to locate Paul in relation to the categories of Trinitarian theology, it is somewhat easier to identify his notion of gender. Paradoxically, the contributors to the evangelical headship controversy appear to agree on the one major issue, namely the *intrinsic* equality of the sexes, with which if I am correct in my reading of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Paul can be fairly sure to have disagreed. Paul’s veiling discourse presumes the metaphysical inferiority of the female; with this assumption it has a continuous argument and a discernable logic, without it, it collapses. Consequently, even if Paul’s theological categories could be mapped onto

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<sup>683</sup> Barrett, *First Corinthians*, p.249.

the Nicene formula, his view of gender could not map onto the basic categories of this dispute. For modern evangelicals the basic dichotomy is between functional difference on the one hand, and no functional difference on the other. This, of course, makes the interpretative task somewhat more difficult, and no less ideologically fraught, and it to this task that I now turn.



## 6. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-16: HERMENEUTICAL PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

### 6.1 Introduction

#### 6.1.1 Summary Of Previous Chapters

As has been seen<sup>684</sup>, this thesis develops and critiques the evangelical headship controversy regarding the gender and Trinity argument. The centre of this debate concerns the contrasting interpretations of 1 Corinthians 11:3 by evangelical feminists and traditionalists. Each reading entails different understandings of classical Trinitarian theology and evangelical tradition. For evangelical feminists, the subordination of females to males on the basis of this verse implies the subordination of the second person of the Trinity to the first and, since for them this position is heretical, they argue that female subordination ought to be rejected. The traditionalist argument is the reverse of this; classical Trinitarian doctrine affirms the functional subordination of the Son to the Father and, by extension, of females to males.

The evaluation of the hermeneutics of this debate<sup>685</sup> discovered that: (i) It is unsuccessful. The Trinity and headship discussion resolves neither the exegetical questions relating to this passage, nor the practical issue of understanding gender in its light. (ii) It is incoherent. Due to the way in which evangelicals construe the authority of the text and the 'logical force'<sup>686</sup> with which it speaks, certain anthropological and epistemological corollaries are entailed. These cohere poorly with the actual content of the epistle. This is not to suggest that the doctrine of God and gender are unrelated issues; it is (i) to demonstrate the relative poverty of

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<sup>684</sup> Ch.2 above.

<sup>685</sup> Ch.3 above.

<sup>686</sup> Kelsey, *Uses Of Scripture*, pp.15-16.

engagement in this debate with 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and (ii) to prepare the ground for my own examination of this text. For Paul, the doctrine of God is significant for gender, but his statements on this topic ought in the first instance to be understood from the perspective of ancient discourses of gender and cosmology.<sup>687</sup> Ancient cosmologies locate ethical reasoning within the ordering of the cosmos by positing participatory relationships between macroscopic and microscopic entities. Consequently, relations between those realities that constitute the cosmos are archetypal of the correct ordering of human society and relations between the sexes. Accordingly, the physical processes of human generation are microcosms participating in larger processes of causation.

My exegesis addresses several cosmological allusions in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, (i) cosmogony (vv. 7-9), (ii) the angels (v. 10), (iii) reproduction (vv. 11-12) and (iv) nature (v. 14). Paul is preoccupied in this passage with human participation in the image of God, and this motif re-emerges in the discussion of reproductive order, in which the woman resembles microcosmically the role of Christ in creation (1 Cor 8:6, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα). Paul's cosmological allusions are not solely concerned with gender, but also with the shared space in which Paul demands a certain type of gender performance.<sup>688</sup> His perspective is apocalyptic – ecclesial space is the site in which a not-yet-remade cosmos may be presently signified as *being* remade. Hence, Paul's instructions regarding attire; the moment at which the 'new' aeon is most visible (female pneumatic speech) is also the moment at which the present order requires especial attention, in this instance through attire.

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<sup>687</sup> Chs.4 and 5 above.

<sup>688</sup> Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.225ff..

### **6.1.2 The Argument Of This Chapter**

Building upon preceding discussions, this chapter explores the issues involved in appropriating Paul's argument today. To this end, the main body of the chapter has four sections. In the first (6.2), I examine some of the hermeneutical problems that make texts from antiquity generally challenging to present-day interpreters. The second (6.3) identifies several methodological, hermeneutical, philosophical and ideological problems that attend ancient discourses of gender such as 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. I intend to demonstrate that the disjunctions between the discourses of this passage and modernity are very serious. The third section (6.4) is concerned with exploring possible interpretative responses to this disjunction. These responses range from outright rejection of the passage, to outright acceptance, with the remaining strategies attempting to mediate between these extremes. The final section of the chapter (6.5) draws together and summarises sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 so as to present a suitable basis for my own interpretation of this passage in the closing chapter.

### **6.2 Hermeneutical Problems Associated With Ancient Texts**

As has been demonstrated, Paul's teaching and instructions regarding the appropriate significance and performance of gender relate to his cosmology and theology. The connection between these issues is widespread in antiquity, but in Paul's case is conditioned by two additional factors: (i) the apocalyptic understanding he has of God, the cosmos and the elements, and (ii) his belief that, in Christ, God has proleptically initiated the age to come. This necessarily complicates the contemporary hermeneutical task inasmuch as modernity represents in some sense an intensive critique of the worldviews that preceded it. This section of the chapter sets

the scene for an analysis of Pauline gender discourse by examining the general problems of reading ancient texts in a contemporary setting.

### 6.2.1 The Model Reader Of Ancient Texts

As the exegesis I propose is chiefly concerned with providing present-day readers with the information necessary to decode Paul's gender discourse in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, it implicitly interacts with the discursive strategy that Umberto Eco<sup>689</sup> terms the 'model reader'. For Eco, the model reader is the author's textual representation of the anticipated competences of his or her audience. It is not a person but a set of competences, codes and discursive strategies, and it cannot therefore be necessarily identified with either the actual reader or the addressee of a text. Rather, it is an amalgamation of every competence that an *ideal* reader would bring to the text in order to 'deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them'.<sup>690</sup> In the case of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, I argue that the model reader includes information about Paul's cosmology, as this helps to 'decode' his gender discourse.

As an exercise in hermeneutics, identifying the model reader is at best a preliminary stage of interpretation. This is because identifying a set of competences necessary to decode a message leaves unanswered the questions of (i) whether these competences are such that someone who lacks them will be able successfully to integrate them into their hermeneutical repertoire, and also (ii) whether or not the decoded message proves persuasive to such an audience. As I have argued, moderns are able to identify many of the concepts necessary to decode ancient gender

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<sup>689</sup> Eco, *Role Of The Reader*, p.7.

<sup>690</sup> Ibid. Authors sometimes overestimate or underestimate the competences of addressees, and *model* the wrong reader.

discourses correctly. However, few if any scientific moderns could honestly affirm the macrocosm-microcosm hierarchy, the role of the four classical elements in sexual differentiation and ancient Mediterranean honour and shame codes.<sup>691</sup> As such, the model reader of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 may prove to be an inaccessible interpretative standpoint for contemporary readers of Paul.

Nevertheless, such considerations are useful for determining whether a text is open or closed. Closed texts tightly define the competences required of their readers, whereas open texts allow for a greater degree of creative participation by readers in constructing meaning; as such, they are semiotically indeterminate. In a recent essay, Richard Bauckham<sup>692</sup> has applied this aspect of semiotic theory to the study of the Gospels, but his observations suggesting a tendency towards closedness in certain Pauline epistles are particularly apt. He writes:

[T]he letter genre...enables a writer to address specified addressees in all the particularity of their circumstances. Even if other people read 1 Corinthians (as they fairly soon did), the genre encourages them to read it *as* a letter addressed to the Corinthians.<sup>693</sup>

If, as Bauckham suggests, the immediate experiences and competences of the first century Corinthian community form the hermeneutical grid for decoding 1 Corinthians – that is, if the epistle is relatively closed – then from the perspective of modernity the interpretation of this text becomes paradoxically open to all manner of misunderstanding. This is because no text can assume literally every possible combination of reader competences. Hence, closed texts are liable to be interpreted according to ‘aberrant presuppositions and deviating circumstances’.<sup>694</sup> An

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<sup>691</sup> See ch.4.

<sup>692</sup> Bauckham, ‘For Whom Were The Gospels Written?’ in *The Gospels For All Christians: Rethinking The Gospel Audiences*, ed. Bauckham (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1998), 9-48.

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.27-28.

<sup>694</sup> Eco, *Role Of The Reader*, p.6. A theoretical example of this would be a contemporary reader who mistakenly reads apocalyptic according to the conventions of modern fantasy genre.

illustration of this is Gordon Fee's<sup>695</sup> interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:12. On structural grounds Fee regards this verse as a rhetorical counterbalance to the creational hierarchy established by Paul in verses 7-9. This is partly correct. Nevertheless, Fee pays insufficient attention to the pre-modern model of reproduction supposed by the text, and infers, in my view mistakenly, that the rhetorical direction of verse 12 is against hierarchy. Rather, Paul's argument here concerns the necessity of the subordinate 'other' within a gendered hierarchy.<sup>696</sup>

None of this is to suggest that a reading by a person whose competences are not anticipated in the text is hermeneutically deficient *per se*; rather, it is only from the perspective of the model reader that such readings are in the final analysis regarded as aberrations. Unanticipated readers often possess unanticipated competences that allow them to expose discursive structures of the text as well, or even better, than the reader constructed by the author.<sup>697</sup> Indeed, it is arguable that Christian hermeneutical history has always recognised that certain scriptural traditions providentially address contexts beyond their original situation, for example, Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 10:11 that accounts in the Pentateuchal narratives (e.g. Ex 17:2, 7, Num 21:5-6, 25:1, 9 and Deut 6:16) were examples 'written for *the purpose of*<sup>698</sup> our warning, to whom the ends of the ages have arrived' (ἔγγραφή πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν, εἰς οὓς τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων κατήντηκεν).<sup>699</sup> Hence, at least in

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<sup>695</sup> Fee, *First Corinthians*, pp.523-24.

<sup>696</sup> See Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, p.842. Anthony Thiselton highlights the affirmation of difference in Paul's argument, but insufficiently expresses the *hierarchical* implications of ancient notions of reproduction.

<sup>697</sup> E.g. Eco, *Role Of The Reader*, pp.161-63. Eco's analysis of the narrative structures of Ian Fleming's Bond novels exposes what he regards as a 'Manichean ideology' (p. 161) that uses ethnic stereotyping to construct its villains. Eco not participating in the ideology of the text facilitates this analysis.

<sup>698</sup> πρὸς + ACC. See definition C. III. 3. of ΠΡΟΣ, Liddell and Scott, ed., *Intermediate Lexicon*, p.684.

<sup>699</sup> Cf. his application of Deut 25:4 to apostles in 1 Cor 9:9.

principle, one cannot exclude the possibility of successful hermeneutical engagement with this passage by moderns, simply because Paul constructs his ideal reader with respect to pre-modern competences.

However, differences between the reader implied in the codes of a text and the real readers it encounters occasionally present obstacles to interpretation. On the one hand, some textual codes are simply too unfamiliar to be deciphered, whereas others such as ideology generate such antipathy in some readers that continuing engagement is impossible. James Scott<sup>700</sup> cites an anecdote from the ministry of Charles Jones, a preacher in the southern states of the US in the 1830s. According to Jones' account, the slaves who heard him openly rejected his preaching from Philemon, largely because they perceived it as contrary to their immediate interests. In a move that anticipated the later hermeneutic of suspicion, some of those present went as far as insisting that 'there was no such Epistle in the Bible'.<sup>701</sup> On the other hand, some readers' interpretative codes are too aberrant to be useful in deciphering the message of the text. John Feinberg<sup>702</sup> reports a discussion held in the pages of *Fundamentalist Journal* regarding the Shroud of Turin. At least one fundamentalist pastor stated that the face on the shroud could not be that of Jesus because it had long hair, arguing on the basis of 1 Corinthians 11:14 that Jesus can be assumed to have had short hair. This is an example of the influence of theology in generating 'overinterpretation'.<sup>703</sup>

Any consideration of the hermeneutical significance of Paul's ancient worldview in the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is therefore an implicit

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<sup>700</sup> Scott, *Domination And The Arts Of Resistance*.

<sup>701</sup> Ibid., p.116.

<sup>702</sup> Feinberg, 'Truth, Meaning And Inerrancy In Contemporary Evangelical Thought', *JETS* 26:1 (1983), 17-30, p.20.

<sup>703</sup> See Eco, 'Overinterpreting Texts' in *Interpretation And Overinterpretation*, ed. Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 45-66.

consideration of the question *is 1 Corinthians open or closed?* I suggest that the epistle is closed inasmuch as it assumes competences unique to the first century Pauline churches of Corinth. However, the similarities between the Pauline notion of gender and that of the wider cultures of antiquity which I previously highlighted<sup>704</sup>, mean that the broad contours of Paul's gender discourse in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 would have been open to most informed readers at the time. Historical distance means that present-day readers will find 1 Corinthians to be doubly closed; (i) the epistle is not addressed to them, and (ii) certain competences it assumes have changed with the transition to modernity. At the very least, this ought to tend towards a policy of hermeneutical caution among contemporary interpreters of Paul.

### 6.2.2 The New Testament And Myth

The above discussion demonstrates the continuing necessity of diachronic understandings of Pauline gender discourse, because it shows that the problem of the intelligibility of the text derives in part from the passage of time. Simply put, diachronic analyses are attempts to understand the discursive patterns according to which the text was generated. Nevertheless, if when one deciphers Paul's argument one discovers that it uses codes that are from the perspective of many present-day interpreters 'aberrant' or 'deviating',<sup>705</sup> then sustained hermeneutical attention must be paid to this text if it is to inform contemporary discussions of gender. For instance, how does one deal with Paul's use of the Genesis cosmogony? He treats the creation accounts as having a real-world, and not merely aetiological, reference. That is, his statement that woman is man's δόξα (1 Cor 11:7b) appears to state that *in actual fact* the original woman was ἐκ (from) and διὰ (for) the original man (vv.8-9). Does this

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<sup>704</sup> See ch.4.

<sup>705</sup> Eco, *Role Of The Reader*, p.6.



interpretative assumption bind any possible interpreter of 1 Corinthians to a similar view of human origins, and if not, how can such an interpreter understand this text?

Generally expressed, such questions intersect with Rudolf Bultmann's approach to the problem myth poses to New Testament interpretation.<sup>706</sup> Given the extensive nature of Bultmann's work, it is not my intention here to provide a comprehensive analysis of either his demythologisation project or his reading of various hermeneutical philosophies.<sup>707</sup> My concern here is with the way in which Bultmann articulates the hermeneutical *problem* that faces biblical interpreters in the light of the fundamental differences between modernity and antiquity. He writes:

We cannot use electric lights and radios and...believe in the spirit and wonder world of the New Testament. And, if we suppose that we can do so...we can represent this as the attitude of the Christian faith only by making the Christian proclamation unintelligible and impossible for our contemporaries.<sup>708</sup>

The essence of this claim is that contemporary readers are alienated from the pattern of understanding that characterises the text's generative community. This cannot be conceived of in synchronic terms, as an atemporal conflict of ideas, but rather is a *historical* alienation. This derives from the fact that the text's generative community and contemporary interpreters are formed by contrasting historical epochs. As such, any attempt to abandon contemporary patterns of understanding in favour of the worldview of antiquity is, for Bultmann, a hermeneutical absurdity: (i) It could only proceed on the basis of a '*sacrificium intellectus*'<sup>709</sup> and (ii) it would be inauthentic, inasmuch as the historical preconditions of ancient understandings are

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<sup>706</sup> Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology'.

<sup>707</sup> For the philosophical tradition Bultmann engages with see Bultmann, 'The Problem Of Hermeneutics' in *New Testament And Mythology And Other Basic Writings*, ed. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 69-94.

<sup>708</sup> Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology', pp.4-5.

<sup>709</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3

irretrievably lost. One cannot 'repristinate a past world picture'<sup>710</sup>; however, one can describe it and attempt hermeneutically to explain its relevance to present concerns.

This emphasis upon historical understanding has deep roots in the German philosophical tradition. In particular, Bultmann's notion that ancient modes of understanding cannot be repristinated implicitly critiques the work of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, for whom the project of hermeneutics entails some form of imaginative re-creation or re-living of the understanding of past epochs. For Schleiermacher, the aim is to 'understand the author *better than he understood himself*',<sup>711</sup> an approach he terms hermeneutics according to the 'divinatory method'.<sup>712</sup> Anthony Thiselton<sup>713</sup> regards the Pauline correspondence as being particularly amenable to this type of approach inasmuch as the specific contextual nature of an epistle invites the 'reconstruction of [the] socio-historical life-context which gives rise to the author's thought'.<sup>714</sup> One could not, for instance, understand the nature of the Pauline use of honour and shame language in 1 Corinthians 11:4-6, without having some prior notion of the social and cultural context within which such expressions were meaningful, and some sense of the specific situation that Paul addresses. However, knowing why and how Paul addresses certain issues is, in my view, a very different prospect from being able to use Paul's argument to address contemporary situations in the way that he addresses the Corinthian community.

Bultmann's analysis of the problem of New Testament hermeneutics is helpful inasmuch as he makes no attempt to reduce its enormity. However, his focus is upon

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<sup>710</sup> Ibid.

<sup>711</sup> Schleiermacher, 'Grammatical And Technical Interpretation' in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Mueller-Vollmer (Oxford: Continuum, 1985), 86-97, p.87. Italics mine.

<sup>712</sup> Ibid., p.96.

<sup>713</sup> Thiselton, *New Horizons*, pp.253-61. See the entire section on 'Pauline texts and reconstruction: "Better" Understanding than the Author?'

<sup>714</sup> Ibid., p.255.

the effects of what he regards as being the principal difference between antiquity and modernity, namely the shift from a geocentric, mythological cosmology. This emphasis is evinced in his exposition of a number of Greek cosmological terms, such as κόσμος.<sup>715</sup> In my opinion, the discontinuities between antiquity and modernity are more extensive than Bultmann's analysis suggests; they concern not only differences of cosmology, but also differences in presuppositions, patterns of moral reasoning and ideology. This is not to state that Bultmann is unaware of such concerns. For example, his discussion of 'Law' in New Testament theology contrasts the role of conscience in the Gentile who does the works of the law by nature (φύσει) (Rom 2:14) with that of the Kantian subject operating according to 'practical reason'.<sup>716</sup> However, his concern was not the full range of discontinuities between ancient and modern ethics but the exposition of the contours of New Testament thought. As shall become apparent, the discussion of how Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 ought now to be understood entails further exploration of these discontinuities.

### 6.2.3 Section Summary

The transition of worldview from antiquity to modernity generates problems for the decoding of texts, inasmuch as the reader modelled by an ancient text possesses very different competences from that of a real contemporary interpreter. A consideration of the model reader necessarily invites consideration of the level of specificity according to which it defines the competences it expects of its readers – whether or not it is open. Although the Pauline epistles possess specific contextual and situational references that would ordinarily render them closed, I have suggested on

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<sup>715</sup> Bultmann, *Theology*, pp.254-59. See Adams, *Constructing The World*, pp.13-14, for an analysis of Bultmann's use of κόσμος.

<sup>716</sup> Bultmann, *Theology*, p.261.

the basis of comparisons with other ancient gender discourses<sup>717</sup> that Pauline gender discourse would have been open, but that it is thus no longer. Bultmann's work emphasises the diachronic nature of the hermeneutical alienation that has occurred. Contemporary readers are formed by the contingencies of modernity and therefore past modes of understanding are closed to them, irrespective of their success in decoding a text. For Bultmann, the discontinuity between antiquity and modernity is seen *par excellence* in the shift away from a geocentric, mythological cosmology, but as I have suggested, there are other areas that this transition has affected which are equally relevant to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

### **6.3 Hermeneutical Problems Associated With Ancient Gender Discourses**

In addition to the general problems of understanding ancient texts, there are several additional difficulties associated with ancient gender discourses. The notion that Pauline gender discourse has a contribution to make towards contemporary discussions of gender, other than perhaps as a salutary example (a way of *not* thinking about men and women) presumes that the transition to modernity leaves the argument of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, in some sense, intact. It implies that Paul's argument as it stands is: (i) *communicable*, that is, it can be transmitted, received and understood, (ii) *coherent*, that is, its premises, logic and conclusions are valid, (iii) *correct*, that is, when it bears upon matters known it does not contradict them, and (iv) *convincing*, that is, the understanding that it offers is persuasive. However, it is far from clear whether the argument of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 could be regarded thus. In particular, there are four problems that interpreters of this passage must face. These are: (i) the problem of intelligibility, (ii) the problem of Pauline worldview, (iii) the discontinuity

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<sup>717</sup> See ch.4.

between the ethical reasoning of antiquity and modernity and (iv) the ideology of ancient cosmological discourse.

### 6.3.1 The Unintelligibility Of Ancient Gender Discourse

The recognition that 1 Corinthians is now doubly closed, and therefore doubly open to misunderstanding, illuminates the first hermeneutical difficulty faced by contemporary interpreters of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, namely, the relative unintelligibility of ancient discourses concerning gender. Jorunn Økland has expressed this basic difficulty particularly aptly; she writes:

The Copernican revolution put an end to ... viewing man and man's gender (male and female) as participating in an endless number of cosmic mirror-relationships. Because today we live on the other side of that revolution and the process of de-centralisation of the human...that it started, it is difficult for us to understand the logic of ancient gender discourses.<sup>718</sup>

This problem of understanding sex and gender derives from two differences between the approaches of antiquity and modernity. (i) Sexual differentiation, including putative differences between males and females in essential personality type or nature, is accounted for differently in each period. I expand upon this below. (ii) The relationship between sexual differentiation and the cosmos is generally different for ancients than for moderns. Økland cites philosopher Kjell Soleim to make this point. Soleim, marking out Descartes as the initiator of the change, states:

As Descartes refused to see human reason as an imitation of divine reason or universal reason, man could no more look at himself in the mirror of the universe in order to find his own properties reflected out there;...And, although Descartes may not have been much concerned about it, by the same token he ruined the gendered system of the universe....In substituting mathematical measurement for Aristotle's final causes and substantial forms, Descartes desexualized our world.<sup>719</sup>

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<sup>718</sup> Økland, *Women In Their Place*, pp.224-25.

<sup>719</sup> Ibid., p.12. From Soleim, 'I Doubt: I Am A Man: The Cartesian Subject Exposed To Sexual Difference' in *Feminism, Epistemology, And Ethics*, ed. Preus (Oslo: University of Oslo, 1996), 137-46.

The formal basis for sexual differentiation in the modern period is usually located in the possession of specific sexual organs or certain chromosomes. However, in antiquity, the formal bases for sexual differentiation are the elements according to which the material realities in the universe were constituted. Hence, for pre-Cartesians, gender occupied a real or *ontological*, place in the world, and the notion that sexually differentiated norms are a constructed social reality, attached by arbitrary convention to different bodily characteristics, was concomitantly alien. By contrast, elemental essentialism formally underpinned pre-modern theories of gendered persons, and these in turn objectively rooted specific gendered norms. Nevertheless, elemental essentialism was not a stable system. Dale Martin<sup>720</sup> has correctly observed that, because the interrelation of the elements is inherently variable, gender categories such as foetal sex determination, masculinity and femininity were fluid and indeterminate and were therefore in constant need of reinforcement in the form of human intervention through medicine and custom.

