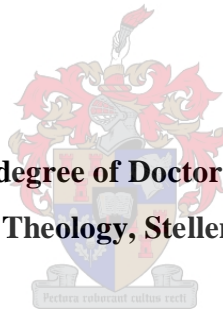


Church and Culture?
Exploring the reception of women's ministries in the Reformed Church in
Zambia in view of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

By
Jackson Phiri

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Supervisor: Prof. Elna Mouton

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Declaration

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Abstract

The Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) was established in 1899 through the missionary work of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Orange Free State in South Africa. After its establishment, the church maintained its ministries through the leadership of male deacons, elders and ministers/reverends who served in all the (official) ministries of the church. This was mainly because of how the Bible was understood and interpreted (literally). In the process, the socio-cultural context of the Bible was mostly disregarded. One example of such a one-sided history of interpretation in the RCZ is that of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, according to which women were not allowed to take up leadership roles in the church. However, things changed when the Synod of the RCZ took a decision (during its 1989, 1998 and 2000 synod meetings) to allow women into all the ministries of the church – as deaconesses, elders and reverends. This went along with serious challenges to understanding the Bible in new ways. A major implication was that biblical texts were now to be read from different perspectives, which included taking into account the socio-cultural world behind these texts. This inevitably led to questions regarding the authority of the Bible.

This research explores the RCZ general membership's reception of the Synod's decision, in view of the members' understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. Through a multidimensional analysis of the text, the study argues that the ban on women speaking in church in 14:34 has to be understood primarily within the Greco-Roman socio-cultural and political contexts as well as the value systems of the first-century Mediterranean world. It concludes by saying that Paul was addressing a context-specific issue in the Corinthian faith community which prevailed at the time, and that it was not meant to serve as a general ban on all subsequent generations of women in every time and place.

The challenge of interpreting the Bible (specifically with regard to women's leadership in the RCZ) is, however, not only about reading the *Bible* in context, but also about accounting for the *contexts* within which the Bible has been and is still being received. In the case of the RCZ, the challenge concerns how (patriarchal) indigenous cultural traditions and values have been upheld for a long time, thereby oppressing and marginalising women as baptised members of the church, created

equally and affirmed by God. While the RCZ is challenged to appreciate these traditions and values, it is called to bring its entire life, including its culture, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In this way, cultural traditions and values are profoundly challenged to be liberated, healed and transformed by Christ, and should not be allowed to dictate or dominate the ethos of a Christian community.

In the end, the study challenges the RCZ to account for, and take responsibility for, their interpretation of this text when appropriating it in today's context. In the final analysis, it seems that 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 may be seen as a text of terror unless one applies a multidimensional exegetical reading to it and identifies the aspects that are socio-culturally defined. Once these aspects have been identified, this text can be read as a text that radically calls Christian believers, men and women, to the unity of the body of Christ while recognising that they are equally gifted and empowered to carry out all the ministries of the church – for the purpose of its edification, strengthening and growth as the *ekklesia* of God in the world.

Opsomming

Die Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) is in 1899 deur sendelinge van die Nederduits-Gereformeerde Kerk in die Oranje Vrystaat in Suid-Afrika begin. Sedert die ontstaan van die RCZ is al die (amptelike) bedieninge van dié kerk deur die leierskap van manlike diakens, ouderlinge en predikante in stand gehou. Hierdie praktyk het hoofsaaklik ontwikkel op grond van ‘n letterlike verstaan van die Bybel met betrekking tot die posisie van vroue. Die sosio-kulturele konteks van die Bybel is tydens die interpretasie-geskiedenis daarvan meestal buite rekening gelaat. Een voorbeeld van so ‘n eensydige verstaan is 1 Korintiërs 14:26-40, waarvolgens sommige gemeen het vroue nie toegelaat is om leiersrolle in die kerk te beklee nie. Vir die Sinode van die RCZ het hierdie praktyk egter verander toe ‘n besluit (tydens sinodale vergaderings in 1989, 1998 en 2000) geneem is om vroue tot alle bedieninge van die kerk toe te laat – as diakens, ouderlinge én predikante. Hierdie besluit het gepaard gegaan met die enorme uitdaging om die Bybel op nuwe maniere te verstaan. ‘n Belangrike implikasie was dat die Bybel nou uit ánder perspektiewe gelees moes word, wat onder andere beteken het dat die sosio-kulturele wêreld agter die tekste in ag geneem moes word. Dit het onvermydelik tot vrae oor die gesag van die Bybel gelei.

Hierdie studie verken die ontvangs (resepsie) van bogenoemde besluit van die RCZ-Sinode deur lidmate van die RCZ, in die lig van hulle verstaan van 1 Korintiërs 14:26-40. Deur middel van ‘n meerdimensionele benadering word geargumenteer dat dié teks primêr binne die Grieks-Romeinse sosio-kulturele en politieke konteks en waarde-sisteme van die eerste-eeuse Mediterreense wêreld verstaan behoort te word. Dat vroue nie toegelaat is om in die openbare vergadering van die gelowiges in Korinte te praat nie, moet eerstens binne hierdie konteks verstaan word. Die proefskrif kom tot die slotsom dat Paulus hier ‘n konteks-spesifieke saak in die geloofsgemeenskap van Korinte aanspreek wat ten tye aandag gevra het, en dat dit nie bedoel was om as ‘n algemene verbod op die deelname van vroue in alle plekke en tye sedertdien te geld nie.

Die uitdaging om die Bybel (spesifiek met betrekking tot vroue-leierskap in die RCZ) te verstaan, gaan egter nie slegs daarvoor om die *Bybel* in konteks te lees nie, maar óók om die *kontekste* waarin dit verstaan is, en steeds verstaan word, te

verreken. In die geval van die RCZ, gaan dit veral oor hoe (patriargale) tradisies en waardes van die inheemse kultuur oor ‘n lang tyd gehandhaaf is, en oor hoe vroue wat as lidmate van die kerk gedoop en deur God as gelykwaardig geskep en bevestig is, daardeur onderdruk en gemarginaliseer is. Terwyl die RCZ enersyds uitgedaag word om hierdie tradisies en waardes te waardeer, word die kerk andersyds geroep om haar totale lewe – kultuur ingesluit – onder die heerskappy van Jesus Christus te stel. Op hierdie manier word kulturele tradisies en waardes fundamenteel uitgedaag om deur Christus bevry, heelgemaak en verander te word, en behoort dit nie toegelaat te word om die etos van ‘n Christen-gemeenskap voor te skryf of te oorheers nie.