What this means for the question of the logic and intelligibility of ancient gender discourses is that notions of male and female in each period are associated with quite different sets of concepts. As Jorunn Økland has argued, there is no warrant for assuming that the concept Paul denotes when he uses the term *γυνή* maps straightforwardly onto the concepts moderns reference when they use the contemporary English term 'woman'. This is, of course, an equally applicable point when made in relation to the concepts denoted by the terms *ἄνθρωπος* and 'man'. Consequently, it is necessary to begin the hermeneutical process with an act of linguistic defamiliarisation, so as to 'find out what Paul puts into the term[s]'.<sup>721</sup>

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<sup>720</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, pp.33-37.

<sup>721</sup> Økland, *Women In Their Place*, p.13.

However, identifying Paul's use of *γυνή* and *ἄνθρωπος* cannot be a sufficient basis for determining how he *uses* the concepts they denote. In order to determine the direction of Pauline influence upon notions of sex and gender, one must first determine the notions in operation in his wider milieu. As has been seen, this is no small task. At times, Paul's Corinthian gender discourse shares elements in common with much of antiquity, such as his emphasis upon the mutual necessity of the sexes. This is unremarkable, such notions being shared with both Aristotle (*Pol.* I.i.5)<sup>722</sup> and Philo (*Cher.* 125). Other elements of his teaching situate him on one side or another of ancient disputes, such as his treatment of human reproduction as *ἐκ* the male and *διὰ* the female, locates him on one side of the ancient discussion regarding whether women contributed actively to the process of generation.<sup>723</sup> Indeed, Paul may not even have been aware that there was some debate regarding this matter. Lastly, some elements may be distinctive Pauline emphases, such as his application of the term *ἐν κυρίῳ* to male-female relations in 1 Corinthians 11:11, or the subversive elements in his handling of the Graeco-Roman ideology of the body, a point that will be addressed later in this chapter (6.3.4). This examination of possible Pauline milieux has been conducted in preceding chapters.

### 6.3.2 The Untenability of Certain Pauline Assumptions

The question of Paul's intelligibility touches upon the presumption identified above that his argument remains communicable. As preceding chapters have shown, the central portion of his argument (1 Cor 11:4-12) carefully charts a rhetorical course using the overlapping notions of honour, creation and generation, and this argument

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<sup>722</sup> One nature for one purpose (*ἐν πρὸς ἑν*) justifies mutual necessity within society.

<sup>723</sup> Rousselle, *Porneia*. Especially the discussion (p. 25) of the opinions of ancient Greek midwives, in contradistinction with, say, Aristotle, *Gen. An.* I.20, and Galen, *De Semine* 1.2.

can be made intelligible. The degree to which Paul's statements remain *tenable*, however, relates to a different aspect of his argument, namely the premises from which he reasons.

James Dunn correctly identifies Paul's principal theological axiom, and therefore his premise *par excellence*, as being God, 'the God of Israel'.<sup>724</sup> In 1 Corinthians, God is creator (1 Cor 8:6, 11:7-12) and also re-creator (15:38-45), revealer through the Spirit (2:10ff, 14:1-33a) and also through Scripture (9:9), redeemer (1:18, 21) and also judge (3:16, 5:13, 10:5). Specifically, the importance of this principal theological axiom to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 cannot be overstated. God is κεφαλή of Christ (v. 3), the inspirer of pneumatic speech (vv. 4-5), the one of whom man is εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα (v. 7), the creator (vv. 7-9), the God of the angels (v. 10), the one of whom Christ as κύριος is chief agent (v. 11), the one ἐξ whom are all things (v. 12), the recipient of prayers (v. 13, cf. 4-5), the one behind nature (v. 14) and the one the ἐκκλησίαι acknowledge (v. 16).

Nevertheless, it is far in excess of the scope of this work to consider the tenability of *this* particular Pauline assumption. Rather, the specific hermeneutical problem addressed here relates to Paul's assumptions regarding honour and gendered attire (1 Cor 11:4-6), cosmogony (vv. 7-9) and the biological processes of generation (v. 12). Such assumptions no longer command general assent, yet they are integral to Paul's argument. Perhaps the best illustration of the unforeseen hermeneutical effects of untenable assumptions is to be found in Paul's inferences from generation (1 Corinthians 11:12). Paul argues on the basis of the order of human reproduction that males and females cannot be considered apart from (χωρίς) one another.

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<sup>724</sup> Dunn, *Theology*, p.31.



Paul evidently assumes the majority ancient view of reproduction, namely that the female is passive, contributing to generation, as Aristotle (*Gen. An.* I.19-20) argued, only inchoate material (ύλη) and neither form nor motion. Evidence for this is to be found in the way in which Paul designates a male child in relation to his mother not by the preposition ἐκ ('from', 'out of') but by the preposition διὰ [+genitive] ('through', 'by means of'). Contrary to some commentators, who regard his argument here to be a rhetorical reversal of the hierarchy he establishes in creation order (vv. 7-8), I do not think that Paul here infers the 'essential equality'<sup>725</sup> of men and women from reproduction. Like Philo (*Cher.* 125-26), he (i) did not consider male and female activities in generation to be equal, and yet (ii) regarded every causal contribution to the generative process to be essential to the act. This explains his statement that males and females cannot be considered 'apart from' (χωρίς v. 11) each other. For Paul, the lesson of generation is the utter-indispensability-in-difference, including difference in intrinsic status, of the sexes.

Nevertheless, it is not reasonable to expect present-day interpreters to assent to this concept of generation, simply to enable an understanding of gender that approximates to Paul's. Contemporary models of generation regard children as more than from fathers by means of mothers; they are, to use the expressions Paul uses, ἐξ ἀνδρός and ἐκ γυναικός (v. 8), that is, they receive half of their nuclear DNA from each parent. This notion would establish Paul's argument upon a fundamentally different premise, and alter the range of legitimate inferences one could make. For Paul, being derived from (ἐκ) a person places one in a hierarchical relationship with them; one is related to that person as δόξα (v. 7) and that person to oneself as κεφαλή (v. 3). That human beings are derived in generation from both mothers and fathers is

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<sup>725</sup> Badiou, *St. Paul: The Foundation Of Universalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p.106.

now known, which according to Paul's logic would suggest that males and females should share equally in designations δόξα (v. 7) and κεφαλή (v. 3). As such, the logic of reproduction order would *now* be seen in a way that Paul originally would not have regarded it, as a 'traversal'<sup>726</sup> of the hierarchy of created gender differences. In short, the shift in premise faces contemporary readers with the dilemma of retaining Paul's hierarchical conclusions and being compelled to find an alternative warrant, or of retaining the logic of the passage but inferring different conclusions.

### 6.3.3 Ethical Discontinuities Between Paul And Modernity

The question of Paul's intelligibility relates to the degree to which his argument is communicable to moderns, and the question of the tenability of his premises entails consideration of whether he assumes positions now known to be incorrect. The third question to be posed is whether Paul's ethical approach and that of modernity are at all continuous. Hermeneutically, this is a question of methodological coherence. When in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Paul engages in ethical reasoning, does he pursue a line of argument that moderns are able to take up, engage with and develop? Three general observations will suffice to introduce this discussion.

(i) Pauline ethical discourse is not explicitly methodological. This does not mean that Paul's deliberations lack coherence, but that he does not begin by delineating his notion of the good, his method, or the criteria according to which he will judge actions to be right or wrong. Perhaps the closest he comes to this is in his opening comments in Romans. In Romans 1:17-18, he sets the moral scene of the epistle by delineating a fundamental contrast between those to whom the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (v. 17) is revealed (ἀποκαλύπτω) through the gospel, and those about whom

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<sup>726</sup> Ibid.

the ὀργή θεοῦ (v. 18) is revealed (ἀποκαλύπτω). Such persons ‘in unrighteousness suppress the truth’ (τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων) (v. 18) that God demonstrated (φανερόω) (v. 19) to them in creation. In general, moderns are far more specific than this when they prepare the ground for their ethical deliberation.

(ii) Vis-à-vis his churches, Paul’s claims to personal authority are central to his deliberative strategy. Whereas not all of his epistles contain references to his being ‘father’ to his churches (e.g. 1 Cor 4:15), nearly all of them begin with a customary statement of his apostolic calling and its divine origin, which warrant or authorise what follows (e.g. Rom 1:1, 1 Cor 1:1, 2 Cor 1:1, esp. Gal 1:1). Such statements of personal authority are unlikely to convince many moderns, for whom they would appear as special pleading, but they illustrate something of the Pauline agenda. Unlike many moderns, Paul is not principally interested in ethical theory, but in practical engagement with his congregations as an *authoritative* Christian pastor.<sup>727</sup>

(iii) It has been common to suppose a structural division in Paul’s epistles between paranetic and general instruction material, at times formally distinguishing sections in certain epistles as belonging to one or another category. Romans 12:1 has been regarded as paradigmatic of the transition from one mode to another. However, as Brian Rosner<sup>728</sup> has commented, the division between ethical and non-ethical modes of discourse is far from clear-cut in Paul, with implicit paranesis appearing piecemeal in general instruction sections and doctrinal material coinciding with ethical deliberations. Additionally, the situational references throughout 1 Corinthians militate further against such a distinction.<sup>729</sup> In chapter 11:2-16 Paul

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<sup>727</sup> Dunn, *Theology*, p.626.

<sup>728</sup> Rosner, ‘Paul’s Ethics’ in *The Cambridge Companion To St. Paul*, ed. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 212-26, p.212.

<sup>729</sup> E.g. περὶ δέ in 1 Cor 7:1, 25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1, 12.

oscillates back and forth from theology (v. 3), to implicit paranesis about honour and appropriate attire (vv. 4-6), to cosmogony and anthropology (vv. 7-9), to explicit paranesis regarding attire (v. 10), to anthropology and generation (vv. 11-12), to attire (v. 13) and to nature and custom (vv. 14-16).

The intricacies of Paul's use of paranetic and descriptive modes have been the subject of extensive theological consideration<sup>730</sup>, yet it occurs to me that fewer biblical scholars have commented upon the philosophical-hermeneutical disjunction caused by Paul's willingness to slip back and forth between these two modes. A distinctly modern commonplace is that it is illegitimate to move from one to the other without some sort of philosophical justification, yet Paul not only offers no such justification but also is apparently, and quite understandably, unaware of the need to do so. The classic exponent of this modern position, also known as the 'is-ought' problem, is David Hume, who writes:

In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met... the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning...[when] instead of...is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an ought, or an ought not. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this ought, or ought not, expresses some new relation or affirmation, it is necessary that it should be observed and explained.<sup>731</sup>

Overlapping with other uniquely modern problems, such as the naturalistic fallacy or the fact-value problem, the 'is/ought' disjunction is in my opinion quite alien to Paul, being as it is a preoccupation of post-Enlightenment thought. Given that it is common for moderns to regard the relationship between is and ought in

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<sup>730</sup> Furnish, *Theology And Ethics In Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968); Schrage, *The Ethics Of The New Testament* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1988), pp.167-70; Dunn, *Theology*, pp.626-30; Lewis, *Looking For Life: The Role Of 'Theo-Ethical Reasoning' In Paul's Religion*, ed. Goodacre (London: T.&T. Clark, 2005), pp.4-17. Also ch.5 of Matthews, 'Foundations for Change: Paul's View Of Sanctification In Romans 12:1-2' (Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University Of Durham, Durham, 2005), pp.31-36.

<sup>731</sup> Hume, *A Treatise Of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 3.I.i. Italics mine.

disjunctive terms<sup>732</sup>, some will regard the incomplete distinction between paranesis and description in Paul to be a blurring of categories, a logical fallacy. In terms of contemporary gender discourse, this disjunction has manifested itself in the feminist critique of biological teleology – their insistence that biology is not destiny. This critique has been aptly expressed in Simone de Beauvoir’s dictum ‘[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’.<sup>733</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 the clearest instance of slippage from descriptive to normative modes is found in verses 7-10. As I have argued<sup>734</sup> these verses comprise the central section of the complex chiasm according to which Paul structures his argument. Table 6.1 below shows the relationship between Paul’s normative and descriptive statements within this structure.

**Table 6.1: Descriptive And Normative Modes In 1 Cor 11:7-10**

<i>ARGUMENT 1: GLORY AND COVERING</i>		
(A)	1 Cor 11:7. ἄνθρωπος μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν	NORMATIVE
(B)	εἰκῶν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων·	DESCRIPTIVE
(B')	ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστίν	
<i>ARGUMENT 2: CREATION ORDER</i>		
(a)	8. οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ἐκ γυναικὸς	
(a')	ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός	
(b)	9. καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα	↓
(b')	ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα.	
(A')	10. διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς [διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους.]	NORMATIVE

<sup>732</sup> E.g. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), p.42f..

<sup>733</sup> de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), p.267.

<sup>734</sup> Ch.5 above. I am indebted to Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.522 for the basic structure.

The normative mode is signalled by the use of the verb ὀφείλω (v. 7, 10), (A) and (A') on the table, although there is no formal marker of the shift from normative to descriptive mode in verse 7. In v. 10, which is Paul's central instruction, the return to normative mode is marked by διὰ τοῦτο (on account of this), which makes the nature of Paul's inference from 'is' (ἐστίν v. 7) to 'ought' (ὀφείλει v. 10) explicit; woman *is* man's δόξα (v. 7b) thus she *ought* to have authority upon her head.

Paul's use of the creation accounts in his descriptive statements (vv. 8-9) illustrates the logic by which he derives 'ought' from 'is'. The first man and woman disclose the *telos* of each subsequent man and woman, and this informs Paul's inferences. As such, the narrative is not simply narrative; it is a foundational myth that discloses God's creative intentions (cf. Matt 19:4ff, Mk 10:6) and, for Paul, it also has purchase upon the present because it is a true account. Taken together, these beliefs provide the basis for Paul's claim that a Corinthian woman is the δόξα ἀνδρός; the nature and *telos* of the first woman, who was 'from' (ἐκ) man and 'on his account' (διὰ [+ accusative]) (vv. 8-9, cf. Gen 2:18, 23) discloses the nature and *telos* of women generally (see Table 6.2 below).

**Table 6.2: Paul's Ethical Inference in 1 Cor 11:7-10**

ii: THE NATURE AND <i>TELOS</i> OF WOMEN ('IS') ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστίν (v. 7)		→	iii: WHAT CORINTHIAN WOMEN SHOULD DO ('OUGHT') ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς (v. 10)
i: MYTH AND HISTORY			
a: Nature ἐξ ἀνδρός (v. 8)	→	b: <i>Telos</i> διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα (v. 9)	

From this table, it can be seen that Paul's argument is implicitly a sequence of inferences from (i) myth and history to (ii) the nature and *telos* of women, through to

(iii) the specific obligations Paul places upon the Corinthian women. Hans-Georg Gadamer observes that this logic is alien to the Enlightenment; it is instead characteristic of 'the Christianity-based teleology of the created world'.<sup>735</sup> The problem of understanding Paul's ethical reasoning in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is further complicated by the fact that contemporary ethics is far from united in accepting the Enlightenment's rejection of a teleological basis for value.

For example, Alasdair MacIntyre<sup>736</sup> would concur with Gadamer's analysis that creational teleology has been relinquished by the successors to the Enlightenment, but far more than Gadamer he regards the nature of the Enlightenment project to have been a blind alley, 'a scheme whose internal incoherence ensured the failure of the common philosophical project from the outset'.<sup>737</sup> MacIntyre's threefold contention is that (i) Enlightenment ethics fails in its quest for rational norms because of 'certain shared characteristics'<sup>738</sup> that (ii) derive from the immediate historical context of the Enlightenment, (iii) the most significant feature of which is the rejection of theological teleology.<sup>739</sup> Consequently, he argues that moderns fail to ground norms because they have an inadequate conception of the destiny to which God has directed human nature, and of the importance of the social roles which contextualise the practice of virtue and make the consequent attainment of one's *telos* possible. His assessment of the Enlightenment position is summed up in the following two comments:

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<sup>735</sup> Gadamer, 'The Ontological Problem Of Value' in *Hermeneutics, Religion and Ethics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 58-75, p.58.

<sup>736</sup> MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1985).

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*, p.51.

<sup>738</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.60-61.

[The] “No ‘ought’ conclusion from ‘is’ premises” principle becomes an inescapable truth for philosophers whose culture possesses only... impoverished moral vocabulary.<sup>740</sup>

[M]oral judgements are linguistic survivals from the practices of classical theism which have lost the context provided by these practices.<sup>741</sup>

Notwithstanding these observations, the teleology proposed by MacIntyre differs both from Paul’s reading of creation (1 Cor 11:7-10) and also from his understanding of the lessons of reproduction (vv.11-12) and nature (v.14). For MacIntyre, the *telos* of humanity is not disclosed principally through the foundational myths of a religious tradition (*contra* Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:7-9), but rather through sustained reflection upon the history of the shared practices of virtue found in the traditions of specific communities, including Christian communities.<sup>742</sup> This discussion illustrates that mapping Paul’s ethical horizons onto the contemporary landscape is no easy task. It entails locating and addressing the areas of agreement and tension that exist between Paul’s approach and the various ethical traditions of modernity. What makes this especially difficult is that some modern traditions have greater potential for rapprochement with Paul than others.

#### 6.3.4 Aesthetic Ideology In Antiquity

Having explored whether Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 can be made intelligible to moderns, whether its premises remain tenable, and what issues affect the coherence with which it can be applied ethically, it is now appropriate to turn to the hermeneutical effects of ideology upon readings of Paul. As has been argued, cosmological discourse in antiquity was permeated by a number of ideological and

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<sup>740</sup> Ibid., p.59.

<sup>741</sup> Ibid., p.60

<sup>742</sup> Ibid. On virtue and function, *telos* and excellence (pp.57-58), virtue and the Good and goods (p.191), and the formation of virtue in relation to a tradition (pp.204-225).



aesthetic concerns that underpin a largely conservative, conformist ideology of city and household.<sup>743</sup> One of the features of this ideology is the notion of the beauty of the cosmos. This elision of aesthetic and moral categories in antiquity has been well noted by Andrew Louth,<sup>744</sup> who observes the classical tendency to regard the chief characteristic of the divine, hence the Good, to be beauty. It is illustrated by the dual use of *καλός* to designate both physical and moral beauty,<sup>745</sup> but it can also be seen particularly well in the discussion between Agathon and Socrates regarding the statement ‘good things are beautiful’ (*τὰ ἀγαθὰ καλὰ*) (*Symp.* 201.C).<sup>746</sup>

The elision of the good and the beautiful profoundly affects the normative role of the cosmos in Hellenistic body ideology. (i) In this context the cosmos is generally thought of as beautiful. It is the best (*ἄριστον*) and the fairest (*κάλλιστον*) of creations according to Plato (*Ti.* 30.B), and the implied connection between beauty and rationality suggests that it also has intelligence and soul. The Stoics subsequently refined this notion.<sup>747</sup> (ii) The beauty of the cosmos discloses, in some sense, the beauty of the divine.<sup>748</sup> Plato’s near contemporary Xenophon (*Mem.* IV.iii.13) states:

[H]e who co-ordinates and holds together the universe, wherein all things are *fair and good* (*ἐν ᾧ πάντα καλὰ καὶ ἀγαθὰ ἔστι*)... is manifest in his supreme works.<sup>749</sup>

On the basis of its size, perfection and *beauty*, Plato (*Ti.* 92.C) describes the entire cosmos as a *perceptible* god.<sup>750</sup> Philo is perhaps more relevant to the period in

<sup>743</sup> See ch.4 above. See also Adams, *Constructing The World* on the ideology evoked by *κόσμος* (pp.69-75), and Paul’s subversive redeployment of the term (p.113).

<sup>744</sup> Louth, ‘Greek Spirituality’ in *A Dictionary Of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Wakefield (London: SCM, 1983), 180-82

<sup>745</sup> See Grundmann, ‘*καλός*’ in *TDNT*, vol. 3, ed. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 536-56, p.537. See definitions I and III of *καλός* in Liddell and Scott, ed., *Intermediate Lexicon*, p.397.

<sup>746</sup> Thanks to Prof. John Barclay for recommending *Symposium* as a possible source for this connection.

<sup>747</sup> See further Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* 1.39.

<sup>748</sup> See further Wright, *Cosmology In Antiquity*, pp.163-84.

<sup>749</sup> Xenophon, *Memorabilia* IV.iii.13. Also cited in Wright, *Cosmology In Antiquity*, p.174. For further comment on the expression *καλός καὶ ἀγαθός*, see Grundmann, ‘*καλός*’, pp.538-40.

which 1 Corinthians was written and more closely related to the religious heritage of Paul.<sup>751</sup> He follows *Timaeus* in describing the intelligible world (ὁ νοητός) as the beautiful original (τὸ καλὸν παράδειγμα), of which the visible world (ὁ ὄρατος κόσμος) is a beautiful copy (μίμημα καλόν). This paradigmatic creation is of divine form (θεοειδής) (*Op.* 16).<sup>752</sup>

(iii) One of the implications of the macrocosm-microcosm analogy is that the beauty and goodness of the cosmos is paradigmatic for the microcosms that it contains.<sup>753</sup> As Andrew Louth correctly observes, this applies *par excellence* to human bodies; ‘the human body is...both a part of...and an encapsulation of the whole (...τὸ πᾶν)’.<sup>754</sup> In view of this, it is more than a coincidence that Plato (*Ti.* 33.B) describes the physical shape of the cosmos as spherical (σφαιροειδής),<sup>755</sup> and elsewhere (*Symp.* 190.A) has the character Aristophanes describe the primal androgyne as initially, hence ideally, round (στρογγύλος).<sup>756</sup> The paradigmatic status of the cosmos, however, extends not merely to physical characteristics but is also behavioural; it takes the form of an ethical *mimēsis* by which one literally learns

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<sup>750</sup> εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ θεὸς αἰσθητός, μέγιστος καὶ ἄριστος κάλλιστος...καὶ τελεώτατος.

<sup>751</sup> I am thinking of the LXX uses of δόξα and δικαιοσύνη to designate that which ‘the heavens declare’ about the LORD (Ps 19:1, 50:6, 97:6). The notion of God as glorious and righteous is not far from God as beautiful and good, although Grundmann disagrees with this. Grundmann, ‘καλός’, p.543.

<sup>752</sup> Cf. Philo, *De Plantatione* 50. Here the beauty of the sensible cosmos makes it a suitable dwelling for God (οἶκον θεοῦ) and its beauty derives from it being the ἀπαύγασμα of an intelligible, therefore beautiful, cosmos. (Cf. Hebrews 1:3 and Wisdom 7:26 regarding ἀπαύγασμα, and Colossians 1:15 for the visible/invisible contrast with respect to Christ and the cosmos).

<sup>753</sup> E.g. The cosmos is ‘one living creature having all living creatures in itself’ (ζῶον ἐν ζῶα ἔχον τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ θνητὰ ἀθάνατά τε), Plato, *Timaeus* 69c.

<sup>754</sup> Louth, ‘Body In Western Christianity’.

<sup>755</sup> See further Rosemary Wright’s chapter ‘Models, Myths and Metaphors’ in which the spherical models of the cosmos are described. Wright, *Cosmology In Antiquity*, pp.37-55.