Uiteindelik nooi en daag die studie die RCZ uit om verantwoording te doen van, en verantwoordelikheid te neem vir, hulle verstaan van hierdie teks wanneer dit as riglyn vir vandag se konteks gebruik word. In die finale instansie moet 1 Korintiërs 14:26-40 gelees word as ‘n teks wat Christengelowiges – mans sowel as vroue – radikaal oproep tot die eenheid van die liggaam van Christus terwyl hulle erken dat álmal op ‘n gelykwaardige manier toegerus en bekragtig word met die oog op ál die bedieninge van die kerk– met die doel om die kerk as *ekklēsia* van God in die wêreld op te bou, te versterk, en te laat groei.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved mother, Adaina Daka, for your quietness during all my years of study. You never complained that I was not taking care of you, instead you prayed for me so that I may succeed in what I was doing. The Congregation of Kabwe Main RCZ for your prayers and encouragements during the period of study. My children, truly God given, first you love the Lord, and secondly, you prayed for me for the success of this project, and you also made regular enquiries as to when I will be done. I am proud of you and you are always in my heart.

My heart's desire is for you to grow up fighting to get what you want in life, never to give up easily – and God, who gives generously, will always give you the desires of your heart. May you grow strong in your faith and in favour with the Lord to whom I give all the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

List of Acronyms

CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CCZ	Council of Churches in Zambia
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship in Zambia
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
LMS	London Missionary Society
NET	New English Translation
NIV	New International Version
RCZ	Reformed Church in Zambia
UCZ	United Church of Zambia
UPCSA	Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	World Council of Churches

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction and background

Since its inception, the church has been called to interpret texts in oral and written form. In the early church, the hermeneutical task was mainly that of men who communicated within predominantly patriarchal contexts (referring to the dominance of men over women) – both with regard to the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures from which these documents originated. This legacy has posed numerous challenges regarding the interpretation of biblical texts since then, also to churches of the twenty-first century.

Through the centuries, the interpretation of the Bible has mainly been under the control of men. A number of biblical texts have often been used out of context to justify and consolidate the oppression, marginalisation and subordination of women to lower their positions in church and society. Examples of such texts are 1 Timothy 2:8-15, 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 and Ephesians 5:22-33.

Added to these hermeneutical challenges is the understanding of “God” as a male deity, which has created and enhanced patriarchal authority and a culture of intolerance towards women. This image, which views God as a male being, has elevated male power, headship and superiority over women. This brings to mind Augustine’s view that “Man alone is the image of God and will be complete if only the woman is joined to him, otherwise woman on her own is not the image of God” (quoted by Mowrey, 1996:120).

Trapped in this web, the church has become accustomed to “traditional” methods of interpreting Scripture with a patriarchal authority attached to the process. This is evident in the one-sided way the church has been interpreting Scripture for generations. This means that certain exegetical perspectives that could help people understand the setting from which the biblical texts originated are left unconsidered, while the texts themselves are understood literally. Mostly no consideration is given to the historical situatedness of these texts in the exegetical methods applied. As a result, certain concerns of “others” (particularly women), whom the Bible affirms as being created, empowered and gifted by God, are ignored.

David Harris (2011:4), publisher and an editor of *Presbyterian Record* in Canada, testifies to the fact that throughout the history of humankind men have

dominated women in both the church and culture. Most often, women have been considered to be inferior to men. Harris's observation about patriarchy can be applied today to many churches in Zambia, where patriarchal structures allow women to be seen as second-class citizens.

After this brief introduction, I now turn to women's struggle for freedom, indicating how women have been oppressed and marginalised by men in different (African) societies, and in Zambia in particular.

1.1.1 Women's struggle for freedom

Nyambura Njoroge, a Kenyan scholar in liberation theology, speaks about the missing link in God's mission, which she interprets as the lack of affirming women as being fully human. In certain cases, women have been denied their full participation in the affairs of the church and society. This is often so when their voices and contributions are overlooked, silenced, devalued and not recognised as authentic and credible (Njoroge 2005:34).

To this day, Njoroge (2005:36-37) affirms, we have people who do not understand that women are equally endowed with a theological understanding and leadership qualities equal to those of men. She goes on to say that it is worse if those affected are black women. She adds that gender-based violence and injustice as a prolific source of misery, suffering and death are what have shaped the lives of many women all over the world. As such, the silence of the churches and communities with regard to any form of subordination and oppression of women is a major concern. Njoroge further acknowledges that women's voices are not heard; even when they speak, they are not heeded or taken seriously, and although women may be present at any forum, the men act as if the women are not visibly present.

In Zambia, it is mostly cultural practices and traditions that play a major role in subordinating women to lower ranks. These cultural practices and traditions are generally accepted as all of us come from and uphold a particular culture which identifies who we are in society. However, most – if not all – of these cultures and traditions do not affirm women as legitimate human beings. Yet it is a known fact that cultural practices and traditions within the realm of the Christian faith are supposed to affirm our equality before God, as all of us are equal in the eyes of the Almighty God. But instead, many cultural practices and traditions have contributed to the oppression and marginalisation of women and children in particular. Edwin Zulu, a Zambian

scholar who has observed Zambian cultural and traditional practices among the Chewa people and Ngoni people of the Eastern Province, states that these cultures and traditions are usually patrilineal (emphasising descent from the father's side), as well as patriarchal in nature (which emphasises dominance by men), while depicting women as inferior to men (Zulu, 2010:3). The Reformed Church in Zambia upheld such cultural and traditional practices for a long time, as women were marginalised and oppressed by being excluded from serving in the different ministries of the church, with certain biblical passages cited (uncritically) to justify such practices.

I will now explain the situation in the RCZ regarding women – from its establishment up to the time the church admitted women leaders into its ranks.

1.1.2 The situation of the Reformed Church in Zambia

The RCZ, one of the churches in Zambia with a large following, is an example of a religious institution that has taken over one hundred years to realise that it has excluded women from its leadership circle. Established in 1899, the governance of the church was initially administered by (male) missionaries, who perpetuated their own patriarchal culture in the Zambian church setting. This went on until 1966, when the autonomy of the RCZ was transferred to local leadership (Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1982:299-308). After this transition, the church was initially governed by indigenous (male) leaders, who likewise maintained their patriarchal culture and did not consider women's leadership. Silence continued to characterise issues concerning women's inclusion in the leadership circle of the church.