<sup>756</sup> It is possible that the στρογγύλος here signifies ‘compact’ not ‘round’, but the reference to the androgyne resembling a tumbling acrobat when running suggests rotation and implies roundness. See further definitions I.1 and I.3 of στρογγύλος in Liddell and Scott, ed., *Intermediate Lexicon*, p.750.

the music of the spheres; one attunes oneself to the cosmic order in order to live κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν ('according to the original nature') (*Ti.* 90.D).<sup>757</sup>

(iv) This creational aesthetic informs ancient hierarchical ideologies of gender. It is particularly evident in Plato's *Timaeus* cosmogony. He apparently regards women as males who, having previously been cowards (δελοί), are re-born into bodies commensurate with their (ignoble) souls (*Ti.* 91.A). This forges a connection in Plato's work between gendered embodiment and hierarchies of virtue and moral beauty. In Aristotle the ideology operates differently. Society is a partnership (κοινωνία) (*Pol.* I.i.1) comprising three *unequal* foundational relationships – male-female, parent-child and master-slave. Within this schema the place of women is determined by the fact that they are imperfect participants in reason (*Pol.* I.ii.13, I.v.6, 8) and directed concomitantly to lesser moral virtues (ἠθικὴ ἀρετή) (*Pol.* I.v.8). Nevertheless, the performance of the specific virtues commensurate with one's nature is an aesthetic matter (*Pol.* I.i.5)<sup>758</sup>; males and females each have their own 'beautiful' purpose, integral to the healthy function of the whole. Closer to Paul's period, Philo's allegorical hermeneutic (*Cher.* 56-57) follows a modified form of Platonic anthropology and contrasts the higher and lower faculties of Mind (νοῦς) and Perception (αἴσθησις), but represents them using the biblical characters Adam and Eve. As such, for Philo, there are *male* and *female* ways of reading that correspond (allegorically) to higher and lower faculties.<sup>759</sup>

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<sup>757</sup> Cf. Paul's use φύσις in 1 Cor 11:14 in the context of cosmogony (vv. 7-9). See further Wright's excellent analysis of the Harmony of the Spheres notion from Pythagoras on, which is relevant to Plato's argument in this section of *Timaeus*. See Wright, *Cosmology In Antiquity*, p.137ff..

<sup>758</sup> οὕτω γὰρ ἂν ἀποτελοῖτο κάλλιστα τῶν ὀργάνων ἕκαστον, μὴ πολλοῖς ἔργοις ἀλλ' ἐνὶ δουλειῶν ('For in this way, each of the tools might be completed beautifully, [If] not serving many tasks but one'). Note the adverb κάλλιστα (beautifully/well/nobly).

<sup>759</sup> For Philo there is also a hierarchy of first and second creations, a spiritual creation (androgynous) and a carnal creation (male *then* female). This reading of the two Genesis accounts is perhaps also influenced by Plato, e.g. the myth of the primal androgyne in Plato, *Symposium* 189.E. See Stephen Barton on gender and the two creations in Philo, in Barton, 'Male And Female', p.8.

Evidently, the Hellenistic ideology of gender is informed by a hierarchical aesthetic that posits the male as the ideal, hence beautiful, physical, moral and (allegorically) hermeneutical archetype.<sup>760</sup> Dale Martin and Edward Adams each provide slightly different accounts of Paul's interaction with this ideology in 1 Corinthians. Dale Martin regards its presence as an indicator of high social status concerns amongst the Corinthians, being as it is a discourse aimed at inscribing upon bodies (and using appropriate *paideia* upon souls<sup>761</sup>), the ideals of upper class Graeco-Roman society.<sup>762</sup> For Martin, 'the normally conceived body hierarchy is actually only an apparent hierarchy'<sup>763</sup> which Paul begins unravelling in 1 Corinthians 12:22-25, by using certain rhetorical status markers subversively (e.g. τὰ δοκοῦντα, ἀσθενέστερα, ἀτιμότερα). According to Martin, Paul first admits the Hellenistic aesthetic ideology, then he denies it, and finally he inverts it when he asserts that the 'shameful member of the body has most seemliness'<sup>764</sup> (ἀσχήμονα εὐσχημοσύνην περισσοτέρα ἔχει) (1 Cor 12:23).

Edward Adams addresses this ideology by means of an analysis of Paul's cosmological terminology. He argues that Paul's immediate rhetorical purpose is the 'linguistic defamiliarization, or uncoding and recoding'<sup>765</sup> of his Corinthian correspondents' cosmological notions. In adopting this strategy, Paul's principal purpose is not merely cosmological and theoretical but pastoral. He recognises that

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<sup>760</sup> See F. Gerald Downing's application of this Hellenistic, in his view particularly Aristotelian, hierarchy to the question of the natures of *Christian* men and women. Downing, 'The Nature(s) Of Christian Men And Women', *Theology* 108:843 (2005), 178-84, p.179.

<sup>761</sup> Grundmann, 'καλός'.

<sup>762</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, pp.34-37.

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid.*, p.94.

<sup>764</sup> Martin (*Ibid.*, p.95) translates εὐσχημοσύνη as beauty, and whilst I think that the idea of physical presentableness is at the fore, I have stayed closer to Liddell, who argued that its principal sense is 'gracefulness' or 'decorum'. The notion of 'seemliness' is, I think, a suitable compromise. See εὐσχημοσύνη in Liddell and Scott, ed., *Intermediate Lexicon*, p.333.

<sup>765</sup> Adams, *Constructing The World*, p.113.

the Corinthians adhere to conventional Hellenistic ideology and seeks to destabilise this. This is necessary because the Corinthians' view of body, society and cosmos leads them to regard wider society as a macrocosm into which they ought to integrate. Paul's introduction of an apocalyptic tension between the cosmos as it stands and God's eschatological order challenges this tendency, and also undermines their emphasis upon certain markers of social status.<sup>766</sup>

However, it is difficult to understand precisely how Martin's or Adams' appraisals of Paul's rhetorical strategy as a subversion of the conventional ideology relates to Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. As I have argued,<sup>767</sup> the ascending and descending sequences of κεφαλή (1 Cor 11:3) and δόξα (1 Cor 11:7, [15]) pairings in this passage underpin an ameliorated form of hierarchy. This suggests that *with respect to gender* Paul stays somewhat closer to the conventional ideology I have identified than he does when discussing other status markers (e.g. the πνευματικός and ψυχικός epithets in 1 Cor 2:6ff). Even supposing (correctly) that Paul ameliorates this hierarchy, the deconstructive rhetoric that one finds elsewhere in 1 Corinthians (e.g. 2:6-3:3, 12:22-25) appears strangely absent. Even Morna Hooker's<sup>768</sup> excellent argument that the expression ἐξουσία ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς (1 Cor 11:10) denotes a symbol of authorisation rather than subjection does little to resolve this when one sees that, for Paul, one of the peculiarities of the female body is that it requires inscription with such a symbol, whereas male bodies require no equivalent authorisation.<sup>769</sup> Indeed, this is implicit in Martin's explanation of the 'angels'

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<sup>766</sup> Ibid., pp.147-49.

<sup>767</sup> See ch.5.

<sup>768</sup> Hooker, 'Authority'.

<sup>769</sup> Assuming here that Paul's comment regarding the man praying and prophesying with covered head is merely rhetorical (1 Cor 11:4, 7).

reference (v. 10); female bodies are more porous therefore dangerous;<sup>770</sup> hence, for Paul, it is seemly (πρέπω) that female heads are covered (1 Cor 11:13).

The differences Martin and Adams identify between Hellenistic and Pauline ideologies of gender are eclipsed by the far more significant differences between ancient and modern approaches. Present-day gender discourses, both traditionalist and reformist, differ significantly from ancient gender discourses, whether Hellenistic or Pauline. Reformist approaches by definition entail some rejection of gender hierarchy, and this is a serious hermeneutical problem for the interpretation of the hierarchical elements of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. That Paul teaches an ameliorated patriarchy in this passage exposes Christianity to the suspicion that it is structurally patriarchal, an *ameliorated* patriarchy remaining an ameliorated *patriarchy*.<sup>771</sup> This suspicion is pertinent if, as I suggest, Paul simply extends the classical body taxonomy from cold wet female bodies, through hot dry males, to the pneumatic masculinity (or *super-masculinity*?) of the ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ (1 Cor 14:45).<sup>772</sup>

Moreover, traditionalists are not as traditional as they themselves might think. Whilst evangelical traditionalists advocate continuing adherence to Paul's ameliorated gender hierarchy, they do this whilst explicitly denying that this hierarchy has an ontological component.<sup>773</sup> Men and women may be differently eligible for leadership roles within such communities, but in general this is no indication that the axioms of

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<sup>770</sup> Martin, *Corinthian Body*, pp.248-49. See also the excellent article by Loren Stuckenbruck. Stuckenbruck, 'Because Of The Angels'.

<sup>771</sup> Daphne Hampson's comments regarding feminism, hierarchy and Christian discourse are relevant here. See Hampson, 'On Autonomy And Heteronomy' in *Swallowing a Fishbone: Feminist Theologians Debate Christianity*, ed. Hampson (London: SPCK, 1996), 1-16, p.14.

<sup>772</sup> See Dale Martin's comment that 'femininity will be swallowed up by masculinity' in Martin, *Corinthian Body*, p.249. This notion somewhat undercuts modern egalitarian questions of the type 'is the Bible good news for women?' (e.g. Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be*, p.1-2). Paul would have regarded the notion that 'femininity will be swallowed up by masculinity' as being good news for women, precisely because of his belief that femininity was inferior to masculinity.

<sup>773</sup> See ch.2.

Enlightenment egalitarianism are in dispute. Indeed, Duane Litfin cites the relationship between the American *Declaration of Independence* ('We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men [*sic.*] are created equal')<sup>774</sup> and American social order as evidence that statements of strict ontological equality need not preclude inequities of status based upon function or leadership role. He then applies this logic to gender roles. However, as will be apparent from my discussion of this topic, ancient gender ideologies are premised largely upon the ontological, not merely functional, priority of the male and thus differ substantially from present-day traditionalism.

In principle therefore, present-day thinkers, both traditionalist and reformist, are alienated from the cosmology, physics, biology and ideology underpinning gender imperatives in antiquity. This hints at what I suggest is one of the fundamental hermeneutical issues facing present-day readers of Pauline gender discourse. Modern readers are formed by a worldview in which what men and women happen to be (ontology) is no longer related *in the same way*<sup>775</sup> to (i) how they ought to behave (ethics) or (ii) to notions of the good-beautiful (*καλός*) and through this to the divine (aesthetics).<sup>776</sup> As such, the transition from antiquity to modernity radically affects every element of a spirituality and theology of human gender, but in particular its ontology. That modernity has wrought a collapse in the ontology of gender largely follows from the fact that Descartes 'desexualized our world'<sup>777</sup> when he made the reasoning human subject the prediscursive centre of his thought and thereby

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<sup>774</sup> Litfin, 'Evangelical Feminism: Why Traditionalists Reject It', *BSac* 136:543 (1979), 258-71, p.264.

<sup>775</sup> It is true that evangelical traditionalists (e.g. John Piper) appeal to a 'beautiful pattern' of gender complementarity, but given the traditionalist insistence that subordination is a subordination of 'role' not 'essence', this is a fundamentally different argument to that of antiquity. See Piper, 'A Vision Of Biblical Complementarity', p.44.

<sup>776</sup> See once again Andrew Louth's summary of the chief tenets of Greek spirituality. Louth, 'Greek Spirituality', pp.180-82.

<sup>777</sup> Soleim, 'I Doubt: I Am A Man', p.140.

disconnected it from the gendered cosmology of the Aristotelian paradigm. However, this was merely the opening salvo in an assault on essentialisms culminating in feminist analyses and in particular in the anti-foundationalism of Judith Butler.<sup>778</sup>

Whereas the ontological problematic of gender had answers in antiquity, albeit incorrect answers, in the modern period the question ‘whence comes maleness and femaleness?’ perennially requires answering. Kjell Soleim writes:

[W]here do I find the signs of male and female? I may...resort to...sciences, but for all I know, the meaning of their discourses may be determined by battles over gender and power, and these battles, again, may be symptoms of a difference which is real but which cannot be adequately expressed by any kind of discourse.<sup>779</sup>

### 6.3.5 Section Summary

This section has highlighted the difficulties associated with understanding Pauline gender discourse. (i.) The transition from antiquity to modernity has made ancient gender discourses generally unintelligible. Quite literally, ancients and moderns imply different sets of associated concepts when they use designations for male and female human beings. Understandably, these associations require decoding if one is to open a fruitful line of dialogue with Paul’s argument. (ii.) Some elements of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 simply contradict present knowledge. This is most aptly illustrated with respect to Paul’s antiquated view of generation but it might also apply to discourses of honour and shame and pre-Darwinian readings of the biblical cosmogony. It is necessary to account hermeneutically for these differences. (iii.) Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 differs from contemporary ethical discourse. He is not explicitly methodological, but is situational and pastoral, an approach which is at odds in varying degrees with the tendencies of post-Enlightenment ethics. The

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<sup>778</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*.

<sup>779</sup> Soleim, ‘I Doubt: I Am A Man’, pp.140-41.



collapse of ‘the Christianity-based teleology of the created world’<sup>780</sup> has exacerbated some of the hermeneutical problems these differences cause. (iv.) Ancient Hellenistic gender discourse relates an ethic of gender to an aesthetic spirituality of cosmic order. Although Paul differs from this approach markedly in places, he does not *radically* subvert the hierarchy of gender, but ameliorates it. As was seen, this lays open Paul’s argument to specific contemporary criticisms and also exposes some of the limitations of contemporary gender discourse.

#### **6.4 An Examination Of Representative Interpretative Strategies**

Building upon the analysis of the hermeneutical problem in preceding sections of this chapter, this section examines possible responses to the hermeneutical impasse. Broadly speaking, if one accepts my reconstruction of Paul’s argument, then certain hermeneutical tensions follow – tensions that can be addressed *directly* in only a limited number of ways. One may (i) pursue a mediating strategy that permits the biblical text to speak as Scripture without requiring a pre-modern cosmology or gender theory. Alternatively, one may pursue a strategy of rejection, by either (ii) rejecting Paul’s argument where it is incoherent with modernity or (iii) rejecting the elements of modernity that do not cohere with Paul. This part of the chapter explores some, but not all, of the methodological options covered by these three basic interpretative stances. However, it only prepares the ground for the conclusion of the chapter in which I explore possible avenues by which one may proceed.

##### **6.4.1 Rejecting Modernity**

If several features of Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 simply cannot survive the transition from antiquity to modernity intact, then for some interpreters this results

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<sup>780</sup> Gadamer, ‘Ontological Problem Of Value’, p.58.

in a stark choice between fidelity to the apparent original meaning of a biblical text and continued engagement with the scientific, ethical or ideological discourses of modernity. Evidently, this tension will be most keenly felt by those with a very high doctrine of Scripture, such as fundamentalists, post-fundamentalist evangelicals and post-conservative evangelicals,<sup>781</sup> chiefly because these groups have a 'strong' notion of what might be termed the truth-value of the *sensus literalis* of Scripture. Although *in practice* these groups differ regarding the logical status of biblical discourses and thus have different assessments of the severity of the hermeneutical crisis that interpretative communities face, *in principle* the strategy of rejecting modernity is one that all of these groups would acknowledge as valid.<sup>782</sup> In the light of my exegesis, I suggest that the specific problems associated with the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 are severe enough to indicate that none of these groups is able to 'side' with the apostle Paul against modernity without performing what Rudolf Bultmann terms a '*sacrificium intellectus*'<sup>783</sup> that renders the 'proclamation [of this passage] unintelligible and impossible'.<sup>784</sup> As such, in this instance I do not think that the rejection of modernity is a strategy that should be pursued.

Ostensibly, English-speaking Christian fundamentalists are the most vociferous in articulating their rejection of modernity, which may take the form of a polemic or apologetic stance vis-à-vis liberal theology, present-day science, post-

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<sup>781</sup> I owe this taxonomy to Roger Olson. Post-fundamentalists (neo-evangelicals) are differentiated from fundamentalists not theologically, but by their openness to modernity, whereas post-conservatives are differentiated from post-fundamentalists by their reformist stance towards issues like the doctrine of Scripture. Olson, 'Tensions'; also Fea, 'Understanding Twentieth-Century Fundamentalism'.

<sup>782</sup> Post-fundamentalists have a similar commitment to inerrancy as fundamentalists. E.g. Packer, *Honouring The Written Word Of God*, vol. 3 (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), p.171; Articles IX and XII of 'Chicago Statement On Biblical Inerrancy'. Post-conservative evangelicals tend to articulate its status in terms of truthful intent rather than inerrancy. E.g. Bloesch, *The Future Of Evangelical Christianity*, p.120; Rogers and McKim, *Authority And Interpretation*, p.109, 235.

<sup>783</sup> Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology', p.3.

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.

enlightenment rationalism or secular humanism. With respect to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, the most obvious point of connection to their preoccupations would be Paul's interpretation of the creation narratives of Genesis 1 and 2 in verses 7-9. Taking their cue from the Princeton theologians of their formative period, fundamentalist writers would no doubt agree with Charles Hodge's comment that in 1 Corinthians 11:7-9:

[Paul] authenticate[s], not merely the moral and religious truths of the Old Testament, but its historical facts...It is impossible, therefore, for any Christian who believes in the inspiration of the apostles to...confine the inspiration of the ancient writers to their doctrinal and preceptive statements.<sup>785</sup>

This literalistic reading of 1 Corinthians 11:7-9 coheres well with fundamentalist accounts of 'creation science',<sup>786</sup> which reject many of the conclusions of the modern disciplines of cosmology, palaeontology and evolutionary biology. However, it seems to me that fundamentalist rejections of modernity are self-defeating, inasmuch as, ironically, they proceed from the standpoint they criticise. Creationist Dennis Lindsay illustrates this well. In arguing that 'the Laws of Thermodynamics *substantiate* Scripture',<sup>787</sup> Lindsay's approach to scientific discourse is circular; he assumes its validity in relation to physics so that he can 'prove' the inerrancy of Scripture and underwrite his dismissal of theories of evolution. Partly, this approach is understandable given the success of modernity in populating the various scholarly discourses, including those discourses that address metaquestions such as methodology and standards of proof. It means, however, that creation science, rather than being a straightforward rejection of modernity, is actually

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<sup>785</sup> Hodge, *I & II Corinthians*, p.210. This is perhaps the latest pre-Darwinian evangelical reflection upon the apostolic exegesis of the creation narratives, published only two years before the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859.

<sup>786</sup> E.g. see the 10 volume 'Creation Science' series by Dennis G. Lindsay, especially volume 1. Lindsay, *Foundations For Creationism*, vol. 1 (Dallas: Christ For The Nations, Inc., 1990).

<sup>787</sup> Lindsay, *Harmony Of Science And Scripture*, vol. 2 (Dallas: Christ For The Nations, Inc., 1990). Italics mine.

parasitic upon it – an attempt to have one’s cake and eat it! Despite the rhetorical appeal of the apparent certainties it purports to offer, it is not a plausible hermeneutic.

I have begun with the example of fundamentalist discourse principally because the differentiating characteristic between fundamentalists and post-fundamentalist evangelicals, is not that they differ regarding the doctrine of Scripture,<sup>788</sup> but rather that at the level of scholarly interpretation they disagree regarding (i) what the text ‘says’<sup>789</sup> and (ii) whether what it ‘says’ coheres with present-day beliefs. As such, both fundamentalists and post-fundamentalists would be happy to insist with James Packer that ‘all [that Scripture] teaches *in both the indicative and imperative moods* is, in very truth, God’s message’.<sup>790</sup> This means that post-fundamentalist interpreters of Paul’s argument in 1 Corinthians 11:7-9 are as vulnerable to Hodge’s argument as fundamentalists. If apostolic teaching in these verses really is that *historically* the first woman was ἐκ the first man and διὰ [+ acc] him (1 Cor 11:8-9), and that this is indeed ‘God’s message’, then their rejection of modern accounts of human origins logically follows. That post-fundamentalists, such as Packer, often propose not-strictly-literal readings of the Genesis 1 and 2 narratives<sup>791</sup> only further complicates the issues surrounding their understanding of Paul’s argument here. Consequently, they usually postulate a bare minimum of historical content in these accounts (the

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<sup>788</sup> There are some differences. Fundamentalists more than evangelicals hold to a Majority Text only view of inspiration (King James only). For an evangelical account, see Hodges, ‘The Greek Text Of The King James Version’, *BSac* 125:500 (1986), 334-45. Mostly the differences concern eschatology and practice – fundamentalists favour dispensational premillennialism, eschew social action and advocate political and academic separatism. See Fea, ‘Understanding Twentieth-Century Fundamentalism’, pp.189-94.

<sup>789</sup> This is only partly true inasmuch as many post-fundamentalists are creationists.

<sup>790</sup> Packer, *Honouring The Written Word*, p.171. Italics mine. Packer self-identifies as both ‘evangelical’ and ‘fundamentalist’, but within Roger Olson’s taxonomy he is clearly ‘post-conservative’. Olson, ‘Tensions’, p.77.

<sup>791</sup> Packer describes the creation accounts as written *inerrantly* in a *semi*-historical genre. Packer, *Honouring The Written Word*, p.173ff. A similar argument to this was made by evangelical scholar Robert Gundry vis-à-vis the Matthean nativity. See Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary On His Handbook For A Mixed Church Under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

special creation and fall of the first man and woman) so that they can maintain a coherent evangelical doctrine of Scripture whilst avoiding some of the obscurantism of the fundamentalist stance.<sup>792</sup>

Many reformist or post-conservative evangelicals have formulated a slightly different notion of Scripture that circumvents the problem of the creation accounts. Asserting that Scripture remains absolutely truthful with respect to all of its imperatives and *some* of its indicative statements (tenets of Christian faith and practice), they simply deny that it speaks with the same accuracy about other matters (issues of science and history). The paradigmatic instance of this is the work of Jack Rogers and Donald McKim, who instead of inerrancy propose the softer notion of infallibility.<sup>793</sup> They argue that biblical authors and pre-critical interpreters were relatively ‘unconcerned with normal, human inaccuracies in minor matters’.<sup>794</sup> The concern for pristine errorlessness in science and history is instead characteristic of the intellectual tradition based upon ‘Lockean reason’ and ‘Newtonian notions of perfection’<sup>795</sup> as they became reified by ‘Princeton theology’s...scholastic theory’.<sup>796</sup> This distinction between what the Bible infallibly *teaches* and what it only *touches* has become quite popular in some evangelical circles as a way of resolving apparent contradictions between the biblical text and modernity.

However, none of these hermeneutical positions – even the post-conservative stance which entails a far less comprehensive rejection of modernity – can do justice to the elements of Paul’s argument that I have identified in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

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<sup>792</sup> See exposition section A. Creation, Revelation and Inspiration in ‘Chicago Statement On Biblical Inerrancy’, p.293.

<sup>793</sup> The distinction between these categories is tackled by the ‘Chicago Statement’, Ibid., pp.294-95.

<sup>794</sup> Rogers and McKim, *Authority And Interpretation*, p.109. Post-fundamentalist evangelicals heavily dispute their contention that biblical writers were unconcerned with strict precision.

<sup>795</sup> Ibid., p.235.

<sup>796</sup> Ibid., p.460.