It was not until 1979 when members started to pose questions to Synod about when women were to be allowed in all ministries of the church. The issue was deliberated extensively during various Synod meetings. It was only in 1989 that Synod resolved to allow women to become deaconesses, and in 1998 to serve as elders in the church. In 2000 the church permitted women to serve as ministers. This completed a circle of the church allowing female leadership in all its formal structures. It thus took the church over a hundred years since its establishment in 1899 to reach this milestone. During those years, women in the RCZ only participated in informal ministries, which the church did not recognise and (fully) appreciate. These issues will be discussed in more detail in 2.4. The motivation for women to be allowed in all ministries of the church will be discussed in Chapter 3 (3.2.8).

For the first hundred years since its inception in 1899, the RCZ trained only male clergy to serve in the ministries of the Word and sacrament, while women were excluded – mainly because it was said that “the Bible does not allow women to preside over men.” This position neither accounted for the socio-cultural traditions within which such biblical utterances were embedded, nor for the cultural traditions and values of the RCZ interpreters of those texts. Moreover, the argument was strengthened by saying that women menstruate, making them unworthy (unclean) to serve Holy Communion. Biblical texts such as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 were cited to support these positions (Synod Report, 1979, 1981 and 1983).

In the year 2000, however, a breakthrough was achieved. During its regular Synod meeting, the RCZ took a bold step by allowing women to participate in all the ministries (offices) of the church, thus to become elders, deaconesses and ministers of the Word and sacrament. Since this decision was made, many women answered the call to serve in these ministries. Some have felt the call to become ministers and have been allowed to undergo training in order to enter into the ministry of the Word and sacrament, while others are already serving as ministers in various congregations throughout the country. By 2014 there were already fifteen female reverends serving in RCZ congregations (Synod Report 2014).

The rationale for this research project is the situation and condition in which these female clergy find themselves, namely as leaders in a male-dominated church. The current RCZ context still represents a male-dominated community where the Bible as the Word of God is upheld as a major source of authority for male dominance, through its patriarchal history and culturally accepted norms. Basic to these cultural norms is that men see themselves as superior to women and still hold a large share in leadership at congregational, presbytery and synodical levels, while women are still relegated to the side-lines.

In the past, a “traditional” (one-sided) approach to interpreting the Bible has mostly been used in the RCZ, one which does not account for the various facets of biblical texts. Moreover, issues of equality and dignity have in most instances been disregarded. One sad consequence of interpreting the Word of God in this manner is division amongst men and women in church and society, which hurts the subjects of such interpretations (cf. Mouton, 2002:12-13). This has left many to wonder whether God is on their side.

The question therefore that needs to be addressed here is: “Can the Bible (originating from patriarchal contexts) be interpreted in order to promote equality for all human beings, and if so, how?” 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is one of the biblical texts that the RCZ has been struggling to interpret in order to allow women to participate in all ministries of the church. This has become a crucial issue that needs to be critically analysed in order to reduce the gap in the leadership positions between women and men serving in ministries in the RCZ.

This need is confirmed by Laurenti Magesa (1977:218-219), who describes how the Bible is supposed to be understood in terms of bringing good news of freedom to all humanity, thus liberating people from whatever may inhibit them physically, morally and spiritually. The Bible is a book of good news, particularly for those suffering oppression – a scenario which is emphasised by the person of Jesus Christ, who is the true liberator.

I shall now explain what motivated me to undertake this study.

1.1.3 The researcher’s motivation

As a male member of the RCZ¹ I was brought up in the cultural and traditional setting of the church and am now serving in the RCZ as a minister of the Word and sacrament. During my ministry I witnessed many women endowed with various gifts that could have been utilised by the church in promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, cultural traditions and values excluded them from doing so because of their gender. The church could not (fully) make use of their skills and gifts as its culture and traditions did not allow for this, based on its (often one-sided, ahistorical) interpretation of the Bible. In particular, the verses by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, “that women should remain silent in the churches,” were used to justify its silencing of women’s voices. Women were only allowed to use their skills, leadership and administrative gifts through the Women’s Guild or Women’s Fellowship, as they are popularly known.

What has been witnessed, ironically, is that the Women’s Fellowship grew rapidly in number, surpassing that of the Men’s Fellowship, who regarded themselves as “custodians” of God’s Word. Large numbers of women in the women’s fellowships give evidence that women are well organised in the church.

¹ This is the church that carried out mission work in Zambia, entering the country through the Eastern province and settling at Magwero in 1899.

In an environment where the God of life and grace who empowers everyone has called them to be part of this ministry and has given them every gift that there is to be used within the church, could there be anything women can fail to do? The life of the church as God intends it to be is a life of witness to the world, which must be lived in full by all humanity (John 10:10). In my view, this is one aspect that is missing in the churches in Africa, specifically in Zambia, and more particularly the RCZ.

However, now that women have been admitted in the ministry to serve as elders, deaconesses and ministers of the Word and sacrament in the RCZ, very few opportunities, if any, are given to them to implement their leadership skills, and a number of challenges remain unresolved. For example, in certain congregations very few women are elected as elders, and those who have become ministers find it very difficult to be elected as part of the leadership in both the Presbytery and Synod executive committees. Worth noting is how God chooses to use God's instruments in creation to communicate God's message. Cultural traditions and gender considerations do not matter at all, for God has gifted both women and men in equally worthy ways. But the question is: where does the unequal treatment of men and women emanate from? This led me to search intently, with passion and much prayer, for answers.

What became clear to me was the powerful role that cultural traditions and values played (albeit unwittingly) – both with regard to the interpretation of biblical texts such as 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and Ephesians 5:22-33, as well as the contexts where those texts are received today. Yet, in the same Scripture, carrying similar authority, we read about Jesus who set all humanity free (Luke 4:18-19). When we further read Paul's letter to the Romans, particularly chapter 16:1-16, we recognise the role played by some women within the church and the services they rendered in the ministry. Paul called them his co-workers in the Lord. How, for instance, could women like Prisca (1 Cor 16:19) function as a co-worker in the church if women were not allowed to speak in the church (1 Cor 14:34-35)?

I was also struck by how our communities interpret crucial biblical texts (such as 1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:8-15). This is compounded further by the way we have come to understand God in masculine terms (without considering feminine terms). Moreover, cultural practices and traditions that have viewed women as second-class citizens contribute to an already regrettable situation.