The rhetorical coherence of this passage, and by extension the validity of Paul's ethical reasoning therein, depends upon a metaphysic of gender<sup>797</sup> that is alien, obsolete and difficult to understand for moderns, and this metaphysic underpins Paul's allusion to ancient biological models of human reproduction (v. 12) and his creational ideology of gender (vv. 4-6). This is not to deny that it is quite possible to formulate a present-day argument for the specific imperatives (e.g. v. 6, 7, 10) and theological statements (e.g. v. 3, 7-9, 11) that Paul presents here. However, it is to recognise that, without presuming the same categories of thought regarding gender, present-day performances of this behaviour can neither *mean* what they meant to Paul and the Corinthians nor have the same theological justification. Consequently, the post-conservative distinction between 'teaching' and 'touching' cannot help here, because the passage presumes a particular model of reproduction and a particular metaphysics of gender. The rejection of modernity in this instance entails the assumption of an ideology of gender that in the light of modern criticisms seems not only absurd, but also wicked,<sup>798</sup> and the adoption of a model of reproduction that since 1832, when von Baer settled the question of the existence and nature of the human ovum, is irrevocably discredited. The remaining alternatives are to rethink the nature of this text as Scripture or to reformulate the biblical hermeneutical enterprise.

#### 6.4.2 Rejecting The Text

Strategies of rejecting or rethinking the status of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, or indeed the entire biblical corpus, are largely self-explanatory. Some interpreters respond to the

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<sup>797</sup> Given David Aune's comments to the contrary, I do not wish to suggest that Paul's anthropology is wholly coherent or clear – simply that the basic contours of his metaphysics of gender are discernible. See Aune, 'Human Nature And Ethics In Hellenistic Philosophical Traditions And Paul' in *Paul In His Hellenistic Context*, ed. Engberg-Pedersen (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1994), 291-312, p.291.

<sup>798</sup> See the discussion of what David Brown terms 'secular conscience' in section 2.4.7 of *Some Issues In Human Sexuality* (London: Church House Publishing, 2003), p.48.

disjunction between Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and modernity by pursuing a strategy of stubborn fidelity to the text, whereas others reject this stance because it amounts, in effect, to an attempt to 'repristinate' the past.<sup>799</sup> Indeed, I have argued that in the case of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 they are right to reject Biblicism, because the underlying problems of Pauline gender discourse are far from peripheral features of his argument and thus present far from peripheral interpretative problems. Given this, it is right to ask whether this passage can be allowed to continue to influence Christian practices of gender. In short, is 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 a text with which moderns (including postmoderns) can have a meaningful conversation? Phrasing the question thus illustrates the dilemma posed by this strategy. To press the conversational analogy, at what point is it legitimate to conclude that one's interlocutor has said something so offensive, incorrect or unintelligible that one can terminate the discussion? Is such a rejection evidence of misunderstanding – a refusal to allow one's own horizons to be widened through engagement with the strange world of the text<sup>800</sup> – or is it a legitimate form of hermeneutical response, a way of saying 'I know...*all too well*'?

Essentially, this question relates to the issue of what authority Scripture might have and how it 'speaks' to or about certain matters. That Scripture is for Christians *Scripture* entails some form of ongoing interpretative relationship between text and Church, even if, as David Kelsey<sup>801</sup> observes, the various Christian hermeneutical traditions identify the relationship between God's disclosure and the text differently. It is, therefore, little coincidence that the strategy of *outright* rejection has tended to

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<sup>799</sup> See Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology', p.3.

<sup>800</sup> Cf. Gadamer, 'The Principle Of Effective History' in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Mueller-Vollmer (Oxford: Continuum, 1985), 267-73, pp.270, 73.

<sup>801</sup> Kelsey, *Uses Of Scripture*, pp.90-100.

coincide, most notably in the cases of Mary Daly and Daphne Hampson,<sup>802</sup> with departure from the Christian community. Consequently, for those who remain, this hermeneutical strategy is not wholly without theological risk. Stephen Barton has rightly noted that approaches that admit a formal separation between Christian theology and the biblical witness can generate serious theological tensions. Treating sections of the biblical tradition as irretrievable may, in fact, be ‘the thin end of a large wedge which eventually cuts Christian theology off from its scriptural roots’.<sup>803</sup>

Because of their commitment to a high doctrine of the authority of Scripture it is rare for evangelicals to reject a text explicitly on hermeneutical grounds. Nevertheless, the *de facto* excision of textual traditions does occur in the evangelical community, albeit generally amongst evangelicals with post-conservative or reformist leanings. It is evident in evangelical scholar Paul Jewett’s approach to gender in the New Testament. In *Man as Male and Female*,<sup>804</sup> Jewett characterises gender as a fundamental *aporia* in Pauline thought, an instance where his gospel and his Jewish heritage are simply incommensurate with one another. Having described the situation thus, Jewett excises the elements of Pauline thought that he regards as subordinationist on the basis of the *analogia fidei*, namely, its congruity or incongruity with gospel fundamentals.<sup>805</sup> This approach has been particularly heavily

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<sup>802</sup> Daly, *Beyond God The Father* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973). Note especially Daly’s comments regarding the retrievable traditions in the Bible, ‘[p]erhaps there would be enough salvageable material to comprise an interesting pamphlet’ (p. 205). Hampson, ‘Autonomy And Heteronomy’, pp.1-16, see also Hampson, *Theology And Feminism*.

<sup>803</sup> Barton, ‘Biblical Hermeneutics And The Family’ in *The Family In Theological Perspective*, ed. Barton (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1996), 3-24, p.9.

<sup>804</sup> Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*, pp.112-13.

<sup>805</sup> Ibid., pp.134-35. “‘In Christ there is no male and female’”. Any view which subordinates the woman to the man is not analogous to but incongruous with this fundamental teaching.’ (p. 134). See also Mollenkott, *Women, Men, And The Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977), pp.90-106 – Chapter entitled ‘Pauline Contradictions and Biblical Inspiration’.



criticised by Wayne Grudem,<sup>806</sup> for whom such a rejection is tantamount to a denial of biblical inerrancy, and hence a *de facto* departure from evangelicalism.

Jewett's antithesis of subordinationism and gospel, characterised by his tendentious juxtaposition of Paul the Jew and Paul the Christian,<sup>807</sup> is open to criticism on exegetical and historical grounds. However, my criticisms of his argument here are hermeneutical and theological. When Jewett appeals to the *analogia fidei* he implies the parallel notion of the *regula fidei*, and in this instance Jewett identifies this with Paul's 'statement of Christian liberty in the Epistle to the Galatians'.<sup>808</sup> This approach, however, coheres poorly with evangelical understandings of the *analogia fidei* and the *regula fidei*. Because it is a conservative Protestant movement, evangelicalism generally adheres to *sola scriptura*, the corollary of which is a notion of Scripture as self-authenticating.<sup>809</sup> As such, for evangelicals the *regula fidei* comprises the entire Protestant canon,<sup>810</sup> and this in turn affects their understanding of the analogy of faith. For most evangelicals, the analogy of faith is, in fact, the analogy of Scripture,<sup>811</sup> which explains the interdiction in certain confessions against the interpretation of 'one place of Scripture, that it be

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<sup>806</sup> Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, p.325-26. Also Hughes, 'Living Out God's Order In The Church', *Master's Seminary Journal* 10:1 (1999), 101-11, p.106; Felix, 'The Hermeneutics of Evangelical Feminism', *Master's Seminary Journal* 5:2 (1994), 159-84, p.170; also Litfin, 'Evangelical Feminism', pp.260-63 for the evangelical feminist use of *analogia fidei*.

<sup>807</sup> This antithesis is reminiscent of that between Judaism and Christianity in scholarship prior to the new perspective. See Stendahl, 'The Apostle Paul And The Introspective Conscience Of The West', *Harvard Theological Review* 56:3 (1962), 199-215; Dunn, 'The New Perspective On Paul', *Bulletin Of The John Rylands Library* 65:2 (1983), 95-122.

<sup>808</sup> Jewett, *Man As Male And Female*, p.134.

<sup>809</sup> E.g. Calvin, *Institutes*, Book I.vii.5.

<sup>810</sup> Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, p.152; Muller, 'The Study Of Theology' in *Foundations Of Contemporary Interpretation*, ed. Silva (Leicester: Apollos, 1997), 533-664. See comments regarding the *regula fidei* in Patristic theology and the expressions of the Reformation (p. 602-603).

<sup>811</sup> Hodge insists 'There is no material difference in the meaning of the two expressions'. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, p.187; also Packer, 'Upholding The Unity Of Scripture Today', *JETS* 25:4 (1982), 409-14, pp.409-10.

repugnant to another'.<sup>812</sup> In setting Paul the patriarchal rabbi against Paul the egalitarian follower of Christ, Jewett makes certain biblical passages (1 Cor 11:2-16, Gal 3:26-28) 'repugnant' to one another. Hence, he breaks the analogy of Scripture, viz. the analogy of faith. That he does so on the basis of an appeal to the analogy of faith simply demonstrates the incoherent hermeneutic his evangelical biblical principles have compelled him to adopt.<sup>813</sup>

None of this is to suggest, in cases where the biblical data, one's hermeneutical method and one's bibliological assumptions do not cohere, that the doctrine of Scripture ought to be insulated from re-examination, revision or rejection.<sup>814</sup> This type of special pleading for Scripture is far from required even by strict evangelical doctrines of Scripture, inasmuch as claiming biblical inerrancy is somewhat different from claiming an inerrant and therefore unreformable doctrine of biblical inerrancy. Nor am I suggesting that the hermeneutical solution to Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is to be found by harmonising it with other passages concerning gender. This method often militates against effective exegesis by, in effect, either disagreeing with all of the texts being harmonised<sup>815</sup> or allowing one text, whether patriarchal or anti-patriarchal, to determine the sense of another.<sup>816</sup>

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<sup>812</sup> Article XX of the 1571/1662 Articles of Religion. Both traditionalist and egalitarian evangelicals generally affirm this notion. See Nicole, 'Biblical Hermeneutics: Basic Principles And Questions Of Gender' in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. Pierce *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 355-63, p.360.

<sup>813</sup> Norman Geisler raises a similar question regarding Jewett's hermeneutical methodology. See Geisler, 'Methodological Unorthodoxy', *JETS* 26:1 (1983), 87-94, p.90.

<sup>814</sup> I think this is the problem with Geisler's (Ibid.) response to Jewett.

<sup>815</sup> Paul Achtemeier offers a good example of this problem. He cites Harold Lindsell's proposal of six Petrine denials as a harmonisation of the four biblical accounts (Matt 26:69ff., Mk 14:66ff., Lk 22:56ff., Jn 18:17ff.), pointing out that this contradicts *all* versions of the story at the one point upon which they agree, namely that there were three denials. Achtemeier, *Inspiration And Authority* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), p.55; also Gundry, *Matthew*, p.626.

<sup>816</sup> Rowan Williams makes some apposite observations. 'Concern with the literal, the diachronic, is a way of resisting...*premature...harmonies*' (p. 123) and 'uncritical canonical criticism threatens to prohibit or ignore any questions...that refuse to take the *homogeneity of the canon* for granted' (p. 124). Williams, 'The Literal Sense Of Scripture', *ModTh* 7:2 (1991), 121-34. Italics mine.

Rather, I suggest that, for those who elect to remain subject to the Christian interpretative disciplines, tensions between the biblical data, exegetical methodology and doctrine of Scripture should not be resolved by the *de facto* excision of difficult or unpalatable texts. This seems to me to be contrary to the spirit of Christian hermeneutical endeavour even if such behaviour is not without precedent.

Instead, I suggest that Christian interpreters ought to (i) accept that biblical traditions occasionally pull in different directions from one another and from modernity, and (ii) learn to negotiate the resultant tensions with 'creative fidelity'.<sup>817</sup> This is, in fact, biblical hermeneutics as a spiritual discipline. Resisting the temptation to short-circuit interpretation far from guarantees solutions to interpretative difficulties. However, by recognising that in keeping, that is in continuing to relate to, even the most difficult of biblical traditions, Christian interpreters remember that their fidelity is to a gospel that was handed down to them (1 Cor 11:2)<sup>818</sup> by other Christians to whom it made different sense, yet with whom they remain in communion. From this perspective, the rejection approach appears to be a refusal of the discipline not only of the text, but also of the Christian interpretative community (in its widest possible sense). In short, whilst Christian hermeneutics is Christian *hermeneutics*, the project is also *Christian* hermeneutics. Slavish adherence to the witness of previous Christians may not be rationally justified, but neither is the *de facto* denial of the *communio sanctorum* – the one results in interpretative crisis, the other undermines the significance of the text, indeed of biblical interpretation *per se*, for Christian theology.

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<sup>817</sup> This emphasis I owe to Stephen Barton. Barton, 'Male And Female', p.17.

<sup>818</sup> See my comment on the significance of this verse in ch.5.

### 6.4.3 Demythologisation<sup>819</sup>

I have argued that in the case of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 fidelity to Paul's argument cannot entail for present-day interpreters the wholesale rejection of modernity, and also that the nature of Christian interpretation requires an ongoing relationship with this text. This being the case, it is necessary to articulate some mediating strategy, which will allow one to interpret this text faithfully whilst remaining intellectually integrated as moderns (or postmoderns). Historically, one of the ways in which some interpreters have attempted to do this has been by demythologisation, that is, by taking a passage that uses a mythological or antiquated discourse and attempting to express its message according to a different, present-day discourse. This, of course, presumes that the message of a text is, in some sense, detachable from the discourse that mediates it, and as will be seen, I do not think that this notion applies straightforwardly to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

Rudolf Bultmann begins from a similar assessment of the hermeneutical problem to that which I have already identified in this chapter. The 'past world picture'<sup>820</sup> of the text is fundamentally irrecoverable, and this means that the ontology of gender underlying Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is simply implausible now. Unless there is nothing in the text except mythology,<sup>821</sup> and nothing in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 apart from an obsolete notion of gender, then some type of hermeneutical accommodation is required. For Bultmann, this takes the form of a hermeneutic of retrieval. He proposes a two-stage process: (i.) The New Testament *kerygma* is analysed and the anthropological, and ultimately existential, significance

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<sup>819</sup> Given the analysis in section 6.2.2 this section will be brief.

<sup>820</sup> See Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology', p.3.

<sup>821</sup> Ibid., p.9.

of the terms according to which it is expressed is retrieved.<sup>822</sup> (ii.) The *kerygma* is then re-expressed according to the terms of a different discourse – for Bultmann this is mid-Twentieth century existentialism but it could, in theory, be any system of thought capable of expressing the *kerygma*. A demythologising hermeneutic of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 would regard the ontology of gender in this passage as a way of describing the existential situation of men and women vis-à-vis the world, one another and God. It would then attempt to convey this in a different discourse.

By way of general comment upon this method: (i) Bultmann's nomenclature unintentionally misleads, the process he articulates being, in fact, not demythologisation, but demythologisation-*and*-remythologisation.<sup>823</sup> This is important because the corollary of Bultmann's notion of understanding as *historical* is that one cannot attain to a context-free appreciation of the *kerygma*; it must always be appropriated according to the contingencies of its readers' milieu. (ii) As de/re-mythologisation, such a model of interpretation assumes that the worldviews of the text and that of the reader are broadly commensurate with one another, essentially that they 'map' the same phenomena, albeit in different ways. This is a bold claim, since the fact that the discourses of antiquity and modernity are different is obvious, but that they 'map' the same 'terrain' is less than clear and requires some justification, which in my opinion is insufficiently forthcoming. (iii) Bultmann assumes that myth and existentialism 'map' the same 'terrain' when he defines myth as a primitive

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<sup>822</sup> Bultmann, *Theology* (κόσμος) pp.254-258; (σάρξ) pp.232-245; (πνεῦμα) pp.153-163, 203-210, 330ff.; (νόμος) pp.259-269; (πίστις) pp.314-329.

<sup>823</sup> Brian Blount takes issue with the term remythologisation, regarding Bultmann's activity as 'decoding' and 'recoding'. I have elected to retain it for its similarity to Bultmann's own terminology. Blount, *Cultural Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), p.34. Blount's analysis of Käsemann's development of Bultmann is useful here (pp.35-36).

objectifying representation of existential realities.<sup>824</sup> That he appears to do little to demonstrate this indicates that his method arbitrarily imposes existential categories upon ancient discourse and assumes at the outset what he seeks to demonstrate, namely that existentialism is the correct matrix within which to read New Testament texts.<sup>825</sup> (iv) Bultmann does not regard de/re-mythologisation as the excision of a discursive husk (myth) from a prediscursive kernel (*kerygma*), but rather as the interpretation of both.<sup>826</sup> However, the way in which he defines myth and his privileging of the existential elements within the New Testament tends, in practice, towards this type of hermeneutical reductionism.

In terms of the applicability of this to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, I can see two problems specific to Pauline gender discourse that make it an unsuitable candidate for a de/re-mythologising hermeneutic. The first relates to the relationship between Pauline gender discourse and Pauline theology in 1 Corinthians. Despite Bultmann's best methodological efforts to the contrary, de/re-mythologisation boils down to a highly selective process by which the putative mythological cosmology of the text is simply winnowed away so as to leave the *kerygma* behind. However, if I am correct in my exegesis of this passage, then it will prove very difficult to isolate the kernel of Paul's teaching from the theo-cosmological husk that surrounds it. The reason for this is that the relationship between Paul's instructions and his theological cosmology is not best described as a relationship of kernel to husk; the two are integrated. For example, Paul's notion of gender hierarchy and differentiation is thoroughly informed

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<sup>824</sup> See James Dunn's criticism. Dunn, 'Demythologising: The Problem Of Myth In The New Testament' in *New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Marshall (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1977), 285-307, p.295.

<sup>825</sup> He demonstrates this in his understanding of the cross as the marker of an existential-demythologising dynamic within the New Testament itself. Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology', pp.11, 32-36.

<sup>826</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9. See also Dunn, 'Demythologising', p.295.

by the same 'prepositional metaphysic'<sup>827</sup> that informs his notion of God and Christ as joint, differentiated first principles of all things (τὰ πάντα) in 1 Corinthians 8:6. It ought to be apparent from this that any attempt to demythologise one element of this synthesis runs the risk of destabilising the entire edifice.

The second problem with the application of this hermeneutic to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 concerns Bultmann's assumption that ancient and modern worldviews essentially reference the same phenomena – in this case the phenomenon of human sexual differentiation. That modernity has its own discourses of sexual difference would seem to indicate that Bultmann's assumption appears not to be a problem but, as will be seen, this conclusion is premature. Modern discourses do not generally attempt to explain gender and sexual differentiation with respect to God and the cosmos, but with respect to the possession of certain traits defined according to the disciplines of medicine, biology or the social sciences. In short, the gender discourses of antiquity and modernity have the same primary reference – male and female human beings – but they have vastly different secondary associations.<sup>828</sup> As such, it is somewhat ironic when some evangelical contributors to the headship debate appeal to biological and social scientific discourses in support of supposedly 'biblical' theories of gender, apparently unaware of the fact that within these discourses sexual difference has a fundamentally different place than that which it occupies in the biblical texts.<sup>829</sup>

Furthermore, the recognition that gender appears to migrate from discourse to discourse over time is itself significant. Kjell Soleim likens the shift from an antique

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<sup>827</sup> Runia, 'First Principle(s)', p.134. David Runia's analysis of different notions of first principles in antiquity illuminates Paul's use of prepositions in 1 Cor 8:6.

<sup>828</sup> See further Økland, *Women In Their Place*, pp.12-13.

<sup>829</sup> See traditionalists: Johnson, 'Biological Basis'; Rekers, 'Rearing Masculine Boys', and feminists: Scanzoni and Scanzoni, *Men, Women And Change: A Sociology Of Marriage And Family* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988); Kimball, 'Nature, Culture And Gender'.

cosmological explanation of gender difference to a modern biological and social scientific explanation to that of a '[psychosomatic?] symptom changing places across the tormented body'.<sup>830</sup> He suggests that the 'eruption' or stubborn re-emergence of gender difference in new contexts constitutes *limited* evidence that it is a real, that is, ontological, phenomenon. However, that gender difference 'erupts' into contemporary scientific and social-scientific disciplines does not necessarily indicate that it is coherently explained by these discourses. Soleim has also pointed out that 'medical...or human sciences...may be determined by battles over gender and power'.<sup>831</sup> Indeed, if there is an ontological sexual difference that precedes what may be said about it, then a position of methodological doubt would lead one to wonder whether it would not altogether elude adequate discursive explanation.<sup>832</sup> This indeed is Soleim's stance; gender difference is an epistemic *aporia* – 'the crack that constitutes humans as humans'<sup>833</sup> – and it entails a position of scepticism towards any human discourse that purports to explain gender. As such, this is profoundly destructive for a de/re-mythologising hermeneutic of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, inasmuch as it implies that far from being discourses that 'map' the same 'terrain' in different ways, neither ancient nor modern discourses of gender are adequate. This is because the 'terrain' they purport to plot is real but as yet inadequately charted. In short, the preconditions of a de/re-mythologising hermeneutic of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 cannot easily be satisfied.

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<sup>830</sup> Soleim, 'I Doubt: I Am A Man', p.141. See also Genevieve Lloyd's analysis of the way in which the association of male with reason migrates between philosophical systems. Lloyd, *Man Of Reason*.

<sup>831</sup> Soleim, 'I Doubt: I Am A Man', p.140.

<sup>832</sup> Ibid., p.141.

<sup>833</sup> Ibid., p.142.



#### 6.4.4 Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutics

By contrast with Bultmann, the customary stance of conservative evangelicals towards hermeneutical dilemmas such as that which I have articulated is to attempt to collapse them – to get Scripture and modernity to agree. Their key focus is usually the problem I have termed ‘untenability’,<sup>834</sup> namely that the Bible *appears* to affirm something that is *known* to be false, but which was not evidently so at the time of writing. As has been seen, some of the responses to this problem take the form of a distinction between Scripture ‘teaching’ and ‘touching’ an issue, or emphasise the role of divine accommodation in inspiration.<sup>835</sup> Other responses deny that there *can* be a problem. Scriptural inerrancy is presupposed and apparent discrepancies are explained away with reference to a writer’s use of a non-technical register or an observational rather than causal mode of describing phenomena.<sup>836</sup>

However, even if these purported solutions were generally adequate – which they are not – they would fail to solve the hermeneutical problems I have articulated in relation to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. (i) Vis-à-vis ‘untenability’, Paul’s reproduction language in 1 Corinthians 11:12 cannot be explained away in this manner. It is not an observational description of reproduction, for if it were then Paul would have described man using the more obvious ἐκ γυναικός (v. 8). Nor is it the characteristic imprecision of a non-technical vocabulary, representing as it does a Pauline spin on a classical prepositional metaphysic. (ii) ‘Untenability’ is not the chief problem here, although it is the most obvious. There are more comprehensive differences between

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<sup>834</sup> Issue IV in section 6.3.2.

<sup>835</sup> Rogers and McKim, *Authority And Interpretation* on Calvin and accommodation (p. 109). Also Berkouwer, *Holy Scripture*, ed. Rogers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp.174-78.

<sup>836</sup> Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, ed. Purswell (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1999), pp.42-43; Article XIII of ‘Chicago Statement On Biblical Inerrancy’, p.292; also see the discussion in Feinberg, ‘Truth, Meaning And Inerrancy’, pp.27-28.

Pauline and modern ethics and ideology, which constitute Paul as fundamentally different from moderns – even moderns who attempt to ‘repristinate’ his worldview.

Recently, the evangelical scholar William Webb<sup>837</sup> has attempted to resolve problems of this nature in the field of biblical ethics. He has termed his proposal a ‘Redemptive-Movement’ (RM) hermeneutic, by which he denotes a hermeneutic that establishes an ethical trajectory beyond that which is expressed explicitly in the text. Webb is not alone amongst evangelicals in arguing that Christian theology or ethics must extrapolate from the explicit statements of Scripture in order to express continuing fidelity to the teaching of the text. Similar strategies are evident in recent publications by I. Howard Marshall<sup>838</sup> and, significant for the purposes of this study, Kevin Giles.<sup>839</sup>

What makes Webb’s RM hermeneutic interesting is that he combines the traditional evangelical grammatical-historical approach<sup>840</sup> to the text with an acknowledgement that at times a better vantage point can be found from which to reason ethically. He manages to maintain this precarious position by insisting that the vantage point supposedly *located beyond* the text is in fact *implied within* it – namely, he claims to extrapolate from the Bible ‘in a biblical fashion’.<sup>841</sup> This is also a hermeneutically subtle strategy, since for many conservative evangelicals one of the corollaries of the grammatical-historical tradition is the rejection of any hermeneutical theory that locates the meaning or sense of the biblical text anywhere other than in the

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<sup>837</sup> Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals*.

<sup>838</sup> Marshall, *Beyond The Bible: Moving From Scripture To Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), p.77.

<sup>839</sup> Giles, *Trinity And Subordinationism*, p.33. See the discussion of Giles in ch.2.

<sup>840</sup> Webb, ‘A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic: Encouraging Dialogue Among Four Evangelical Views’, *JETS* 48:2 (2005), 331-49, p.338.

<sup>841</sup> *Ibid.*, p.349.

‘writing’ (γραφή) (cf. 2 Tim 3:16).<sup>842</sup> He writes, ‘the “better ethic” developed through a RM hermeneutic is in fact the ethic of the NT (and OT) rightly understood’.<sup>843</sup>

Webb’s strategy has three distinct hermeneutical moments. (i) Locate the teaching of a biblical passage in relation to its immediate cultural milieu. For Webb this entails searching for evidence of systematic ethical movement ‘between the biblical text and its surrounding social context’<sup>844</sup> – what he terms the operation of a ‘*redemptive spirit*’.<sup>845</sup> (ii) Utilising Webb’s (eighteen!) criteria,<sup>846</sup> then identify the direction and the extent that the biblical text attempts to move its original addressees’ culture and determine whether any further movement in a redemptive direction is possible. If so, then extrapolate a final point of destination along the trajectory set by the biblical text. (iii) Finally, use this trajectory to analyse and locate one’s own culture on the continuum generated by (X) the original addressees, (Y) the teaching of the biblical passage, (Z) the ultimate ethic, so as to determine whether to apply the ethic of the text or the ultimate ethic in one’s own setting. (See Table 6.3 below).

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<sup>842</sup> Geisler, ‘The Relation Of Purpose And Meaning In Interpreting Scripture’, *Grace Theological Journal* 5:2 (1984), 229-46 (intention as a structure of the text not the extratextual mind of the author) p.230.

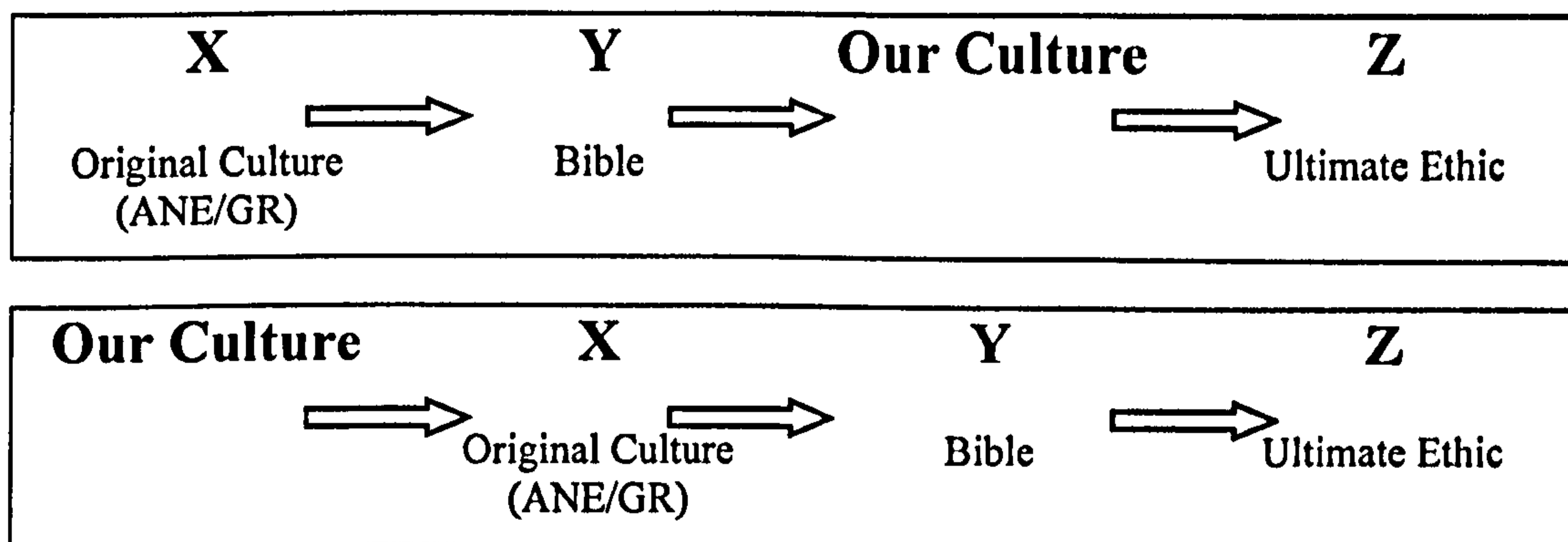
<sup>843</sup> Webb, ‘Redemptive-Movement: Encouraging Dialogue’, p.336.

<sup>844</sup> Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals*, p.36.

<sup>845</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33.

<sup>846</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.16-17. 1. Preliminary Movement, 2. Seed Ideas, 3. Breakouts, 4. Purpose/Intent Statements, 5. Basis in Fall and/or Curse, 6. Original Creation, I: Patterns, 7. Original Creation, II: Primogeniture, 8. New Creation, 9. Competing Options, 10. Opposition to Original Culture, 11. Closely Related Issues, 12. Penal Code, 13. Specific Versus General, 14. Basis in Theological Analogy, 15. Contextual Comparisons, 16. Appeal to Old Testament, 17. Pragmatics Between Two Cultures, 18. Scientific Evidence.

**Table 6.3: Two Models Of Webb's Redemptive Movement Hermeneutic<sup>847</sup>**



There is insufficient space here to provide a comprehensive analysis of Webb's eighteen hermeneutical criteria, rather it is my intention (i) to delineate some of the evangelical traditionalist criticisms of RM methodology, (ii) to illustrate where Webb's theory may be relevant to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and (iii) to offer some methodological and exegetical observations of my own. (i) In terms of evangelical traditionalist critique, Webb's thesis has received critical attention from Wayne Grudem<sup>848</sup> and Thomas Schreiner.<sup>849</sup> Grudem criticises RM hermeneutics initially on methodological grounds. In positing an ethical vantage point beyond the canon, Grudem argues that Webb diminishes the 'moral authority' of the text and also undermines the 'Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura*'.<sup>850</sup> This is because RM hermeneutics in their first and second moments (see above) are both complicated and technical – they assume competence in ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman

<sup>847</sup> Ibid., pp.37-38, 40. The upper scheme Webb applies to slavery and women (pp.37-38) and the lower to homosexuality (p.40)

<sup>848</sup> Grudem, 'Review Article: Should We Move Beyond The New Testament To A Better Ethic? An Analysis Of William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals*', *JETS* 47:2 (2004), 299-346; Grudem, 'A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic: The Slavery Analogy, And Gender Equality And Homosexuality, By William J. Webb', *JBMW* 10:1 (2005), 96-120; Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, pp.350-57.

<sup>849</sup> Schreiner, 'William J. Webb's *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals*: A Review Article', *SBJT* 6:1 (2002), 46-65.

<sup>850</sup> Grudem, 'Webb: A Review', p.301

milieux and skill in the application of Webb's numerous hermeneutical criteria. They therefore *de facto* contradict both the perspicuity and sufficiency of the text, and depart from traditional evangelical bibliology.<sup>851</sup>

Schreiner and Grudem agree with Webb that there is a redemptive-movement within the Bible, although they dispute both the nature and the scope of the movement. One of their most telling criticisms has been that Webb's focus upon biblical ethics is too narrowly conceptual, that is, it locates redemptive-movement as an ethical-cultural construct associated with problems of accommodation in the inspiration of Scripture. Instead, they argue that there is a 'climax and fulfillment'<sup>852</sup> or 'old covenant–new covenant structure of *redemptive history* found within the Bible itself'.<sup>853</sup> Further to this, they insist that fulfillment of Scripture occurs *within* the narrative structure or story of the text – 'the fulfillment of all of Scripture *in Jesus Christ*'.<sup>854</sup> Grudem correctly observes that '[Webb] never considers the possibility that the development from OT to NT is the end, and that the NT itself provides the final ethical standard for Christians in the new covenant'.<sup>855</sup>

(ii) One of the significant areas of overlap between my study and Webb's account of RM hermeneutics is that one of the passages that he uses as a test case is Paul's argument from the creation narratives in verses 8-9.<sup>856</sup> Vis-à-vis this passage, Webb argues correctly that the creation narratives are invoked for the ultimate purpose of demonstrating that woman is the *δόξα* of man (v. 7b), the corollary of

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<sup>851</sup> Ibid., pp.305-06. See the discussion of *claritas scripturae* in ch.3.

<sup>852</sup> Schreiner, 'Webb: A Review', p.54.

<sup>853</sup> Grudem, 'Webb: A Review', p.318. Italics mine.

<sup>854</sup> Schreiner, 'Webb: A Review', p.55. Italics mine.

<sup>855</sup> Grudem, 'Webb: A Review', p.307.

<sup>856</sup> Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals*, pp.274-78. (Appendix D).

which being that she ought to have ἐξουσία upon her head (v. 10).<sup>857</sup> Webb does *not* comment in any depth upon the ascending and descending sequences of κεφαλή and δόξα pairings (vv. 3, 7), which as I have argued are in reciprocal relationship. Instead, his focus is upon determining whether the nature of an appeal to creation has transcultural force, namely, whether or not it resists redemptive-movement as culture makes the shift from antiquity to modernity. In essence, Webb is concerned with questions analogous to those articulated in this chapter.

In order to address verses 8-9, Webb invokes Paul's argument in verses 11-12 vis-à-vis human reproduction, on the basis that Paul cites this as a qualification of creation order. He rightly observes the prepositional shift from ἐκ to διὰ (v. 12), and correctly infers that Paul appeals to the customary notions of reproduction of his day – of women as 'reproductive gardens'.<sup>858</sup> He is also one of the very few commentators to observe correctly that the transition to a modern embryology necessarily invites consideration of how different reproductive premises alter Paul's conclusion if we maintain his logic.<sup>859</sup> The relevance of this for 1 Corinthians 11:8 is as follows. According to Webb's interpretative criteria arguments from creation are only *moderately* convincing; in the case of men and women they boil down to relatively weak arguments from precedence due to primogeniture.<sup>860</sup> The inferential shift implied by modern embryology, although unbeknown to Paul, is a strong argument in opposition to precedence and primogeniture. It ought to be taken as more determinative of the redemptive-motion of the text than verses 8-9. When combined

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<sup>857</sup> This inference is clear from the interrupted chiasmic arrangement of this passage. See ch.5.

<sup>858</sup> Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals*, p.275. Thomas Schreiner disputes this interpretation. Schreiner, 'Webb: A Review', p.60.

<sup>859</sup> Webb, 'Balancing Paul's Original-Creation And Pro-Creation Arguments: 1 Corinthians 11:11–12 In Light Of Modern Embryology', *WTJ* 66:2 (2004), 275-89; Webb, 'Redemptive-Movement: Encouraging Dialogue', p.346.

<sup>860</sup> Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals*, pp.123-44.

with the ἐν κυρίῳ (v. 11) reference, which Webb understands as denoting potential ‘social equality’ in the gospel community, he takes verses 11-12 as a “seed idea” setting up the potential for further movement that would be mostly unrealised in Paul’s ministry setting’.<sup>861</sup>

(iii) In terms of an appraisal of Webb, I think that he makes many good comments regarding 1 Corinthians 11:7-12. However, in my opinion, he forecloses far too quickly upon the further relevance of Graeco-Roman comparisons. If I am correct, this would indicate that he has been either less diligent or less perceptive than he might otherwise have been in employing his own methodology, the first hermeneutical ‘moment’ of which entails an analysis of biblical discourses in the light of their original milieux. I have argued that the prepositional play in this passage between ἐκ, διὰ [+acc] and διὰ [+gen], is characteristic of ancient prepositional metaphysics (cf. 1 Cor 8:6) and that this would have been evident to informed first century readers as a cosmological register. From this vantage point, Paul’s argument is imbued with much theological significance, the governing notion in both verses 7-9 and also 11-12 being (obliquely) the microcosmic differential participation of gendered human beings in the *imago Dei*. As such, the motif of human reproduction is not an illustrative, but a participatory, paradigm of life ἐν κυρίῳ (v. 11).

Moving beyond the question of Webb’s exegesis to his methodology, I think Grudem and Schreiner are broadly correct when they distinguish between Webb’s somewhat abstract notion of RM and the narratively-embedded character of salvation-history (*Heilsgeschichte*). To be fair to Webb, he asserts that RM hermeneutics and salvation historical approaches are complementary.<sup>862</sup> However, this is not evident in

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<sup>861</sup> Ibid., p.276, cf. Schreiner, ‘Webb: A Review’, p.60.

<sup>862</sup> Webb, ‘Redemptive-Movement: Encouraging Dialogue’, p.335

his work, which is concerned ostensibly not with situating oneself in a *narrative* but with the justification of a complex casuistic algorithm by which one can judge how to apply an instruction beyond its immediate discursive context. In short, Webb's hermeneutic leaves unaddressed the Pauline question of the shifting of the ages. He appears simply to assume, unlike Paul, that redemptive-movement is somehow unbounded by the possibilities and paradoxes of redeemed-yet-preglorified human life – in a people who have received the Spirit (1 Cor 2:12) the possibilities of which must be expressed for the time being in the σῶμα ψυχικόν (1 Cor 15:44).<sup>863</sup> In short, Webb inadvertently restricts the significance of the text to what it can tell people to do and fails adequately to address its *theology*.

#### 6.4.5 Double-Agency Discourse Hermeneutics

Nicholas Wolterstorff's book *Divine Discourse*<sup>864</sup> offers a possible solution to the dilemma present-day readers face in interpreting Pauline gender discourse. Wolterstorff's proposal is somewhat different from either Bultmann's demythologisation hermeneutic or Webb's trajectory hermeneutic. For Bultmann, the significance of the text resides in a strict subset of the biblical materials (*kerygma*) whereas for Webb it lies beyond them in an 'ultimate ethic'.<sup>865</sup> Wolterstorff's elegant solution posits two loci of significance, and two distinct discourses – human and divine. Potentially, this approach could dissipate the problems associated with 1

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<sup>863</sup> See James Dunn's sections on 'Living between two worlds' in Dunn, *Theology*, p.689ff. Dunn and Webb actually agree vis-à-vis slavery that Paul undermines its logic, but Dunn's broader scheme acknowledges the tensions of the early Christian apocalyptic outlook (pp.179-180, 317-319). Also Martyn, 'Epistemology'.

<sup>864</sup> Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections On The Claim That God Speaks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

<sup>865</sup> Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals*, p.37.



Corinthians 11:2-16 by simply disconnecting what God might want to say through Paul's argument from its indigestible elements.

Wolterstorff's approach is no mere sleight of hand; his hermeneutical subtlety derives from insights from the linguistic philosophy known as speech-act theory. For the major proponents of this approach, John Austin and John Searle,<sup>866</sup> utterances do more than establish logical or causal relationships; they perform certain acts. Austin further distinguished three basic elements of a speech-act (i) the act *of* speaking ('locutionary act'), (ii) what one does *in* this act ('illocutionary act'), and (iii) what one does *by* it ('perlocutionary act').<sup>867</sup> In its developed form, speech-act theory distinguishes five types of illocutionary act – assertives, directives, commissives, declaratives, and expressives<sup>868</sup> – which are differentiated from one another by their 'illocutionary point',<sup>869</sup> namely the end to which they are directed. How an illocution functions, that is how it achieves its illocutionary point, is essentially through the operation of constitutive rules. These are the conventions that govern the performative context,<sup>870</sup> such as a bride and groom each must say 'I do'.<sup>871</sup>

Wolterstorff's appropriation of speech-act theory principally concerns the constitutive rules governing a particular species of indirect speech-act, this being the performance of one illocution by means of another, such as giving an order by asking

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<sup>866</sup> Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay In The Philosophy Of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

<sup>867</sup> Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, p.108. This is adopted by Searle. See Searle, 'Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts', *Philosophical Review* 77:4 (1968), 405-24; also Thiselton, *New Horizons*, pp.292-93.

<sup>868</sup> This is Searle's taxonomy. Austin describes 'verdictive, expositive, exercitive, behabitive, and commissive' illocutions. Searle's commissives, assertives, and declaratives correspond to Austin's commissives, expositives, and verdictives. See chapter 1 of Searle, *Expression And Meaning: Studies In The Theory Of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.1-29.

<sup>869</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

<sup>870</sup> See chapter 3 of Searle, *Speech Acts*, pp.54-71 especially on the sincerity condition (pp.62-63).

<sup>871</sup> Speech-act theory is an important tool for analysing ritual acts. See Rappaport, 'Enactments Of Meaning' in *A Reader In The Anthropology Of Religion*, ed. Lambek (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 446-67, p.449ff.

a question ('can you sit down?').<sup>872</sup> There are, he explains, discursive situations in which one person's speech-acts might be legitimately regarded as someone else's. 'Double-agency discourse',<sup>873</sup> as he terms it, differs according to the '*degree and mode of superintendence*'<sup>874</sup> that the discursive situation entails. It ranges from (i) dictation, through (ii) paraphrase and (iii) deputised discourse, to (iv) appropriated discourse, although only the final two of these occupy Wolterstorff. Deputised discourse involves the authorisation of one person to perform a speech-act on behalf of another, such as 'an ambassadorially delivered warning'.<sup>875</sup> Normally, a deputy will not only have been authorised to 'speak' but will also have 'heard' from the person for whom he or she 'speaks' (1 Cor 7:10), although not always (1 Cor 7:12). By contrast, appropriating discourse is distinguished by its lack of an authorising convention; it simply permits one person (God) to adopt the discourse of another (the human writers), and *occasionally bracket propositional content or modify illocutionary point*.<sup>876</sup>

On this basis Wolterstorff contends that 'double-agency discourse'<sup>877</sup> is adequate for understanding even problematic scriptural passages as divine illocutions. He contends that although the Bible contains some deputised discourses, such as prophetic speech, appropriated discourses predominate. As such, appropriated

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<sup>872</sup> See Searle's chapter 'Indirect Speech Acts', Searle, *Expression And Meaning*, pp.30-57.

<sup>873</sup> Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, pp.38-54. See Merold Westphal's evaluation. Westphal, 'On Reading God The Author', *RS 37:3* (2001), 271-91, pp.276-80.

<sup>874</sup> Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, p.41. Italics original.

<sup>875</sup> *Ibid.*, p.45.

<sup>876</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.51-54. A good analogue of this is Robert Gundry's attitude to biblical intertextuality. Commenting on the difference between Hosea 11:1 in its original setting and in Matthew 2:15 he implies some notion of appropriating discourse, although not Wolterstorff's. He writes, 'Hosea 11:1...has to do with the exodus of Israel from Egypt. Matthew 2:15 quotes Hosea 11:1 with...reference to the preservation of Jesus in Egypt. But Hosea 11:1 isn't Hosea 11:1 any more, so to speak; it's Matthew 2:15'. Gundry, 'Matthew, Midrash and the ETS', (Email Correspondence, 16<sup>th</sup> September 1999).

<sup>877</sup> Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, pp.38-54.

discourse offers the distinct possibility that the hermeneutical tension caused by 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 can be resolved. Since it allows the bracketing of the human writer's content and illocutionary point, there is no reason why differences between Paul's gender discourse and modernity should constitute a serious problem for a hermeneutic that focuses upon a divine appropriation of Paul's words. Brevard Childs makes precisely this point regarding Wolterstorff's theory:

[O]ne can accept someone else's speaking for...[one's] own without accepting everything that the other person says. The fact that the human authors of scripture expressed various erroneous beliefs does not prevent God from speaking infallibly by way of what they said.<sup>878</sup>

In short, even if in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Paul is incorrect regarding gender, this presents no obstacle to the divine appropriation of his words. Wolterstorff aptly illustrates how this works with an example from Psalm 93:1-2. This passage assumes the geostatic, geocentric cosmology of antiquity.<sup>879</sup> Wolterstorff argues that since God cannot share a mistaken worldview, the divine speech-act in Psalm 93:1-2 precludes the assertive illocution 'the earth is stationary in space'. Instead, it is something akin to 'God is everlasting'.<sup>880</sup> Correspondingly, since God cannot hold an incorrect view of human sex and gender differentiation, the divine speech-act in 1 Corinthians 11:7-9, and 11-12 cannot affirm an obsolete propositional metaphysic or underwrite an erroneous notion of human reproduction. If this passage is 'divinely-appropriated' discourse, then by Wolterstorff's logic it must state something else.

However, I am not convinced that Wolterstorff's hermeneutic is applicable to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. (i) The interpretative difficulties generated by Wolterstorff's example are poor analogues for those generated by 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. In essence,

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<sup>878</sup> Childs, 'Speech-Act Theory And Biblical Interpretation', *SJT* 58:4 (2005), 375-92, p.378.

<sup>879</sup> Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, p.209, the entire section is useful here (pp.208-216).

<sup>880</sup> *Ibid.*, p.211. I do not think that this is a particularly sensitive reading of this text.

Psalm 93:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 are very different types of illocutionary act. Psalm 93:1-2 is an expressive illocution that declares the praises of God. That it does so on the basis of certain assertive illocutions regarding God's relationship to the world presumes what John Searle terms a 'direction of fit' of '*word-to-world*'.<sup>881</sup> In other words, the words of the text purport to align themselves with the world-as-it-is, but only to praise the God who made the world. Wolterstorff's double-agency hermeneutic fairly straightforwardly circumvents any problems these assertive illocutions cause, because the expressive illocution can be performed in terms other than a geostationary cosmology. The 'noematic content'<sup>882</sup> of the divine and human speech acts in this passage can therefore, in principle, be separated; God is not required to say exactly what the Psalmist says.