According to the researcher, this is where the heart of the problem lies, namely in the relation between church and culture – this led him to investigate how this issue could be resolved. The (preliminary) answer came after a thorough reading of the exegetical and hermeneutical challenges raised by Patte (1995) and Mouton (2002), who propose a multidimensional approach to the interpretation of Scripture, with critical exegetical practice that results in the liberation of all people (including women).²

With this new insight, the researcher's aim is to make a contribution that may help to change the perception of women's ministries in the RCZ in the light of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. My hope is that this will help to alleviate the suffering of many women (inside and outside of the church) who themselves are not able to speak up in the Zambian context. This is because of, inter alia, the alarming amount of violence against women in Zambia. Such violence happens on a daily basis in the homes of both church members and in our communities at large. This provides a brief explanation of how this project was conceptualised.

In my view there is an intersection of how the Bible has been and is being interpreted, the choices made in the hermeneutical approach applied to the biblical texts, and cultural values and traditions, which undervalue the contributions women make to church and society. These aspects all intersect in depicting women as inferior to men. In addressing this it is anticipated that a more just and free society could be realised where both men and women shall live in mutual respect, harmony and dignity with one another.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to rethink and revisit our cultural and religious traditions that have been handed down to us by our forefathers, and which still promote and entrench male chauvinism. There is also an urgent need to revisit the way in which the Bible functions in its appeal to authority, both in reading and interpretation in our churches and communities at large. This is because women in the RCZ have often been discriminated against, faced with injustice, been violated, oppressed and deprived of power by the way in which the Bible has been read and used from the pulpit by most ministers, evangelists and elders (e.g. women were not to speak or preside over men, and therefore were not allowed to participate in church resolutions). This was because ministers/reverends, evangelists and those who were

² A multidimensional approach to Scripture explores a biblical text from a variety of (literary, socio-historical and theological) angles. I discuss this later in the chapter.

given the challenge of reading and interpreting the Bible through preaching, would choose to do so using an androcentric approach³ thereby adopting a one-sided view of interpretation, without taking into account other relevant aspects of a chosen text. For example, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 has often been cited as a text that bars women from presiding over men.

Moreover, wife battering and gender-based violence have become rampant in Christian communities and homes, just as in other parts of the world. This is taking place mostly because of the way we have upheld our cultural tenets and traditions, which certainly regard women as being inferior to men. There is, for instance, a Zambian Nsenga⁴ saying that goes, “If a woman is loved by her husband, she must accept to be beaten even when she has not wronged him, as this becomes a symbol of love”. Another saying is “*Mkazi ni tiyola*”, meaning a woman must always be on her knees as a form of obedience to her husband. In addition, an accepted notion is that a good wife should always subject herself to her husband’s needs in all matters at home as a form of discipline. This is so much part of traditional culture that it is what traditional marriage counsellors teach those about to enter into marriage.

The history of biblical interpretation⁵ has shown that most interpreters of biblical texts do not (necessarily) pay attention to critically analysing these texts in order to offer alternative voices (of affirmation or concern). Thus, Mouton (2011:288) states that churches have often become insensitive to issues/voices relating to forms of injustice, discrimination, marginalisation, abuse of power and violence, which have characterised our churches and communities.

Interaction with any biblical text typically involves both text and interpreter. When a reader engages a biblical text, he/she necessarily interacts with two worlds – the world of the text and that of the reader. This process is enabled by the invitation of the life-giving Spirit’s grace and gift to inhabit the “proposed world” of these texts (Ricoeur, 1975:29-35), on the one hand, and the faithful hermeneutical responses/choices of interpretive communities and individuals, on the other hand. Thus, as we as twenty-first-century readers/audiences begin to dialogue with these ancient texts, the Spirit enables us to understand them (be it partially and provisionally) in our own world, through our hermeneutical theories (Mouton, 2002:17-19). Alluding to the

³ This is where masculinity becomes the central focus in viewing a biblical text.

⁴ Nsenga is one of the Zambian tribes from the Eastern Province. The researcher comes from this tribe.

⁵ This refers to the process of reception of biblical texts by different communities in the history of the Christian faith.

ethics of reading as life-centred hermeneutics, Musa Dube (2014:26), biblical scholar from Botswana, states that through careful and nuanced reading it is indeed possible to discern interpretations that are in line with the will and intentions of God, which may give life and sustain hope in present-day communities of faith.

It is therefore essential for church leaders to understand, as Padgett puts it (1987:28), that there is no “pure” reading of (biblical) texts or interpretation of facts, because people are the products of their backgrounds and assumptions. This point is further articulated by Burnett (2006:160), who affirms that the biblical documents have lasted for centuries and every reader and interpreter should make an assessment of what the text could have meant at that particular time, and that the text has been subjected to different methods of reading and interpretation through the ages. This makes both the contexts of origin and reception of utmost importance in the process of biblical interpretation.

In this regard the researcher agrees with Patte (1995:37-51), who says that there is an urgent need to account for every reading and interpretation that is made of a biblical text in order to ensure that readers understand the nature of the message they are reading and can understand what these messages mean for people today. He hopes this can be achieved through the adoption of a multidimensional approach to the reading and interpretation of the Bible.

Having briefly looked at the nature of textual communication, I will now look at the concepts “church” and “culture,” and the relation between them. My purpose is to show how these concepts necessarily interrelate in processes of biblical interpretation. I will also discuss how culture can function constructively in its relation to the gospel of Christ.

1.2 The relationship between church and culture

The relation between church and culture is central to this dissertation. It lies at the heart of the researcher’s exploration of women’s ministries in the Reformed Church in Zambia in the light of members’ understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

Peoples’ faith experiences never occur in a vacuum – not in ancient times and not today. All human experience, including religious experience, is embedded in and intertwined with peoples’ cultural identity; hence the relation between faith/church and culture is of crucial importance to understand why faith communities believe and act in the way they do. The relationship between church and culture is, therefore, rich

yet complex. Like all (religious) messages, the message of Jesus of Nazareth was received within specific socio-cultural contexts – namely first-century Palestine and the Greco-Roman Mediterranean world. The Christian church came into existence where cultures had already struck roots and it was necessarily influenced by that cultural context. The early Christian documents were likewise received by many different peoples in particular socio-cultural contexts through the ages. In the case of the RCZ, the relation between biblical interpretation and culture fundamentally affects how women’s ministries are seen by members of the congregation (cf. 3.2.1-3.2.9).

Culture is a complex phenomenon and cannot be defined easily (Ndegwah 2004:81). What is clear, however, is that it plays an important role in shaping the life of communities, from generation to generation, even where people are unaware of it. How can this be understood?

Generally, culture may be understood as encompassing every aspect of human life – language, philosophy, religion, formal and informal education, the economy, politics, recreation, etc. New Testament scholar Bruce Malina (1993:11-14) defines culture as “systems of symbols relating to and embracing people, things and events, that are socially symbolled.” North-American theologian Richard Niebuhr (1951:32-33) and Nigerian scholar Ernest Ezeogu (Ezeogu, 1998:26) both cite Anastasios Yannoulatos, who describes culture as the sum of all human activity manifested in human achievement. Such a broad description underscores all aspects of human development (Raymond, 1970:155-156). Sandra Barnes (2005:968) affirms this by saying that “via culture, persons are able to identify issues and challenges, make sense out of them, formulate strategies to address them.” She goes further to state that “culture provides the materials from which individuals and groups construct strategies of action.” Thus, culture generally refers to “everyday things, the things that define a people’s existence in a particular location – things of mannerisms, behaviours, attitudes, values and customs as they reflect a governing philosophy of a people” (Ngulube, 1989:165). It can further be defined as the thinking and behaviour of people who share particular social groupings as they identify themselves by belonging together (Van der Walt, 2001:23-25).

The New Testament writings typically reflect a complex picture of different peoples originating from different cultures and sometimes sharing a mixture of cultures, each with its peculiar traditions and value systems (e.g. Jews, Samaritans, Greeks, Romans, Hellenists). Their cultural embeddedness determined the way they

perceived, felt, acted and believed. The way they behaved and interacted made sense within their different cultures, as values were judged as “normal” or not according to the way life was viewed and shared within a particular group (Malina, 1993:17). This also applies to the apostle Paul and his cultural world (Neyrey, 1990:13-14), and the world implied by his Corinthian correspondence.

Paul’s world can mainly be regarded as authoritarian, hierarchical and agonistic. How male and female were viewed was different from how this is seen today. Thus, as we deal with the apostle Paul today through his Corinthian correspondence, we should do so knowing that he comes from a different cultural world with a different world view in terms of his perception of life. This also pertains to how he regarded women. In this sense, as Paul is a Jew of the first century Greco-Roman period,⁶ we need to understand him within his Mediterranean culture, which is far removed from us in time. Therefore, when we discuss his Corinthian correspondence, we should understand that Paul belongs to that world so different from ours, a world of Jews, Greeks and Christians, where God was in control and everything else was in place and orderly (Neyrey, 1990:18-27). This issue will be reviewed when I investigate the cultural values of the Mediterranean world in the first century CE (2.2.2 -2.2.7 and 4.2- 4.2.3).

Echoes of these values can be found in the RCZ groups I interviewed for this study. The RCZ has formally upheld a particular culture that marginalised women after the church’s establishment in 1899. Even after women were allowed to serve as deaconesses in 1989, this culture has continued to affect the congregations. This can be seen in the way that the members interpret biblical sources.

The second component of the relation church and culture is the concept of ‘church’ (*ekklēsia*). The Christian church expressed itself through the ages in many formal and informal ways. The formal ways were regarded as the official ways of doing ministry, mostly by men, while the informal were those ways regarded as unofficial in which ministry was conducted, especially those which involved women. Generally, in the Old Testament *ekklēsia* refers to an assembly duly summoned, such as the assembly of citizens (and citizens were male) in a city-state (Button and Van Rensburg, 2003:3-26). However, in the New Testament, the concept is reinterpreted to designate the coming together of believers (Acts 19:39-40). For Paul, the concept is

⁶ The Greco-Roman period is the period where the Mediterranean world’s cultures, traditions and civilizations depended on or were greatly influenced by the Greeks and Romans.

used in the sense of a gathering of Christians who meet at a certain place or locale to worship God through the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 14:28, 34-35). By gathering together, they form a new *ekklēsia*, the people of God. Richard P. Mcbrien (1983:108) elaborates on the concept of church as the worshipping assembly called forth by God in a particular place. Amalorpavadass (1988:140-141) gives four descriptions of “church,” namely “the people of God, the messianic community, the body of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit who exist as a unit in a particular place and time”. Amalorpavadass (1988:203-204) defines church as “(t)hose who belong to Christ, and form a body, thereby making visible Christ’s presence in the world through the Spirit”. He goes on to say that “church” can also be understood as “the new people of God which historically and sociologically prolong God’s kingdom within space and time”. This expression of church may refer to the worldwide, ecumenical church of Christ, represented by different denominations, as well as to local congregations or parishes of such denominations, assembling in different places. It includes both men and women.

Apart from being a worshipping community, the concept of ‘church’ is also expressed as a discerning, decision-making body at various (congregational and synodical) levels. These decision-making structures may vary from denomination to denomination, and may include issues pertaining to exegetical, hermeneutical, liturgical and ethical aspects of the life of the church in God’s presence. In this dissertation, unless otherwise stated, ‘church’ shall refer to at least these two expressions of church life: (a) the body of Christ represented by the RCZ which gathers in specific places (congregations) for worship and fellowship, and (b) the General Synod of the RCZ, representing its congregations as a regulating body, which takes decisions to be carried out by its members.

Church and culture are related to and deeply dependent on one another. The one cannot exist without the other. Both are meant to orientate people according to core values and to define their identities and ways of living. The church necessarily exists within a cultural context and develops its ethos and vocabulary according to that context – be it a monolithic or a multicultural environment. Kanyoro (1999:56) rightly states that “gospel always comes with culture,” to the extent that the two concepts are almost fused together as one. But that is exactly where their relation becomes problematic and where their mutual influence has to be discerned and analysed carefully. While culture may be regarded as a gift from God, it is interpreted

and embodied by (fragile) human beings and, therefore, needs to be revisited regularly. The gospel of Christ, on the other hand, is by its very nature inviting and transformative, and meant to challenge cultural values and traditions to the core and, where necessary, to transform them. Throughout this dissertation, I wish to show how the gospel of Christ challenges culture through the New Testament interpretation of its cultural heritage (Mugambi, 1989:137-138). The crucial question now is how the relation between church and culture has to be understood, and how it has been understood through the ages (Niebuhr, 1951). And further: to what extent does culture influence the church, and can the church influence culture (Kanyoro, 1999)? Such questions have to be attended to critically in view of the oppression and marginalisation of women, which has been justified biblically in various cultures through the centuries and the RCZ in particular. These questions will underlie my exploration of the reception of women's ministries through the centuries and especially in the RCZ in the ensuing chapters of the dissertation.