By contrast, the central section of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (vv. 7-12) is a complicated interplay of different speech-acts, and the 'direction of fit' in this passage alternates between '*word-to-world*' assertives (vv. 7b-9, 10-12), and '*world-to-word*' commissives (vv. 7a, 10).<sup>883</sup> The rhetorical purpose of the assertives is to provide warrants for the commissives; hence the overall direction of fit for this section of argument is one of *world-to-word-to-world*, namely the text is designed to establish an obligation to live in accordance with male and female nature as Paul describes them. However, the fact that Paul underwrites this with biblical creation references invites consideration of creation itself as the speech-act of God (Gen 1:3). As such, the direction of fit in 1 Corinthians 11:7-12 extends backwards, by means of literary

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<sup>881</sup> Searle, *Expression And Meaning*, pp.3-4. 'Direction of fit' denotes the kind of alignment that an illocution attempts to make between the propositional content of a speech-act and its world of reference.

<sup>882</sup> Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, p.138. Noematic content here refers to the basic content (propositions) of an illocution along with its illocutionary stance (assertion, commission etc.) It is differentiated from designative content, which takes account also of the object of reference. See also Michael Levine's analysis. Levine, 'God Speak', *RS* 34:1 (1998), 1-16, p.4, 7.

<sup>883</sup> Searle, *Expression And Meaning*, pp.3-4. See also Table 6.1 above.

allusion, to incorporate God's initial speech-act, and the scheme as a whole has a *world-to-word-to-world-to-WORD* direction of fit. In short, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 presumes that Paul's commissive and assertive illocutions are in keeping with God's initial creative word. Whilst some of Paul's statements are untenable (e.g. 1 Cor 11:12), they could be rescued by appealing to a notion of appropriated discourse. However, presuming that God 'says' something quite different by means of these illocutions from what Paul 'says' would result in a concomitant loss of rhetorical and theological integration.

(ii) I doubt whether 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is the correct type of 'double-agency' discourse for Wolterstorff's hermeneutic to be applicable. In short, Pauline writings purport to be deputised discourses rather than appropriated discourses. This is significant because the interpretative space Wolterstorff opens up between the human and divine illocutions depends upon the text being *appropriated* discourse. Ordinarily, deputised discourse assumes a close alignment between the '*noematic content*'<sup>884</sup> of the primary and secondary speech-acts. A good example of this is diplomatic speech – an ambassador commits the one on whose behalf he or she speaks to the content of his or her statements. If 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is *deputised* discourse, then it follows that there is less scope for differentiation between what Paul might say and what God might want to say through Paul's words.

Paul expends much effort, particularly in the Corinthian correspondence, defending his apostolic status vis-à-vis his congregations (1 Cor 4, 9, 15:1-11, 2 Cor 11:5-15, 12:11-13). This entails a claim to speak or act on God's behalf. Indeed, our passage begins (1 Cor 11:2) with Paul's reminder to the Corinthians of his status as the one through whom the Christian traditions (παραδόσεις) were handed down

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<sup>884</sup> Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, p.138.

(παραδίδωμι) and follows on from his claim that he remains a suitable candidate for them to imitate (1 Cor 11:1). The implication would seem to be that Paul's view of the status of his own teaching in this passage relates at least in part to his apostolic self-identity, and this portrays him as one deputised by Christ. Logically, Wolterstorff's notion of appropriation remains applicable to the Pauline epistles, but only by ignoring what Paul indicates about himself and his writings.<sup>885</sup>

(iii) Finally, I am not convinced that an application of Wolterstorff's hermeneutic to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 would be theologically constructive. This question is one which Wolterstorff himself considers when he recognises that his hermeneutic might reduce Scripture to 'a wax nose'<sup>886</sup> that can be shaped to fit the competing demands of different orthodoxies. This problem arises because Wolterstorff proceeds from a similar assessment of the hermeneutical problem to that which I articulate in this chapter. If the text 'says' something which appears false or morally dubious, and that which is untrue or wicked cannot be logically attributed to God, but notions of what constitutes falsehood or wickedness change across interpretative contexts, then there is the very real danger that communities will simply 'interpret God's speech as to make it conform to [their own] beliefs'.<sup>887</sup> The danger that results from this is that communities may miss what God does say or incorrectly attribute to God something that God did not say.<sup>888</sup> Wolterstorff offers no definitive solution to this difficulty, perhaps because there is none.

Brevard Childs evidently finds the 'wax nose' problem highly problematic, comparing Wolterstorff's use of speech-act theory unfavourably with that of Anthony

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<sup>885</sup> See also Fowl, 'The New Testament, Theology And Ethics' in *Hearing The New Testament*, ed. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 394-410, p.409n27.

<sup>886</sup> Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, pp.225-26.

<sup>887</sup> *Ibid.*, p.227.

<sup>888</sup> *Ibid.*, p.236.

Thiselton.<sup>889</sup> Unlike Wolterstorff, Thiselton identifies the divine communication in Scripture within the human and, as Childs argues, he never has ‘to employ a “second hermeneutic”... to overcome the frailty of the human discourse’.<sup>890</sup> This is a fair analysis. Wolterstorff’s hermeneutic is a significant departure from the grammatical-historical hermeneutical tradition, whereas Thiselton’s is not. Childs comments on Thiselton clarify this:

Thiselton never judges...statement[s] to be unworthy of the Apostle Paul or unthinkable for a loving God....By assuming the ‘truth-telling’ content of Paul’s letter...Thiselton avoids all the ensuing hermeneutical problems that plague Wolterstorff.<sup>891</sup>

Nevertheless, Childs gives little indication of how he would resolve the problems of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Should one assume the divine “‘truth-telling’ content’ of assertions regarding an erroneous reproductive biology or prepositional metaphysic? Appealing, as Childs does, to a canonical reading of texts would not resolve this, since the hermeneutical issues I have identified relate not to whether 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 coheres with other New Testament passages (although that is a pertinent question) but whether it coheres with the worldviews of its present-day readers. Since Childs, like Wolterstorff, would not require God to affirm what is untrue, the remaining logical alternatives are to reject some or all of this passage – a method Childs eschews – or to reject my exegesis. However, the rejection of an exegesis on such grounds also reduces Scripture to a ‘wax nose’, but the logic by which it is shaped to fit is not Wolterstorff’s ‘Paul has said X, but God could not have meant X’, but the equally problematic ‘Paul *only appeared* to have said X, because God could not have meant X’. Given that I agree with my own exegesis, I cannot

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<sup>889</sup> Childs, ‘Speech-Act Theory’, p.388ff.; Thiselton, *New Horizons*, pp.272-312; Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, pp.41-52.

<sup>890</sup> Childs, ‘Speech-Act Theory’, p.390.

<sup>891</sup> Ibid..

agree with Childs' critique but, as my analysis indicates, I am far from convinced of the adequacy of an appropriated discourse hermeneutic for 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.

#### 6.4.6 Performance Hermeneutics

Implicit in all of the preceding strategies is the notion of Scripture as, in the first instance, a repository of *information*, the commensurate interpretative responses to which are *extraction, translation and transmission*.<sup>892</sup> Performance interpretation is somewhat different. It is a metaphor that denotes a number of interpretative strategies that share a common belief that the meaning of a biblical text is not solely a function of its literary or historical characteristics, but also of the pattern of life to which it testifies and which it enjoins.

Nicholas Lash has explored the metaphor of interpretation as performance in his essay *Performing The Scriptures*.<sup>893</sup> Central to his argument is his assertion that different types of text place different interpretative demands upon readers.<sup>894</sup> Circuit diagrams invite different interpretative engagement from an electrician than the law does from a judge, and both differ from the creativity demanded of performers *and* the attentiveness demanded of an audience by an artistic performance.<sup>895</sup> Lash argues that biblical interpretation corresponds far more closely to a musical, theatrical or political enactment than it does to a process of literary or historical deciphering. It is important to note that he is not simply classifying texts by the extent to which they are existentially involving, with technical blueprints at one extreme and *Hamlet* and the Bible at the other. Rather, his stance is reminiscent of Wittgenstein's connection

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<sup>892</sup> This is even the case with double-agency hermeneutics inasmuch as the first stage of Wolterstorff's schema is to interpret the human discourse by the ordinary literary and historical means.

<sup>893</sup> Lash, 'Performing The Scriptures' in *Theology On The Way To Emmaus* (London: SCM, 1986), 37-46.

<sup>894</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.

<sup>895</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40.



between language games and socio-cultural 'forms of life'.<sup>896</sup> For Lash, 'the richer the text, the more complex its relationship to the culture which reads and remembers it'<sup>897</sup>, and the biblical text, as a particularly rich and complex witness to God's action in the life and story of Jesus and his disciples, ought to be read in a manner commensurate with this. Such a reading entails *performance* – the manifestation of the same story in similar lives.

It is also significant that this is not *individual* performance. Lash writes, 'it is no more possible for an isolated individual to perform [biblical] texts than it is for him [sic.] to perform a Beethoven quartet'.<sup>898</sup> This communal emphasis requires some explanation. Since, for Lash, texts invite different interpretative responses they, by extension, also act as interpretative constraints. Accordingly, the biblical text constrains and legitimates certain biblical performances – there are performances that 'fit' the text, and performances that do not. In saying this, Lash nowhere proposes universally perspicuous criteria for determining what constitutes a good or a bad performance. Rather, he insists that ultimately the responsibility for interpretative judgement rests with those who are charged to perform the script. Such judgement is necessarily collaborative because (i) interpreters of ancient texts often require expert assistance, and (ii) the script to perform has more than one cast member – it presumes a *company* of players.

Nicholas Lash is far from the sole advocate of hermeneutics as performance, the same metaphor is also evident in the work of Stanley Hauerwas<sup>899</sup> and Mary

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<sup>896</sup> See further Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. Anscombe and Rhees (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), §19, 23, 174. Hereafter, PI.

<sup>897</sup> Lash, 'Performing The Scriptures', p.38.

<sup>898</sup> *Ibid.*, p.43.

<sup>899</sup> Hauerwas, *Unleashing The Scripture: Freeing The Bible From Captivity To America* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

McClintock Fulkerson.<sup>900</sup> Critical of modernist interpretation, in particular historical-critical and fundamentalist approaches,<sup>901</sup> Hauerwas argues that these reading strategies abstract the meaning of the Bible from the practices of the Church, assuming instead a perspicuous text with an individual, rational and apolitical reader engaged in a process of supposedly objective exegesis and (perhaps) application. For Hauerwas, this type of hermeneutical objectivism has two principal flaws. (i) It focuses upon deciphering rather than implementing biblical texts. He writes, ‘no clever theological moves can be substituted for the necessity of the church being a community of people who embody our language about God’.<sup>902</sup> (ii) It is counter-productive. The inevitable influence of politics upon the interpretative process is left unacknowledged and therefore unaccounted for and this gives ‘unchecked power to some interpreters over Scripture without such power being justified’.<sup>903</sup> As such, far from being apolitical, for Hauerwas, modernist interpretation enacts the wrong type of politics.<sup>904</sup> Enacting a Christian interpretative politics, which for Hauerwas is supremely the non-violent politics of Jesus,<sup>905</sup> requires transformation.

In positing transformation as the prior determinant of *Christian* interpretative activity, Hauerwas, like Lash, appears to have followed Wittgenstein in rooting

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<sup>900</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing The Subject* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); McClintock Fulkerson, ‘Changing The Subject: Feminist Theology And Discourse’, *LitTh* 10:2 (1996), 131-47; McClintock Fulkerson, ‘Is There A Non-Sexist Bible In This Church? A Feminist Case For The Priority Of Interpretative Communities’, *ModTh* 14:2 (1998), 225-42.

<sup>901</sup> Hauerwas, *Unleashing The Scripture*, p.19. Compare this with Lash’s observations regarding ‘rescuing [the text] from the professors of theology’. Lash, ‘Performing The Scriptures’, p.40.

<sup>902</sup> Hauerwas and Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), pp.170-71. Also cited by Donald Carson in Carson, *The Gagging Of God* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), p.478.

<sup>903</sup> Hauerwas, *Unleashing The Scripture*, p.18.

<sup>904</sup> This of course begs the question of who decides what the right and wrong kind of politics might be.

<sup>905</sup> The influence of John Howard Yoder on Hauerwas is perhaps apparent here. Yoder, *The Politics Of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972). See also Hauerwas and Wells on other aspects of the relationship between Hauerwas and Yoder. Hauerwas and Wells, ‘Theological Ethics’ in *God’s Advocates*, ed. Shortt (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005), 175-93, pp.185-87.

language in certain fundamental 'forms of life'.<sup>906</sup> Indeed, in his recently published conversation with Rupert Shortt, Hauerwas attributes this aspect of his thought to the influence of Wittgenstein.<sup>907</sup> Nevertheless, he also appeals to the semiotic theory of Stanley Fish, and in so doing goes well beyond Lash in his scepticism vis-à-vis the potential of the biblical text to act as a constraint upon interpretative performances. According to Fish, the text has no 'status independent of interpretation'.<sup>908</sup> Since it is not pre-interpretatively stable and its meaning is attained *through* interpretation, it cannot be an interpretative constraint. Hence, whilst Lash argues for *de facto* textual limits in interpretation ('it would be silly to sing railway timetables'<sup>909</sup>) Fish and Hauerwas suggest otherwise.<sup>910</sup> Accordingly, if there are constraints upon meaning then they derive from 'whatever interpretative assumptions happen to be in force'<sup>911</sup> within communities – and such assumptions vary between communities.

The variability between community discourses is a notion that has been taken up by Mary McClintock Fulkerson. Like Hauerwas, she also makes use of Fish, arguing that, since the text has no meaning apart from use, the proper interests of a theological hermeneutic are the conventions that shape communal 'forms of life' and ultimately the meaning of the words on the page.<sup>912</sup> Unlike Hauerwas, who evidently

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<sup>906</sup> Wittgenstein, *PI*, §23.

<sup>907</sup> Hauerwas and Wells, 'Theological Ethics', p.175.

<sup>908</sup> Fish, *Is There A Text In This Class?* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1980), p.171.

<sup>909</sup> Lash, 'Performing The Scriptures', p.38.

<sup>910</sup> Indeed, Fish's principal example of unlimited semiosis is the example of a reading list, which he successfully passes off as a poem to his students in one of his English classes. See Fish, *Is There A Text?*, pp.326-27; also the perceptive comments regarding this in Carson, *Gagging*, pp.75-76, 114-15.

<sup>911</sup> Fish, *Is There A Text?*, p.vii. See further Thiselton's excellent analysis of Fish. Thiselton, *New Horizons*, pp.515-55.

<sup>912</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, 'Non-Sexist Bible?' p.227.

regards the Christian interpretative community in comprehensive terms,<sup>913</sup> McClintock Fulkerson emphasises local communities of discourse, particularly groups of Presbyterian and Pentecostal women.<sup>914</sup> In this respect, the difference between the two approaches seems to me to be notional rather than methodological. McClintock Fulkerson is interested in whether and how feminist politics of interpretation function *within* Christian groups, whereas Hauerwas is interested in the articulation of a theology that allows the Church (in a wide sense) to resist co-option from *without* by hostile civic politics. Hence, they each draw the boundaries of their community of discourse in accordance with the basic interpretative situation they address.

The emphasis upon community performance in Lash, Hauerwas and McClintock Fulkerson leads naturally to some consideration of the significance of exemplars – those who can assist the faithful in learning fidelity. Despite expressing reservations regarding the role of ecclesiastical authorities, Lash tacitly acknowledges the significance of performative expertise when, returning to the musical analogy, he refers to certain performances the preparation for which are ‘years of disciplined experience’.<sup>915</sup> For Hauerwas, a significant feature of the Church’s role as ‘truthful community’ depends upon it having people who can act as wise ‘spiritual masters’.<sup>916</sup> Similarly, Stephen Barton talks of ‘*becoming apprentices* to masters found trustworthy in the discipline of performing the Scriptures’.<sup>917</sup> None of these notions

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<sup>913</sup> Ibid., pp.231-32. McClintock Fulkerson’s choice of terms for the interpretative community (‘Christian communities’, ‘community of biblical practice’ and ‘biblical-doctrinal tradition’) illustrate her local and plural focus. Compare this with the emphasis upon ‘the Church’ in Hauerwas and his comments regarding reunification. Hauerwas, *Unleashing The Scripture*, p.152n9.

<sup>914</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, ‘Feminist Theology And Discourse’; McClintock Fulkerson, ‘Non-Sexist Bible?’

<sup>915</sup> Lash, ‘Performing The Scriptures’, p.40.

<sup>916</sup> Hauerwas, *Unleashing The Scripture*, p.16.

<sup>917</sup> Barton, ‘New Testament Interpretation As Performance’ in *Life Together: Family, Sexuality And Community In The New Testament Today* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 2001), 223-50, p.250. Italics original.

are new, being implied in Athanasius' (*De Incarnatione* 57) comment regarding the epistemic value of the imitation of the saints.

But for the searching of the Scriptures and true knowledge of them, an honourable life is needed, and a pure soul, and that virtue which is according to Christ...For *without a pure mind and a modelling of the life after the saints, a man could not possibly comprehend the words of the saints.*<sup>918</sup>

What interests me about Athanasius' view of the saints is that although he evidently regards them as models of good scriptural performance, their excellence is ultimately to do with their transparency to Christ – their transformation. A life thus modelled 'after the saints' is, in fact, a life of 'that virtue which is according to Christ', and it is in its potential to mediate the transforming power of Christ that the imitation of the saints assumes a position of epistemic privilege. Going beyond performance as *mimēsis*, this is performance as embodiment and repetition. It is what Stephen Barton terms 'immersion in the life of Scripture-shaped communities'<sup>919</sup>, but for Athanasius this applies only insofar as the shape of Scripture itself is determined by the Christ-shaped lives of the apostles, and the Christ-shaped testimony they passed on.<sup>920</sup>

This is relevant for a hermeneutical analysis of our passage. William Schweiker has analysed Hans Georg Gadamer's notion of 'understanding as mimetic performance'.<sup>921</sup> If, as Gadamer suggests, understanding is *Dasein* making itself manifest through dramatic presentation, then the connection in Athanasius between understanding and the saints as those in whom Christ is making himself manifest

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<sup>918</sup> Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* p.67. Italics mine. Hauerwas also notes this excerpt. Hauerwas, *Unleashing The Scripture*, p.37. See Thomas F. Torrance for the epistemic privilege accorded to piety in the Patristic period. Torrance, *Trinitarian Faith*, p.17.

<sup>919</sup> Barton, 'Interpretation As Performance', p.250. See also the section entitled 'The saints as "performers" of Scripture' (pp.241-5).

<sup>920</sup> On the subject of a Christ-shaped biblical spirituality and finding Christ in wider canonical narrative see Adam, *Hearing God's Words*, ed. Carson (Leicester: Apollos, 2004), pp.44, 121-27.

<sup>921</sup> Schweiker, 'Sacrifice, Interpretation, And The Sacred: The Import Of Gadamer And Girard For Religious Studies', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 55:4 (1987), 791-810, p.794ff.

becomes somewhat clearer. Performance is interpretation as indirect Christophany – what Gerard Loughlin terms ‘the non-identical repetition of Jesus’ life’.<sup>922</sup> This resonates with Paul’s appeal to Christ as model in Philippians 2:5, and also with several statements throughout the Corinthian correspondence. These include references to the imitation of Christ through the imitation of Paul (1 Cor 4:16, 11:1) and the manifestation of Jesus in mortal flesh (2 Cor 4:10) – all seen in the wider context of notions of God’s wisdom and grace illuminated by a cross-shaped narrative (1 Cor 1-2, 2 Cor 8:9).<sup>923</sup>

The categories discussed here are pertinent to the debate regarding 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and headship practices. (i) Most interested parties could agree that what is at stake in this debate is, to use Lash’s phrase, ‘not, in the last analysis, written texts...but patterns of human action’.<sup>924</sup> Indeed, John Piper’s reference to a supposedly ‘beautiful Biblical pattern of mature manhood and mature womanhood’<sup>925</sup> fits neatly into this scheme; the twin ‘poles’ of his theology of gender evidently comprising the patterns of the biblical narrative and those of the present-day Christian community that applies them. (ii) The emphasis upon gender *formation* as well as performance also touches upon notions of community and the role of exemplary performers. For example, it is difficult to read Ruth Tucker’s<sup>926</sup> account of women as ‘Martyrs’, ‘Mothers of the Church’, ‘Monastics’, ‘Mystics’ and ‘Rebels with a Cause’

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<sup>922</sup> Loughlin, cited in Barton, ‘Interpretation As Performance’, p.241.

<sup>923</sup> See Michael Gorman’s chapter on the role of a cruciform narrative in shaping Pauline communities. Gorman, *Cruciformity*, pp.214-67.

<sup>924</sup> Lash, ‘Performing The Scriptures’, p.42. Note Lash’s qualifier ‘in the last analysis’. Although for many traditionalists the text is one of the issues at stake, the principal difference between traditionalist and feminist evangelicals concerns whether these ‘patterns of human action’ entail elements of hierarchy and precedence.

<sup>925</sup> Piper, ‘A Vision Of Biblical Complementarity’, p.44.

<sup>926</sup> Tucker, ‘The Changing Roles Of Women In Ministry’ in *Discovering Biblical Equality*, ed. Pierce *et al.* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 23-38. Especially Tucker’s final paragraph (p.38).

and fail to recognise these as female paradigms or 'saints'.<sup>927</sup> To paraphrase Hauerwas, they are 'spiritual *mistresses* who can help women to practice fidelity to the gospel'.<sup>928</sup> However, in their reflection upon the saints, advocates of the performance analogy tend to go further than this. They collapse the traditional distinction between interpreting the text and applying it, hence, their talk is of transformation<sup>929</sup>, embodiment<sup>930</sup> and, to use the term I suggested above, indirect Christophany.

(iii) Both evangelical traditionalists and evangelical feminists demonstrate themselves aware of the problems of attempting to appropriate Pauline gender discourses slavishly, that is by replicating the 'form of life' of Paul's Corinthian churches.<sup>931</sup> As such, their attitude towards application approximates the emphasis in some performance hermeneutics upon 'creative fidelity'.<sup>932</sup> Nevertheless, application in traditional evangelical hermeneutics is not equivalent to performance. Evangelical hermeneutical realism posits a logical and sequential progression between the three distinct activities of bibliology, exegesis and application.<sup>933</sup> This not only entails the view that meaning is disclosed prior to performance, but it also evokes the metaphor

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<sup>927</sup> The reverse is true of traditionalists, e.g. John Piper's discussion of his father's role in modeling a pattern of Christian manhood. Piper, 'A Vision Of Biblical Complementarity', p.32. See further, Hardenbrook, 'Where's Dad?'

<sup>928</sup> Cf. Hauerwas, *Unleashing The Scripture*, p.16.

<sup>929</sup> See Fowl, 'NT, Theology And Ethics', pp.408-09; Hauerwas and Wells, 'Theological Ethics', p.175.

<sup>930</sup> See further Richard Hays on 'The Church as embodied metaphor'. Hays, *The Moral Vision Of The New Testament* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1996), pp.304-06.

<sup>931</sup> See the relevant sections of Chs.2 and 3.

<sup>932</sup> Lash, 'Performing The Scriptures', p.40; Barton, 'Interpretation As Performance', p.225.