Revisiting H Richard Niebuhr's seminal work *Christ and Culture*, originally published in 1951, Dirkie Smit (1990:9-16) highlights some crucial aspects regarding church and culture that need to be borne in mind today. The following point is of particular importance for this dissertation: in order for the church to discern where it is and where it is going, it should understand the story of where it has come from.

It is only in the process of understanding its own story that the church may position itself as an agent of change in serving the community. Smit reminds us of Niebuhr's plea to the church to alleviate the suffering of communities, because of painful memories from the past and their lingering effects in the present. The church is called to stand in solidarity with those who suffer by developing a common memory of the bad decisions or experiences in the past that still influence people's lives in the present. From there the church needs to develop a unity of purpose in striving towards healing those destructive memories through the memory of the cross of Jesus Christ. This may require ongoing conversion from the church by avoiding what is sinful in its own ranks, which makes confession a necessary tool in the promotion of healing and unity in a community (cf. Pelsler, 2005:719).

To become a responsible Christian community, we therefore need to respond to God in the central figure of Jesus Christ through whom God acted in history. Christian communities are thus called to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions (including their interpretation of the Bible), and to be in solidarity with

those who suffer because of interpretations that lack nuance. As a response to the gospel's invitation to reform continuously, this may need radical decision making from the church with regards to its role in society (Smit, 1990:19-23).

I now wish to explain the rationale of the research. This will include an explanation of why the RCZ took so long to admit women into its ranks.

1.3. Rationale of the research

The RCZ, as stated earlier (1.1.2), was established by the missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of the Orange Free State in South Africa and has taken over a hundred years to admit women ministers to its ranks. However, despite women now being admitted as ministers, ambivalence remains amongst church members about the role of women in the church and society, because of the ways in which crucial texts such as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 have been interpreted as demanding silence from women in church. This, in turn, still has an effect on how women are perceived and treated in the church and how the continued abuse of women in the community is justified by means of the Bible. The study explores these assumptions prayerfully and critically.

1.3.1 Research motivation

According to the creation story of Genesis 1:26-28, regardless of its historical background, women were created in the image of God, as well as empowered and equally gifted for service in the church. Galatians 3:28, in its affirmation of the baptismal formula, states that there is no difference between males and females, as we are all one in Christ.

The intention of this study, therefore, is to advocate a multidimensional approach to the reading and interpretation of biblical texts, that is, to consider the literary, socio-historical and rhetorical aspects of the text concerned. Through this method, it is anticipated that one will be able to explore the context of a biblical text. In this process, we should be able to cultivate an awareness of the different dimensions of biblical texts before their appropriation in present-day contexts (Patte, 1995). With the concept of a multidimensional approach in mind it is hoped that we shall embrace (new) cultural values where the human dignity of everyone ought to be upheld by all. The stated method should help us reread and reinterpret crucial texts, such as 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, as one of the "texts of terror" (Trible, 1984) in the

New Testament, which have been used to subordinate women to inferior positions in churches and in society in general.

Apart from the multidimensional nature of these texts (which may complicate the reading process), “the New Testament is read and appropriated today against the background of a long and rich”, yet complex, research history of interpretation (cf. Mouton 2002:13-14). This history reveals a large variety of ways in which the Bible has been used in concrete, practical contexts through the centuries, in many different cultures. A critical exegetical approach will hopefully help to describe and evaluate the culture and its values (particularly regarding women) underlying the text of first Corinthians, as well as the contexts in which it has been received since then.

When the context of a biblical text is analysed and properly accounted for, the possibility of becoming truthful to the dynamic nature of biblical texts may be enhanced as the two horizons of the process of textual engagement are considered, namely, that of the original author and his/her experiences, on the one hand, and that of the contemporary reader with his/her experiences, on the other. This makes interpretation of biblical texts a continuous process (cf. Mouton, 2011:278). This should, hopefully, help us to reread and reinterpret 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 (and other biblical texts which are believed to be texts of terror) from a new perspective, and assist us in imagining and embracing new ideas about God’s vision of humanity (in spite of their patriarchal language). From motivating this research I now move on to outlining the aims and objectives of the study.

1.3.2 Aims and objectives of the study

As alluded to earlier (1.1.2), the aims and objectives of this study are articulated in consideration of the high levels of abuse of power, oppression, suppression and discrimination that the majority of women in the Zambian churches are facing, especially in the RCZ. The study aims to contribute towards a life-giving and life-affirming ethos of biblical interpretation through rereading and reinterpreting 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, using a multidimensional exegetical approach (Patte, 1995; Mouton, 2002). It hopes to contribute towards developing the potential of both males and females, particularly in Zambia. I now focus attention on the research questions guiding this study and how they help shape, develop and structure the whole research.

1.4. Research questions

In order to respond to the many issues raised in 1.3 above, the main questions that this research will address are the following:

- 1 What is the relationship between church and culture in general, and the RCZ in its cultural environment in particular?
- 2 In view of question 1, how was the Bible in general, and New Testament in particular, received in the RCZ – especially regarding the status and role of women in the early Church?
- 3 Since 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 seems to have influenced the RCZ processes of decision making regarding women in leadership in crucial ways, how has this text been received by the RCZ from its inception in 1899 up to 2000, when the Church allowed women in all ministries of the Church? And how could this be ascertained?
- 4 In view of this reception in history (how the text is received and appropriated in different contexts at different times in history), how was 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 supposed to function rhetorically within the literary, social-cultural context of the epistle? And how can this be ascertained? And what methodology would fit such a comprehensive analysis?
- 5 How can 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 be used today by readers and interpreters within diverse contexts, and in the RCZ in particular? In other words, how should it be read in the RCZ in the context of gender imbalances, and how could one account for women ministries in relation to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35?

Having outlined the research questions, I now turn to a statement of the hypotheses which accounts for my provisional response to the research questions.

1.5. Hypotheses

In order to respond to the research questions listed in 1.4, I will work with the following hypotheses:

- 1 It is hypothesised that the relationship between church and culture has to be understood, analysed and problematised if the gospel which the church represents is to have a lasting effect on culture. Through this study the

RCZ will be challenged to understand its own story, to open itself to being accountable for its decisions and to being transformed by the gospel of Christ, who not only is the centre of the gospel but also the transformer of culture.

- 2 It is hypothesised that the Bible in general, and the New Testament documents in particular, were authored in a particular time addressing concerns of a particular people who were surrounded by, and fused in, a particular cultural environment. Ultimately, the RCZ – called and missioned by God – will be challenged to consider their cultural traditions and values critically, and through the gospel bring its entire life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
- 3 It is hypothesised that within the RCZ (Synod council and congregations) 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 was initially received with the understanding that women should not be allowed to take up leadership roles in the church. An empirical research project was conducted in the five RCZ congregations within Kabwe Presbytery to ascertain people's understanding of the text as well as the role of women, the results of which will be analysed.⁷
- 4 It is hypothesised that 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 was supposed to be understood within its socio-cultural and historical context. As such Paul could have been addressing a thorny yet context-specific issue within the Corinthian church. A brief history of interpretation of the text will be undertaken, followed by a multidimensional analysis focusing on social, cultural, literary and rhetorical aspects of the text.
- 5 It is hypothesised that by accounting for the socio-cultural world behind 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, as well as its theological-rhetorical purpose in the light of that world, this text may be used to guide analogous processes of (re)interpretation by interpreters in diverse contexts today.

I will now deal with the expected outcomes of the research.

1.5.1 General outcomes

According to McDonald (1993:163-166), a Canadian scholar, the reading/interpretive process of Scripture requires that readers enlarge their ways of how they view the

⁷ Kabwe, formerly known as Broken Hill, is a provincial town in the Central Province of Zambia.

world (context). This may bring a different approach to how they interpret biblical texts where an interaction of a reader/interpreter with the text is developed. In the process of that interaction two things may become necessary: an honest interrogation of who we are, and a transformation towards an increased openness of our understanding of texts and contexts (Mouton, 2002; West, 2014; Smit, 2015).

With this general outcome of the research in mind, I now turn now to specific outcomes as end product of the research.

1.5.2 Specific outcomes

Exegetical approaches to interpreting biblical texts with a view of affirming peoples' humanity are widespread today. A good example is the interpretation of the book of Ruth by Musa Dube (2001:179-195), which suggests an interpretation of healing to people who are going through oppression and marginalisation. This approach may be good in itself, though other challenges may arise when considered from the perspective of the transformative potential of a particular text. For my research, I find a multidimensional exegetical approach appealing and applicable as it addresses and seeks to account for traditional and cultural influences on biblical interpretation.

As such this study goes against the grain of a one-sided approach that views a biblical text from only one particular viewpoint without considering other aspects, such as the circumstances or social contexts within which the text originated and in which it is read today. Furthermore, a one-sided approach does not necessarily take into account the intent or rhetorical purpose of the biblical documents concerned (Patte, 1995:17-30).

I will now outline how the research shall be carried out in terms of its methodological processes.

1.6. Methodology

To deal with the research questions stated above, this research will adopt a number of methodologies as outlined below.

I will first do a literature study related to church and culture, and explore how the two concepts are utilised and how they relate to each other in the proclamation of the gospel of Christ. I will then examine the history of interpretation of the Bible in general and the New Testament in particular, focusing on how women were viewed in relation to 1 Corinthians 14 within the Greco-Roman world and since that time. From

there I specifically deal with the history of interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14 during selected periods. When it comes to researching the reception history of this text in the RCZ, I will make use of what is available in terms of minutes of synodical meetings, reports and other authoritative documents regarding formal decisions of the RCZ. I will subsequently undertake more empirical research through a survey of the reception of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 in the RCZ. For the purpose of the survey, Bible study groups that were specifically selected and constituted for this purpose functioned as an information-collection tool. This part of the study was conducted to examine how the RCZ accepted women as co-workers in the three levels of ministry: deaconesses, elders and ministers of the church. It will focus on the implications for general church members of the resolution of the Synod of the RCZ in 2000 to allow women into leadership in all its structures.⁸

Group Bible studies with a sample of both women and men from the RCZ were thus conducted with the purpose of assessing the reception of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 within the church. The research empirically appropriated a critical reading of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, focusing on socio-cultural and rhetorical aspects of the text.

The rest of the study uses a multidimensional exegetical approach to analyse various aspects of 1 Corinthians 14. This is meant to offer an alternative reading of a text which has often been subjected to one-sided interpretations in the RCZ, because of its cultural biases and (unchallenged) traditional values. I will focus on the socio-cultural world of the first-century Mediterranean and Greco-Roman world as a backdrop to the everyday realities of the Corinthian faith community. In the light of this I will also discuss literary and rhetorical aspects of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. In the process I bear in mind what Mouton (2002:26) says about exegetical and hermeneutical processes, with reference to Richard Hays: “Indeed careful exegesis heightens our awareness of the theological diversity within Scripture and of our historical distance from the original communities ... to whom these texts were addressed”. This approach is proposed against traditional androcentric exegetical practices (cf. Patte, 1995), which emphasise one side of a biblical text, assuming that the text has a single meaning. To mention an example of such a one-sided reading from the RCZ context: the Matero Presbytery (Zambia) forwarded a concern to the

⁸ The Synod is the highest policy-making body in the RCZ, whose authority and resolution cannot be questioned but rather can be reviewed at its next sitting.

RCZ Synod meeting of 1993, asking the Synod to revisit its decision to allow women deaconesses, as this was regarded by the Matero Presbytery as being against the Bible. First Corinthians 14:34-35 was one of the texts cited to argue that the decision was against the Bible (Synod minutes, 1993:30). However, the Synod resolved to uphold its decision.

I will now elaborate on aspects of the chosen methodology under the following themes: reception history of 1 Corinthians 14, empirical research with reference to 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, multidimensional exegetical practice with reference to 1 Corinthians 14, maintaining ethics in biblical translation, being accountable when reading biblical texts, biblical texts in their context today, and the rhetorical dimensions of biblical texts.

1.6.1 Reception history of 1 Corinthians 14

This section will deal with the reception history of 1 Corinthians 14 through the centuries to show how certain understandings of 1 Corinthians 14 changed while others remained almost the same. The section briefly explores how the text has been received by faith communities in different contexts through the centuries, and how communities were influenced by the hermeneutical and exegetical frameworks of their time. I will also focus on the implied reception of 1 Corinthians 14 in the socio-historical context of the first-century Greco-Roman world, with particular reference to how women and men lived and were treated in the socio-cultural context of that time.

Rousseau (1986:40-41) explains that the reception of biblical texts is a difficult and a very complex phenomenon. He understands the New Testament documents to be written documents that have specific requirements and characteristics as written communications. To envision the meaning of a biblical text involves that both text and receiver be analysed critically. The receptor/reader is affected by numerous factors such as historical distance, and socio-cultural and traditional factors. These issues will be considered when I discuss the role of faith communities in Chapter 2.