<sup>933</sup> See the discussion in ch.3. See further the logical progression between the three Chicago statements from inerrancy to hermeneutics to application. 'Chicago Statement On Biblical Inerrancy'; 'Chicago Statement On Biblical Hermeneutics'; 'Chicago Statement On Biblical Application'.

of the scholarly 'relay race' beloved of performance critics of the modernist hermeneutical division of biblical and theological labour.<sup>934</sup>

That traditionalist and feminist evangelicals use categories similar to those of performance interpretation raises (once again) the question of how one evaluates performances relative to one another. For Lash, this depends upon how comprehensively a particular interpretation renders the nuances of the text, and how wise, imaginative and creative interpreters have been in embodying the story of God.<sup>935</sup> This, however, only begs the question of what constitutes – and more importantly *who determines* – interpretative imagination and creativity? Lash writes, 'even if [a] performance is technically faultless...we might judge it to be lifeless, unimaginative'<sup>936</sup>, but are there not also 'correct' performances that *some* judge to be brilliant but others judge to be poor? This indeed is analogous to the evangelical headship controversy – each party claims to offer a better rendition than its opponents of passages such as 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Within Lash's scheme, who is to say which section of the audience is correct? To posit the wise or 'spiritual masters'<sup>937</sup> is only to beg similar questions.<sup>938</sup>

One could perhaps appeal, as does N.T. Wright, to the character and storyline of the Christian narrative in order to determine how to perform the text. For Wright, the biblical narrative is a drama of God's actions in the world structured like a five-act

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<sup>934</sup> See further Barton, 'Interpretation As Performance', p.227.

<sup>935</sup> Lash, 'Performing The Scriptures', pp.40-42.

<sup>936</sup> Ibid., p.40.

<sup>937</sup> Hauerwas, *Unleashing The Scripture*, p.16.

<sup>938</sup> Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Lash argues that for adult Christian faith 'truth, security and freedom are never *objects possessed*'. Lash, 'What Authority Has Our Past?' in *Theology On The Way To Emmaus* (London: SCM, 1986), 47-61, p.60.



Shakespearean play.<sup>939</sup> The first four acts – creation, fall, Israel and Christ – have been performed and are extant in the biblical witness, but the fifth act is inextant and we, the company of performers, must improvise it in fidelity to (i) the preceding storyline and (ii) the ending, which has been generally delineated.<sup>940</sup> However, this approach does not resolve the evangelical disagreement regarding texts such as 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. According to Wright’s analogy, the way in which Pauline gender texts should be interpreted will depend upon the story so far, yet on the issue of gender the story so far is anything but clear. Some evangelicals read the first two acts of the play as indicating that benevolent patriarchy is a creational good, corrupted by the fall but *restored* in Christ,<sup>941</sup> others regard patriarchy itself as a corruption of an original pristine egalitarianism; it must be *reversed* in Christ.<sup>942</sup>

In the absence of consensus regarding the place of gender in the preliminary acts of the Christian drama, perhaps the solution in the short term is to cease searching for transcontextual criteria by which one can judge absolutely the validity of competing performances of New Testament gender passages. This is Mary McClintock Fulkerson’s strategy. Following George Lindbeck’s emphasis upon ‘*intrasystematic* truth or falsity’<sup>943</sup> as more fundamental to religious discourse than ontological correspondence, McClintock Fulkerson focuses upon the ‘thick description’ of the performative grammar of the communities that interpret the text.<sup>944</sup> This standpoint is broadly continuous with a number of ethnographic and

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<sup>939</sup> Wright, *NT And People Of God*, p.142; Wright, *Scripture*, p.91. See further Barton, ‘Interpretation As Performance’, p.239.

<sup>940</sup> I am unsure as to how I, and other Christians like me, who do not read the creation and fall accounts as literal-historical reports, should approach this hermeneutical device.

<sup>941</sup> Ortlund, ‘Male-Female Equality’; Grudem, *Evangelical Feminism And Biblical Truth*, p.109.

<sup>942</sup> Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, p.25; Hess, ‘Equality’, p.87.

<sup>943</sup> Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religions and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (London: SPCK, 1984), p.64; McClintock Fulkerson, ‘Non-Sexist Bible?’ p.229.

<sup>944</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, ‘Non-Sexist Bible?’ p.229, 32.

phenomenological studies of gender in evangelical, charismatic and fundamentalist communities in recent years.<sup>945</sup>

Ruth Marie Griffith's<sup>946</sup> study of the members of the Women's Aglow Fellowship is particularly interesting in this respect. The hermeneutical practice of these women vis-à-vis New Testament gender passages is ostensibly oriented towards submission to male 'headship' and, in this sense, it could be construed as a performance of 1 Corinthians 11:3. Significantly, submission is not typically articulated in terms of powerlessness, but rather in terms of the exercise of a particular type of power. Griffith writes:

[Submission is] a strategy for getting what they want, which in these cases appears to be the taming of men's naturally monstrous urges into gentleness, appreciation and affection and the creation of ideal Christian families.<sup>947</sup>

Rather than regarding this as the exercise of so-called 'soft' power, this strategy is, in fact, the articulation of a radical powerlessness that creates the space for God's transformative agency within human situations.<sup>948</sup> Griffith cites a fundamentalist pastor to this effect; 'Submission is the wife learning to duck, so God can hit the husband'.<sup>949</sup> In this sense, submission as the engagement of divine power to transform 'difficult' males situates these women's understandings of their marital relationships within a larger repertoire of community narratives associated with mission, and specifically with the transformation of society by spiritual warfare.<sup>950</sup>

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<sup>945</sup> Griffith, *God's Daughters*; Brasher, *Godly Women*; Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity*; Aune, 'Significance Of Gender'. Kristin Aune's essay on congregational study of New Frontiers International churches is useful for illustrating some of the connections between the US and UK contexts (esp. p.194).

<sup>946</sup> Griffith, *God's Daughters*.

<sup>947</sup> *Ibid.*, p.186.

<sup>948</sup> As Griffith (*Ibid.*, p.243n.26-27) makes clear the similarity here with Sarah Coakley's work is not coincidental. See Coakley, 'Kenōsis And Subversion'.

<sup>949</sup> Griffith, *God's Daughters*, p.176.

<sup>950</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.191-96. See especially p.195, 'Father, our country *shall* serve God! Jesus Christ is *Lord* over the United States'. Italics original.

This narrative is reinforced by the core disciplines of the community – militant prayer and worship, glossolalia, the mutual sharing of stories and the testimony of women recognised as practised in this pattern of performance. As such, it may be that this kind of performance approximates the sort of community practice that McClintock Fulkerson had in mind when she described how ‘a “sexist text” that obliterates women’s well-being for one community of women may not be that for another’.<sup>951</sup>

Given that Paul does not use the κεφαλή metaphor to enjoin adherence to customary patterns of propriety *for the ultimate purpose* of influencing husbands, this performance of the text does not make particularly good *exegetical* sense of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. The performance of the Aglow women is perhaps better construed as a composite reading of both 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 1 Peter 3:1-7, in which influencing unbelieving husbands is one of the matters at hand. However, it remains a reading, one that is coherent within its own terms of reference and it therefore satisfies Lindbeck’s condition of ‘intrasystematic truth’.<sup>952</sup> Nevertheless, although coherent, I am not convinced of the adequacy of this reading. Whilst the ‘poles’ of performance in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 are certainly more than ‘written texts’, they also involve more than human relationships.

As I have demonstrated,<sup>953</sup> for Paul, gender is part of a socio-cultural system that performs not on the limited stage of human society, but the universal, cosmological and theological stage of which human society is only a microcosm. As such, there is a difference in the script performed by the Aglow women, and that written by Paul. Whereas the Aglow women see their performance in terms of the transformation of individuals, marital relationships and (American) society, Paul

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<sup>951</sup> McClintock Fulkerson, ‘Non-Sexist Bible?’ p.232.

<sup>952</sup> Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, p.64.

<sup>953</sup> See ch.5.

appears to have been interested in situating issues of gender within the wider context of the mystery of God's agency in creation and redemption (1 Cor 8:6, 11:12). The backdrop for this is the cosmos itself, in which the Church, as the privileged location for the activity of the Spirit (1 Cor 11:4-6, 12:4), proclaims the origin, nature, potential and final promise of all things in Christ (1 Cor 15:27) to a fallen world, the pattern of which is passing away (1 Cor 7:31). In short, I am suggesting that to perform the script written by Paul faithfully, one must not only perform it coherently and creatively but also comprehensively. This is difficult, precisely because, as the argument of this chapter has shown, human gender does not occupy the place in contemporary cosmological discourse that it did in the ancient world.

#### **6.4.7 Section Summary**

This section of the chapter has evaluated six interpretative stances towards Pauline gender discourse, highlighting the merits and weaknesses of each as a response to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. (i) The strategy of rejection of modernity ostensibly acknowledges the authority of the text, but it is counterproductive in cases in which what the text appears to say (or imply) is known to be false (e.g. 1 Cor 11:12). Such instances require either the denial of known facts or the denial that the text says what it appears to say, neither response being satisfactory. Collapsing this dilemma by positing a distinction between what the Bible 'teaches' and 'touches' was also seen to fail because 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 will not easily accommodate such a distinction. (ii) Rejecting the text ostensibly has the merit of being critical, but this appearance obscures the problem of negotiating the notions of 'Scripture' and 'authority'. For evangelicals who pursue this strategy vis-à-vis 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 the problems that ensue are quite severe. In particular, there is the issue of theological coherence.

Since Protestant hermeneutics posits Scripture as the *regula fidei*, to ignore, excise or diminish the authority of a biblical passage is to break the *analogia fidei*.

(iii) Demythologisation attempts to 'bridge' the gap between ancient discourses and the modern worldview according to which the *kerygma* was originally and is now mediated. When applied to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 two problems emerged. First, demythologising Paul's argument here may destabilise his argument elsewhere, because the prepositional metaphysic he applies to gender (1 Cor 11:7-9,12), he also applies to God and cosmos (1 Cor 8:6). Second, demythologisation supposes that the discourses of antiquity and modernity 'map' the same territory in different ways – and this supposition is insufficiently warranted. (iv) Redemptive-movement hermeneutics posit an ethical trajectory from the biblical text to an ultimate point beyond it. The aim is to allow present-day readers to determine whether and how to apply biblical commands. Whilst the principal shortcoming of this approach is its intricacy,<sup>954</sup> its applicability to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is also questionable. First, the emphasis upon paranesis pays insufficient attention to the Graeco-Roman context of some of Paul's indicative statements regarding God, gender and the cosmos. Second, that this method is abstracted from the salvation-historical narrative means that it risks neglecting elements in the narrative that constrain redemptive-movement.

(v) Wolterstorff's notion of 'double-agency discourse'<sup>955</sup> posits the divine appropriation and redirection of human speech-acts. This allows for a distinction between the human and divine 'noematic content'<sup>956</sup> of difficult biblical passages. However, it does not resolve the problems of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. First, this passage is far more complicated rhetorically than the examples Wolterstorff proposes.

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<sup>954</sup> It posits eighteen hermeneutical criteria. Webb, *Slaves, Women And Homosexuals*, pp.16-17.

<sup>955</sup> Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, pp.38-54.

<sup>956</sup> *Ibid.*, p.138.

Second, Paul's apostolic claims indicate that 1 Corinthians purports to be deputised *not* appropriated discourse. Third, the text's ability to constrain interpretation ultimately disappears behind its 'wax nose'.<sup>957</sup> (vi) Performance hermeneutics treats biblical interpretation as entailing the enactment of the 'forms of life' testified to by the biblical texts. However, when this way of understanding biblical interpretation was applied to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, some difficulties emerged. The principal difficulty is that Paul 'scripts' the Corinthian performance of gender for a cosmological and theological stage. In short, the 'form of life' he patterns is integrally related to certain of his metaphysical statements. Consequently, a performance hermeneutic leaves unanswered the question of whether and, if so, how present-day readers can perform the script if they cannot share the metaphysic.

## 6.5 Conclusion

The argument of the entire chapter can be summarised as follows. Any attempt to decode a text entails *technically* some consideration of the reader it anticipates. However, Scripture's antiquity precludes assuming that actual readers can adopt the standpoint implied by an ideal reader now. Ordinarily this is unproblematic, since the model reader is by no means the *only* standpoint from which to approach a text. However, given that there is a distinction between interpretation and use,<sup>958</sup> the model reader ought at least to inform the standpoint of those wishing to interpret Scripture. The antiquity and occasional nature of the Corinthian correspondence indicate that it is closed, that is, it presumes a highly specific reader – a Pauline Christian in Roman

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<sup>957</sup> Ibid., pp.225-26.

<sup>958</sup> Umberto Eco's distinction between interpretation and use strikes me as a good one. One could *use* a biblical verse as a title of a novel, but such use hardly constitutes *interpretation*. See Eco, 'Between Author And Text' in *Interpretation And Overinterpretation*, ed. Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 67-88, p.68.

Corinth. This is not to say that, as *Scripture*, it does not invite ‘completion in the lives’<sup>959</sup> of other readers, only that this invitation is analytic of its reception into the canon not its characteristics as *text*. This picture is complicated by the fact that Pauline gender discourse would have been open to a less specific readership – it has become closed because of the differences that have since opened up between the ancient gender discourses encoded in the text and those of its current readers.

A comparison of the differences between Pauline gender discourse and modern discourses exposed four areas of tension. First, although ancient and modern gender discourses have the same primary referents – human males and females – the secondary concepts they are associated with are very different indeed. However, these concepts and associations are by no means indecipherable. Second, some ancient notions relating to sex and gender are now *known* to be incorrect. The most obvious example in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is Paul’s (implied) notion of reproduction (1 Cor 11:12), but one could also point more generally to ancient beliefs regarding the rôle of the elements in constituting sexual differentiation. Third, Paul differs from moderns in his approach to ethical and moral reasoning. Whereas a characteristic feature of modern ethics has been the decline of a ‘Christianity-based teleology of the created world’,<sup>960</sup> Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 uses the biblical narrative to situate human gender teleologically and theologically. Fourth, ancient ontologies of gender performed particular aesthetic and ideological functions in reifying certain notions of gendered propriety. In the post-Cartesian world, in which gender is not inscribed upon the cosmos,<sup>961</sup> Pauline patterns of gender performance lack the same persuasive force.

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<sup>959</sup> Barton, ‘Interpretation As Performance’, p.237.

<sup>960</sup> Gadamer, ‘Ontological Problem Of Value’, p.58.

<sup>961</sup> Soleim, ‘I Doubt: I Am A Man’, p.140.

These four points of tension are sufficiently serious for the interpretative standpoint implied in the gender discourse of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 to be almost wholly inaccessible to present-day readers. That is to say, although it is possible to reconstruct the beliefs, competences and dispositions that this passage presumes, it is not plausible for current readers *as moderns* to attempt to replicate this standpoint comprehensively. This means that one cannot escape (initially) formulating the problem of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 in terms of a dichotomy between the kind of attention the passage invites and that which it is liable to get from current readers. This is analogous to the oft-cited ‘original meaning’/‘today’s meaning’ dichotomy.<sup>962</sup> In the first instance, to insist that the ‘original meaning’ of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is the ‘meaning for today’, or to put it differently that interpretative fidelity requires the replication of the author’s generative codes, is to condemn interpretation not only to anachronism but absurdity, since some of the generative codes of this text are known to be false. However, insisting that the passage therefore has *no* theologically serviceable meaning for today – that since the author’s generative codes cannot be replicated, the passage cannot be interpreted – is to call into question either the scriptural status of this passage or indeed the very notion of an authoritative text.

Both of these approaches to biblical interpretation respond to the ‘original meaning’/‘today’s meaning’ (generative/interpretative) dichotomy by simply identifying the present meaning of a text with its textual/original/authorial sense. By contrast, demythologisation, redemptive-movement, double-agency discourse and performance hermeneutics could be regarded as construing the problem dialectically, in that they attempt to anchor an interpretation in the text, whilst simultaneously distancing its range of meanings now from what it actually states. In short, they use

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<sup>962</sup> See further the critical comments in Barton, ‘Interpretation As Performance’, p.227.



Scripture to warrant their interpretative conclusions *indirectly*. David Kelsey observes this type of ambiguous relationship to the biblical text in his analysis of several different hermeneutical approaches. He writes:

In [such]...cases the theologian preserves some distance between scripture and his own theological proposals. The proposals are in some way *based on* scripture, but they are not direct restatements or 'translations' of what scripture says.<sup>963</sup>

This dynamic was evident in Bultmann's distinction between the *kerygma* and the discursive medium in Scripture. On the one hand, the *kerygma* is distinguished from the discursive medium as the principal subject matter of the text – its semiotic 'anchor'. On the other hand, the hermeneutical distance between Bultmann's interpretation of Scripture and the text's sense derives from his supposition that the original discursive medium is replaceable. For Webb, what anchors an interpretation in the text is the ethical trajectory he derives from the text itself. The space he makes between the text and his interpretation derives from the process of extrapolation, which extends this trajectory beyond its original context into the present. For Wolterstorff, interpretative distance derives from the notion of 'double-agency' by which the divine and human discourses of the text can be differentiated. As he notes, there is no formal connection that anchors the meaning of these discourses to one another, hence the problem of Scripture's 'wax nose'. Nevertheless, in practice Wolterstorff ordinarily proceeds as if there is such a connection, invoking divine discourse chiefly when there is a problem with the *prima facie* sense of the text. Performance hermeneutics anchors its theological and hermeneutical proposals in the 'patterns of human action'<sup>964</sup> enjoined and narrated by the text. This is *inter alia* an interpretative decision that certain 'forms of life' constitute the normative content of

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<sup>963</sup> Kelsey, *Uses Of Scripture*, p.191. Italics original.

<sup>964</sup> Lash, 'Performing The Scriptures', p.42.

Scripture and thus it simultaneously creates distance between other, more troublesome, features of the text and those judged to be theologically relevant.

In short: (i) Christians ought to make *something* of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.<sup>965</sup> (ii) What they make of it ought to be constrained in some way by its generative codes.<sup>966</sup> (iii) As an interpretative standpoint the generative codes of this text are, from the perspective of current readers, aberrant and implausible and, given the horizons of contemporary knowledge regarding biology and the cosmos, absurd.<sup>967</sup> However, if in (ii) ‘be constrained in some way by’ is taken to mean ‘very closely correlate to’ or ‘be identical with’ then (i) or (iii) must be taken to be false.<sup>968</sup> Since (i) is, to borrow David Kelsey’s<sup>969</sup> terminology ‘analytic’ to the concept Scripture and therefore ‘Christianly apt’, and (iii) has been demonstrated, it follows that it would be unjustified for Christians to suppose that in (ii) ‘be constrained in some way by’ means ‘be identical with’. Instead, a weaker notion of interpretative constraint is implied – one that anchors Christian interpretative proposals regarding 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, whilst simultaneously distancing them from the dangers of theological and interpretative absurdity. As our discussion has shown,<sup>970</sup> this inevitably takes a number of forms of which none of the examples examined above is entirely successful in addressing the specific problems of our passage. It is necessary therefore to *attempt* to find a way of approaching the passage commensurate to the problems it presents, and it is to this task that I now turn in the concluding chapter.

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<sup>965</sup> From the concept of Scripture.

<sup>966</sup> From the concept of Scripture and from Eco’s distinction between interpretation and use.

<sup>967</sup> From 6.3.1-6.3.4 above.

<sup>968</sup> As in 6.41 and 6.42 above.

<sup>969</sup> Kelsey, *Uses Of Scripture*, p.97,192.

<sup>970</sup> See 6.4.3-6.4.6 above.

## 7. CONCLUSION

### 7.1 Introduction

#### 7.1.1 The Argument Of This Thesis

In this thesis, I consider some of the questions posed by the conduct of the evangelical headship dispute regarding gender roles in the family and Church. Chapter 2 examines the factors that occasioned the dispute and follows this examination with an overview of the various strands of the controversy. In chapter 3, I examine in more detail the argument that, on the basis of 1 Corinthians 11:3, gendered subordination entails some form of subordination within the Trinity and *vice versa*. Paying particular attention to the epistemological premises of this argument, I suggest that this 'Gender and Trinity' debate assumes a stance at odds with the eschatological focus of Paul's theological epistemology.

Chapters 4 and 5 address the question of what the relationship between God and gender might be in 1 Corinthians. I argue that Paul situates some of the ideals of the Graeco-Roman view of the universe into a cosmological perspective that is fundamentally shaped along eschatological lines. The Church is the site within the present aeon that is capable of being ordered appropriately vis-à-vis God. This serves as a suitable context into which the notions of sexual differentiation underlying the argument of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 can be incorporated. Paul conceptualises the metaphysics of sexual differentiation in similar terms to many of his contemporaries, but he additionally regards the sexes as being constituted vis-à-vis one another as microcosms of God and Christ vis-à-vis the cosmos. Within the cosmic-eschatological boundaries of the Church, the correct ordering of male-female relationships is possible and this is why Paul is preoccupied with the veil as a symbol.

In chapter 6, I turn to the question of how to interpret Paul's theological understanding of gender in the present. This question is complicated by two sets of difficulties – problems of interpreting ancient texts, and problems of interpreting ancient models of gender. As *text*, this passage presumes a highly specific readership – Pauline Christians in 1<sup>st</sup> century Roman Corinth; as *gender discourse* and as *argument*, the view of the world it encodes is fundamentally different from, and at times incommensurate with, present-day understandings of biology, the cosmos and ethical methodology. One may bring several interpretative strategies to bear upon this problem, but none of those I examine is entirely successful in resolving the hermeneutical tension that this text's status as Scripture generates.

### 7.1.2 The Argument Of This Chapter

At the end of chapter 6, I identify the principal hermeneutical obstacle to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. The status of this text as *Scripture* requires Christians to formulate some way of engaging constructively with it that is anchored to the generative codes of the text itself. If, however, I am correct in my exegesis, the generative codes of this particular passage cannot be adopted in the light of current knowledge. Logically, this is to call into question either the text's status or the type of constraint it ought to exercise over Christian interpretative activity. It follows therefore that those who continue to regard this text as Scripture are obliged to seek some form of interpretative anchorage point *in the text* that does not entail one to adopt all of Paul's cosmological or metaphysical positions. In short, this is to entail some type of belief that, whether or not Paul was aware of this, the argument of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 actually says more than he meant it to say. It is the purpose of this final chapter to discuss how one might begin to address this.

## 7.2 Towards A Theological Hermeneutic

It is important to recognise at the outset that this problem is not premised upon any *particular* model of Scripture or of its authority. This is not to say that I do not have definite views on these matters; it is simply to observe that the questions of where Scripture's authority resides and what its epistemic status might be are secondary to the fact that, for those who continue to regard this collection of materials as Scripture, the text must be understood as bearing *some* authority *somewhere*. From this, the problems and questions I have raised logically follow, since this authority must be brought to bear upon theological proposals *somehow*.<sup>971</sup> I am, of course, not denying that Christians with definite views regarding Scripture tend to assume interpretative methods commensurate with their particular view of the text. One need only consider the logical relationship between the grammatical-historical method of interpretation in conservative Protestantism and *sola scriptura*, which turns ultimately upon the rejection of the Magisterium.

Nevertheless, I do not think that the question I pose here is unique to post-Enlightenment Western Protestant forms of Christianity (e.g. Liberals, Evangelicals), even though as my analysis indicates, and as Andrew Louth elsewhere correctly observes,<sup>972</sup> this tension has been most keenly felt by those interpretative traditions most influenced by *sola scriptura* on the one hand and historical-criticism on the other. Indeed, analogous concerns regarding the biblical text are equally, though differently, expressed by Patristic interpreters. Origen's (*De Prin.* IV.i.15-16) concern regarding the anthropomorphism of certain biblical narratives illustrates this point well, as do Augustine's (*Conf.* III.v.9; *Ep.* CXXXVII.18) comments upon what

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<sup>971</sup> See Kelsey, *Uses Of Scripture*, p.191.

<sup>972</sup> Louth, *Discerning The Mystery: An Essay On The Nature Of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), see esp. the discussion on p.99ff. See also Steinmetz, 'The Superiority Of Pre-Critical Exegesis', *Theology Today* 37:1 (1980), 27-38.

he regards as the ‘unworthy’ rhetorical style of the Scriptures. The strength and elegance of both Augustine’s and Origen’s proposed solutions consists in the way in which these imperfections are transformed into hermeneutical opportunities. For Origen, absurdities in the literal sense of Scripture are enigmas placed there by God for the benefit of the ‘skilful and inquisitive’ reader, who can attempt to discover therein a higher meaning that is ‘worthy of God’ (*De Prin.* IV.i.15).<sup>973</sup> For Augustine, the imperfect style of Scripture constitutes the preparatory discipline of the text; ‘the condescension of its style’ (*Ep.* CXXXVII.18) invites even uneducated Christians to engage with it, whilst the ignobility of this condescension demands that the sophisticated reader ‘bend [his or her] neck to follow its steps’ (*Conf.* III.v.9).

Despite the merits of strength and elegance in these proposals, it seems to me that the allegorical method, and in particular as it appears in Origen, fails to address the question of interpretative constraint in relation to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. I have argued that unless one’s theological proposals are somehow anchored to the generative codes of the biblical text then it is difficult to see how one can regard a proposal as being ‘warranted’. One can, frankly, conceive of a good number of ideas ‘worthy of God’, but it would be arbitrary to bring every single one of them to bear upon 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.<sup>974</sup> This is not to comment upon the suitability of the allegorical method *per se*; indeed, it seems to me that the generative codes in certain biblical forms (e.g. parables, psalms, tales, aetiologies) invite precisely this kind of open-ended creative readerly engagement. However, this cannot apply to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, which, as a pastoral-theological argument, presumes a more interpretatively closed readerly engagement. Whilst this would be no obstacle to

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<sup>973</sup> See further Bostock, ‘Allegory And The Interpretation Of The Bible In Origen’, *LitTh* 1:1 (1987), 39-53. This layered understanding of textual meaning was characteristic of longstanding Alexandrian exegetical tendencies. Cf. Philo, *Spec. Leg.* I.200.

<sup>974</sup> See section 6.4.5 on the problem of Scripture’s ‘wax nose’.

Origen, for whom all of Scripture had an allegorical sense, it does not solve the problem I have posed.

The use of non-literal exegesis to dissociate *authority* from *argument* in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is by no means the only response available. Since this entire discussion is premised upon the supposition that my understanding of Paul's argument is correct, the rejection of my exegetical conclusions will appear to be the most obvious course of action for Christians who posit a very close correlation between the divine and human agencies in inspiration (e.g. evangelicals). However, since I regard my exegesis as warranted, I regard such a move as exegetically irresponsible. What is more, to reject an unpalatable exegesis of a biblical text as invalid because it does not validate a theologically pre-determined set of interpretative outcomes is a subtle form of interpretative narcissism. It is to say 'we cannot believe X, therefore God, and thus Paul cannot possibly have said X'.<sup>975</sup> Although this is a logical stance, it is arbitrary – even more so than the stance adopted by Origen.

In response to this discussion, and that of the preceding chapter,<sup>976</sup> it is fair to state that there can be no royal road to an interpretation of this text. All of the stances I have examined thus far either short-circuit the interpretative process or arrive at an approach to this passage that makes poor sense of it as an argument. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 cannot be transposed into a Modern worldview, because Moderns, frankly, lack a coherent gender discourse into which to transpose it; one cannot easily extrapolate from its ethical content into the present because of the interdependence of its imperatives and its theology; and one cannot posit a complete illocutionary rupture between Paul's argument and what God might say by means of it without reducing Scripture to a 'wax nose'.

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<sup>975</sup> I make a point similar to this in 6.4.5 above regarding Brevard Childs.

<sup>976</sup> See section 6.4.1-6.4.6.

This assessment of the problem seems to place present-day Christian interpreters of Scripture in a somewhat analogous situation to that in which Coleridge's Ancient Mariner found himself. In his poem '*The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere*', Coleridge tells the tale of how, deep into the Southern Ocean, a ship is befriended by an albatross, which, at the end of *Part I* of the poem, one of the crew shoots and kills. Pursued by the vengeful patron spirit of the albatross, disaster strikes the ship and as penance for destroying something so numinous, the guilty mariner is first compelled to bear the albatross around his neck,<sup>977</sup> and then later to walk the Earth telling his tale. At one level, this poem serves as a particularly apt extended metaphor for the hermeneutical tension I describe. As *Moderns*, present-day Christians are inescapably implicated in a worldview that 'took its cross-bow' to Paul's cosmology, and particularly his sexual metaphysic; as *Christians*, it is their concomitant fate to bear this piece of Scripture and all of its difficult discourses around with them interpretatively.

However, to be more accurate, if certain of Paul's statements do not genuinely correspond to the actual way in which the world and human beings are constituted, then this is hardly the result of either Modernity or my argument. It is not that they have *ceased* to correspond to the actual constitution of humanity and the cosmos – it is that they *never* corresponded to it. This is not to judge Paul anachronistically for being unaware of that which he could not have known, any more than it is to hold present Christian interpreters to account for being unaware of the knowledge of

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<sup>977</sup> See Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere (1798)' in *The Complete Poems*, ed. Keach (London: Penguin, 1997), 147-66, Ln.139-42.

Ah! well a-day! what evil looks  
Had I from old and young!  
Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.



subsequent epochs.<sup>978</sup> It is merely to observe that in terms of a realistic assessment of the scale of the difficulties, it is not necessary for Christians to adopt the logically contradictory stance that *God's* view of human sexual differentiation ever entailed mistaken beliefs (e.g. that men were the sole material agents in human reproduction, 1 Cor 11:12). Christians are not required in this instance to do apologetics, but hermeneutics, and as such, although they have not shot this particular albatross down, they must wear it anyway.

In the light of this I want to suggest that wearing the albatross entails, in the first instance, a hermeneutical practice of patience. This, of course, is to beg the perfectly reasonable rejoinder '*is 2000 years of patience long enough?*'<sup>979</sup> However, I am not advocating a process of 'wait and see'; I am suggesting that (i) this is one of the few places left to go for those who elect to remain within the discipline of the text, and (ii) it is in any case a potentially theologically productive place in which to be situated. In order to support this contention, I want to present two theoretical insights, one taken from an essay by Rowan Williams<sup>980</sup> and the other from Umberto Eco.<sup>981</sup>

### 7.2.1 Rowan Williams: Taking Time

In his essay '*The Literal Sense Of Scripture*',<sup>982</sup> Williams connects the 'literal sense' of a biblical text to a reading approach he describes as a 'diachronic reading',<sup>983</sup> although by diachronic he refers not to reading across times but to the temporal nature of reading activity *per se*. Texts are not accessed at once; the arrangement of the

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<sup>978</sup> See further Bultmann, 'New Testament And Mythology', p.1ff.

<sup>979</sup> This is one of the questions posed to me by my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Barton.

<sup>980</sup> Williams, 'Literal Sense'.

<sup>981</sup> Eco, 'On The Possibility Of Generating Aesthetic Messages In An Edenic Language' in *The Role Of The Reader*, ed. Seboek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 90-106.

<sup>982</sup> With thanks to Dr. Stephen Barton, who brought this essay to my attention.

<sup>983</sup> Williams, 'Literal Sense', p.122.

materials of the text shapes the reader's experience over time, simply by virtue of the fact that one piece must be read after another. Williams makes several comments in relation to this observation, the principal one being that one ought to avoid what he terms methods that bring 'premature unities and harmonies'.<sup>984</sup> By this, he has in mind non-literal readings that treat the content of the text as a series of abstract semiotic relations. Williams argues on this basis that careful attention to the narrative or 'dramatic' sequence of a text is an important hermeneutical discipline, which is applicable even to theological argumentation. This is particularly pertinent to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.<sup>985</sup> As I noted in chapter 5, Paul's repeated sequence of addressing males and then on this basis generalising to females (e.g. 1 Cor 11:4-5) is central to his rhetoric; the argument would be quite different if one read the statements in a different temporal sequence. To express this in analytic terms, many arguments are not commutative – one has to read them in a particular direction.

Perhaps the most significant implication Williams draws on the basis of his interpretative observations relates to the way in which his notion of readerly temporality expands to become the central motif of his phenomenology. The time spent in the discipline of attending to a text, a person or an artefact is that which makes possible the revelation and understanding of the irreducible complexity that constitutes its interior existence. He writes:

To speak of the 'inner life' of a product or a person is to presuppose its capacity to make us 'take time' with it or them; otherwise we are likely to fall captive to the mythology of an essential core of truth from which accidental material and external forms may be stripped away.<sup>986</sup>

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<sup>984</sup> Ibid., p.123.

<sup>985</sup> Ibid., p.125.

<sup>986</sup> Ibid., p.129.

Elements of this hermeneutical approach are useful for my purposes. On the one hand, Williams' focus upon patience facilitates resistance to co-option into the process of manufacturing premature and fictional resolutions to situations of hermeneutical tension. On the other hand, his proposal also retains the notion that there is nevertheless an 'interiority' to biblical texts, with one of the aims of interpretation being to make known its qualities somehow. However, Williams gives little practical advice regarding the question of how one might anchor one's theological proposals to this interiority, still less any real consideration of the problem of the generative codes of a text such as 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Partly, I suspect that Williams would not phrase the problem in this manner, since the terminology of textual structures, generative codes and discursive patterns is indebted to a structuralist and poststructuralist mode of textual analysis that he dismisses as idealist and insufficiently temporal.<sup>987</sup> However, whilst this characterisation is broadly correct, the essay by Umberto Eco offers a useful perspective on the way in which ruptures in a text may in fact serve to generate, indeed proliferate, aesthetic and symbolic meanings. What is interesting about this particular proposal is that contrary to Williams' typology of diachronic and synchronic approaches, Eco describes this process as a function of the passage of time.<sup>988</sup>

### **7.2.2 Umberto Eco: Creative Tensions In An 'Ideal' Language**

In his essay *'On The Possibility Of Generating Aesthetic Messages In An Edenic Language'*, Umberto Eco investigates an intriguing thought experiment that he formulates upon the postulation of an ideal imaginary primordial language. The notion of a perfect or Edenic language has fascinated Eco for some time, especially

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<sup>987</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p.125.

<sup>988</sup> Eco, *'On The Possibility'*, p.103.

insofar as it has been a historical preoccupation in European thought.<sup>989</sup> His purpose here is to investigate the way in which aesthetic uses of language invite readers to participate in the process of generating meaning from the message. One of the additional outcomes of his study is to illuminate the way in which ruptures or instabilities in a symbolic system constitute one of the means by which the system proliferates. The language Eco postulates here is ideal only insofar as it is in a state of equilibrium. It is essentially a very limited series of semantic units that exist as binary pairs and express basic oppositions such as 'yes/no', 'good/not good' and other such qualities that are needed to articulate the experiences of Adam and Eve in the garden story.<sup>990</sup> Additionally these semantic units exist in connotative relationship with one another such that a stable homology is formed with the positive terms (yes, good etc.) on one side and the negative (no, not good etc.) on the other.<sup>991</sup>

What interests me about Eco's thought experiment is the way in which he describes the prohibition to eat the fruit as a rupture in the connotative associations that constitute the homologous structure of the language.<sup>992</sup> For Eco, the fruit is 'red' as opposed to 'blue' and thus is associated with 'edible', 'good' and so on. Consequently, the prohibition against eating it introduces a contradiction between what it connotes and what is denoted of it. This constitutes the prohibition itself as a fundamental form of aesthetic message. Eco speculates upon the ways in which over time this invites the playful engagement of Adam and Eve, thereby causing the language to proliferate *iteratively* beyond its initial boundaries. The process begins with the creation of the first metaphor. In order to express the contradiction between

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<sup>989</sup> See further Eco, *The Search For The Perfect Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), see esp. p.74.

<sup>990</sup> N.b. It should be remembered that Eco's essay is not an exegesis of the Fall narrative, it is a linguistic 'thought experiment'.

<sup>991</sup> Eco, 'On The Possibility', pp.91-92.

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*, p.95.

the literal 'redness' of the fruit and the idea of 'blueness' that its prohibited status connotes, the combination metaphor 'redblue' is created by simple concatenation.<sup>993</sup>

Bearing the contradiction within itself, this word evokes more aesthetic interest and provokes further experimentation with verbal and visual ways of expressing the same idea, and this exposes the rules of the language system itself. The result is a proliferation of new words, metaphors and symbolic expressions. Eco writes:

The experience is assigned to the expanding language system by way of semiotic judgements. His language is beginning to swell in his hands, and his whole world is growing fuller...the contradictions force him to reenvision the form which he assigns to the world, while...they induce him to exploit them for their potential poetic effects.<sup>994</sup>

The relevance of Eco's imaginary situation lies in the way in which it offers some conceptual leverage over the central question of this chapter, namely whether it offers a suitable analogy for the way in which a theological proposal might be generated by 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 without entailing that it be limited to it. It seems to me that this notion of language as a proliferating system is fundamentally sound, and that if a generative rupture could be found within the discourses of the text itself, then this might potentially serve as a useful anchorage point for a proposal that ultimately allows one to 'reenvision the form which [Paul] assigns to the world'.<sup>995</sup> Indeed, this idea of a semiotic proliferation that is open to that which is beyond itself seems to me to be intrinsic to the generation of Christian doctrine, and most characteristic of the notion *mystery* and the concomitant virtues of faith, hope and love. Take, for example, the central, theologically-generative mysteries of Christian theology – God as triune (*lit.* 'three-one'), Christ as *theanthropos* (*lit.* 'God-man'). It is perhaps no coincidence that these are expressed as paradoxical concatenations of

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<sup>993</sup> Ibid., p.97.

<sup>994</sup> Ibid., p.103.

<sup>995</sup> Ibid.

apparent incommensurables (cf. Eco's 'redblue' metaphor), still less of a coincidence that certain Patristic authors should comment upon the proliferating effect of these notions upon language and doctrine – 'we must strain the poor resources of our language to express thoughts too great for words' (Hilary, *Trin.* II.2).<sup>996</sup> This is theology as interpretative 'play'.<sup>997</sup>

### 7.3 Towards A Reading Of The Text

None of this is to suggest that the preceding observations constitute the formulation of a fully-fledged hermeneutical theory, since considerations of space, and somewhat ironically also *time*, place this task well beyond the scope of the thesis. Rather, it is to suggest that (i) there is sufficient reason to hope that careful attention to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 will expose some element of the argument that can nevertheless be theologically productive<sup>998</sup> and (ii) to suggest one particular avenue of investigation. I think that the best way of presenting my reading is to narrate some of the ways in which I have attempted to engage with this text. I use the term narrate intentionally, since as both Williams and Eco acknowledge, reading *with the text* is an iterative, *viz.* temporal, process, which is, in the last analysis, open-ended.<sup>999</sup>

#### 7.3.1 Engaging The Argument

As I have already noted, the argument in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 presents a sequential progression from a discussion of attire as a symbolic marker of honour and shame

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<sup>996</sup> See section 3.3.2.

<sup>997</sup> See further Barton, 'Interpretation As Performance', p.232.

<sup>998</sup> This resembles the relationship that Daniel Treier suggests the *sensus literalis* has with the Medieval quadrilateral. See Treier, 'The Superiority Of Pre-Critical Exegesis: Sic Et Non', *TrinJ* 24:1 (2003), 77-103, pp.80-81.

<sup>999</sup> Williams, 'Literal Sense', p.122. Although Williams comments here on reading T.S. Eliot, the same iterative reappraisal of previous readings of the text applies, in my view, to our passage.

(vv.4-6), to attire as grounded in created differences between males and females (vv.7-12). The order of the topical progression through the passage, together with the fact that the conclusion of each section addresses the question of female attire (v.6,10,15), suggests a logical sequence in which the former discussion of social codes (vv.4-6) is premised upon the latter discussion of creation (vv.7-12). Female attire is a marker of male honour (vv.4-6), and it is warranted by a metaphysic of sexual difference (vv.7-12). This illustrates its function as a religious symbol. As Clifford Geertz observes, 'religious symbols [in this case female veiling] formulate a basic congruence between a particular style of life [here, ancient Mediterranean propriety codes] and a specific...metaphysic [Paul's ἐκ, δι'α language], and in so doing sustain each with the borrowed authority of the other'.<sup>1000</sup> However, in this case, the sustaining is unidirectional; Paul's comments regarding veiling are authorised by a view of the world as created by God in the Genesis 1 and 2 creation narratives (1 Cor 11:7-9), which structurally incorporates certain gendered and causal interrelationships (v.12).

Although the gendered and causal interrelationships Paul brings to bear upon the question of attire suppose that woman is metaphysically contingent upon man (vv.8-9), the sexes are nevertheless bound together in a reproductive mutual necessity that (vv.11-12) instantiates and illustrates the unity and differentiation of the agencies of God and Christ in cosmogenesis and redemption. As such, although Paul's argument begins by positing a hierarchical set of linear correspondences between God→Christ→Man→Woman (v.3), it takes its readers to a more nuanced, yet still hierarchical, position in which man and woman function as microcosms of God and Christ. This, in fact, is commensurate with Paul's eschatological cosmology, in which

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<sup>1000</sup> See Geertz, 'Religion', p.62.

the Church circumscribes that part of the cosmos that can appropriately order itself back towards God.<sup>1001</sup> Consequently, female veiling signifies more than woman's metaphysical contingency upon man; the imperative that she exercise (her own) power over her head (v.10) is her instruction to participate in this ordering process. Insofar as ancient models of gender typically posit women as fluid, unbounded and in need of external, viz. male, control, this instruction, in its theological context, constitutes an implied stretching of the category 'woman'. The veil is paradoxically a sign that a Christian woman, whilst metaphysically subordinate, is in the process of being eschatologically re-ordered or transformed. She, who was once in need of control, now has σωφροσύνη like a man.<sup>1002</sup>

### 7.3.2 Reflection Upon An Implicit Structure

One of the questions that I have brought to bear upon Paul's argument during the process of engaging with it over time is the question of how his statements, such as those comprising the sexual metaphysic of 1 Corinthians 11:7-12, are affected by his eschatological epistemology? In chapter 3 of this thesis,<sup>1003</sup> I argued that Paul understands God to be an eschatological mystery; as such, he regards Christians, including himself, as being able to know only in a manner commensurate with a Spirit-filled-yet-pre-glorified constitution. Anything more than a knowing 'in part' (1 Cor 13:9) is deferred until the *visio Dei*, the constitutive precondition of which is final transformation at the resurrection. However, this is to beg the question of the epistemic status of Paul's own statements; does he extend his own knowing 'in part' to the materials that he writes, including the materials of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16? Does

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<sup>1001</sup> See ch.4, and section 5.4.2.

<sup>1002</sup> See Anne Carson on women and σωφροσύνη at various points in Carson, 'In Her Place'.

<sup>1003</sup> Cf. section 3.4.



this in any event bear upon the actual epistemic status of these texts? I think that it does, but since this is to speculate upon the formulation of a doctrine of revelation and Scripture, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to address systematically.

However, what I do want to suggest here is that Paul's notion of eschatological mystery bears upon his description of males and females in 1 Corinthians 11:7-12, and especially upon the notion of mutual dependence in reproduction (v.12) being ἐν κυρίῳ ('in the Lord' v.11). With respect to this description, I argue above<sup>1004</sup> that Paul uses reproduction neither as an analogy for nor as an illustration of life 'in the Lord' (*viz.* the Church); given his cosmological framework,<sup>1005</sup> he appears to regard reproduction as something which actually *is* in the Lord – a participatory correspondence with the creative agencies of God and Christ. However, Paul carefully situates sex and gender differences in a theological framework that blends together both creation and eschatology, since Paul's two cosmological reference points are the κόσμος-as-it-was-originally and the κόσμος-as-it-will-be.<sup>1006</sup> This appears in my view also to be highly significant, since it suggests that, for Paul, human reproduction had an 'in the Lord-ness' to it from the beginning, even before the Lord was revealed in the cross (1 Cor 2:1,7). This seems effectively to constitute human reproduction, something inherently bodily, as an eschatological sign – a proleptic announcement. It is not very far from this to Ephesians 5:31-2, which refers to Genesis 2:24 ('the two shall become one flesh') as a 'great mystery' that designates Christ and the Church.<sup>1007</sup>

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<sup>1004</sup> Section 5.4.2.

<sup>1005</sup> Cf. ch.4.

<sup>1006</sup> See section 4.4.1.

<sup>1007</sup> The reference point here is different – Christ and the Church, not God and Christ – but a similar idea of human bodies as eschatological mysteries is implied.

### 7.3.3 Potential Proliferations

Although the sexual metaphysic by means of which Paul expresses all of this remains a major difficulty for interpreters of this text, I think nevertheless that the notion of one's body constituting an eschatological sign potentially offers a fruitful line of theological discussion that emerges out of the argument of this passage. It seems to me that a similar issue is raised by the notion of the 'image and glory of God' (1 Cor 11:7). If one accepts the extent to which Paul eschatologically defers the knowledge of God in 1 Corinthians, then this introduces a kind of *aporia* into the notion of human beings (for Paul, males) as 'image'. This is both to come up against and also to require what Sarah Coakley terms 'an eschatological horizon which will give mortal flesh final significance'.<sup>1008</sup> To be image of God (v.7), or an eschatological sign of Christ (v.12) is, by Paul's own epistemology, to have one's final significance deferred, but not eternally so; it is to say, with Calvin (*Institutes* I.i.1-2), that true knowledge of self requires knowledge of God, but it is also to defer unmediated knowledge of God, and thus unmediated knowledge of self, to an eschatological limit point. It is also to identify one's self with one's body.

That the eschatological epistemic *aporia* associated with the notion of human beings as bodily signs of God should be identified with sex and gender is not surprising. However, it suggests that all descriptions of the relationship between human gender and God (including Paul's own description) are rendered provisional and open to reevaluation. This has two effects: (i) The first is to imply that Paul's sexual metaphysic is itself open to reevaluation. This is good news, since this metaphysic is one of the chief hermeneutical problems associated with this text. (ii) The second effect is to suggest that although constituted by the notion of human

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<sup>1008</sup> Coakley, 'The Eschatological Body: Gender Transformation And God' in *Powers And Submissions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 153-67, p.166.

beings as signs of God, this argument implies that sex and gender difference are liable to exceed any adequate explanation. All one can do is apply the same process of patient attendance one applies to the biblical text. This stance is not far from Kjell Soleim's understanding of gender difference as 'the crack that constitutes humans as humans', which I discussed in the preceding chapter.<sup>1009</sup> On this basis, the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 has hardly been made any easier, since it effectively problematises gender discourses *per se*. Nevertheless, it also opens up discussions of human sexuality to theological considerations of questions such as how to understand desire, the significance of love, and the nature of eschatological transformation – all of which have deep resonances in 1 Corinthians. This, however, is to raise questions, the ramifications and implications of which I look forward to exploring in a subsequent publication.

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<sup>1009</sup> Soleim, 'I Doubt: I Am A Man', p.142. See section 6.4.3.

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