Considering processes of women's liberation worldwide, in Africa and Zambia in particular, I will work with feminist advocates who have influenced communities constructively through their work. A sampled approach is used in the selection of these feminist scholars/theologians. I will give preference to voices from Africa such as Nyambura Njoroge and Denise Ackermann, who have great influence

through *The Circle of Concerned African Theologians*, and whose work has impacted positively on many African communities. But I will also listen to the authoritative voice of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, originally from Germany, and speaking from a North-American context.

The influence of these and other theologians will be discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. This will be done to assess the impact of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 in the RCZ. Other churches/denominations will also be considered regarding their stand on the issue of the liberation of women, as the body of Christ stands in solidarity and promotes justice for all humanity. Some of these churches/denominations interact with the RCZ, since they are members of the (ecumenical) Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) and the Evangelical Fellowship in Zambia (EFZ).

From the brief reception history of 1 Corinthians 14 I will move to the next challenge, namely to conduct empirical research on the reception of women's ministries in Zambia in the light of the RCZ's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14.

1.6.2 Empirical research on 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

For the purpose of assessing the impact of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 on the RCZ, the researcher has chosen to work with five focus groups in five different congregations of the RCZ in the Kabwe District. The groups discussed 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 in the RCZ context. In each congregation, ten (10) people were identified to participate in a Bible study activity. Considering gender balance, five (5) men and five (5) women were selected for each group. The focus groups were invited to participate interactively on two different occasions. Members responded to a questionnaire facilitated by one of its members, and reported through a secretary chosen by each group. The rationale behind this was that a group would deliberate the questions and that when members were satisfied with the responses, the secretary would write down what had been resolved in the group. The secretary would read to the group what had been agreed upon as answers to the different questions. If in the opinion of the facilitator there were different responses to a particular question, those views would be written down and reported as different opinions coming from one group. Members were instructed in advance not to intimidate others or to dominate the discussion. Other matters related to these Bible study groups are discussed in Chapter 3 (3.3), where I deal with the survey as a tool for collecting data.

Following the empirical research, I will conduct an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, focusing on socio-cultural, literary and rhetorical aspects of the text.

1.6.3 *Multidimensional approach*

Before I define a multidimensional approach, I wish to state that this methodology is one among many possible ways to analyse biblical texts exegetically.

The term “multidimensional” applies to the varied angles from which a text, drama or painting can be viewed in order to understand its meaning/s. Instead of one perspective, multidimensional interpretation tries to give a comprehensive idea of the object being investigated. In the case of New Testament texts, the choice of a multidimensional approach is based on the multifaceted nature and purposes of these texts. They were *written* texts, initially conveyed in primarily *oral* cultures, produced by flesh and blood communities in specific contexts, communicated from particular perspectives and with an aim to *persuade* (be it to inform, to encourage, to console, to warn, or to transform). Because of these multi-layered characteristics, these texts can be approached from inter alia historical, literary and rhetorical angles. To do justice to the many aspects of textual communication, one would thus at least need (a) an adequate exegetical method, accounting for the rich yet complex nature and purpose of the texts involved, and (b) a sufficient hermeneutical theory and practice, accounting for the nature of human interpretation and the role of interpreters in the process of understanding as sense-making (cf. Mouton, 2002:26; Patte, 1995:37-40; Jonker, 1996:17-18).

In this dissertation, I propose to use a multidimensional exegetical approach to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. I also wish to show how people read the text in a shared context yet interpret it differently (Jonker, 1996:71, 305).

I have chosen to discuss 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 as an influential text, as well as its perceived restrictiveness because of its cultural and traditional values. The focus will be on two major interrelated yet distinguishable aspects of the text, namely socio-cultural and literary-rhetorical aspects. These will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively. Chapter 4 will focus on socio-cultural aspects as it looks at the world “behind” the text, while Chapter 5 focuses on the text itself and looks at literary aspects (nature and type of text) and rhetorical aspects (how it was meant to persuade and how it in fact functioned and still functions in the lives of people). Creating an

awareness of these aspects is important because the gospel of Jesus Christ exists or comes to us within our cultural settings (Abogunrin, 1986:14) and is meant to have a transforming effect for it to be gospel (Ezeogu, 1998:33).

I am aware that a multidimensional approach can be developed in many ways and on many levels (cf. Jonker, 1996:37-38). My approach begins with socio-cultural aspects which encompass various issues of everyday cultural realities within the Mediterranean world. This will show something of the complexity of the context in which the text was written and may allow us to see the cultural influences that gave rise to it. Once these are known, it will hopefully be easier to decode some literary and rhetorical aspects which focus on the text itself. By then we should have a clearer understanding of the context of the author and the realities of his cultural environment. Once these realities become clearer, it may be easier to understand why he chose a specific genre and literary devices to argue his case.

1.6.4 An exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 14

In the light of my findings from the empirical study on 1 Corinthians 14 and the reception history of the text in question, I will use a critical, multidimensional exegetical approach to read this text. This approach will be utilised in terms of an analysis of (a) socio-cultural, (b) literary, and (c) theological-rhetorical aspects of the text. These elements are so interactive and interdependent, however, that one may just as well combine the last two elements.

The aim of the study is not to prescribe what should or what should not be done in the process of reading Scripture as the authoritative Word of God. The aim is rather to show how complex the process of hermeneutics (reading and interpreting Scripture) is, and how great the need is to adhere to practices of exegesis and hermeneutics that would affirm justice and wellbeing for all. Hopefully that will bring us nearer to an experience of the Lord's Prayer: "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). My prayer for my own as well as the RCZ's interpretation of Scripture is that God's will shall prevail as God is acknowledged by all within the faith communities where God's glory dwells (Gaventa, 2008:311; Tebbernee, 2008:300).

The next step will be to discuss how the ethics of biblical interpretation can be maintained, that is, if church leaders are to be faithful to the communities on whose

behalf we often undertake the task of interpreting God's word. This entails taking responsibility and being accountable for how we interpret Scripture.

1.6.5 Maintaining ethics in biblical interpretation

The concept of "ethics of interpretation" (Patte, 1995:37-63; Mouton, 2002:25, with reference to inter alia Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza) refers to taking responsibility as well as being accountable for any act of interpretation of a biblical text that affects our communities who are the recipients of that interpretation. To understand the "ethics of interpretation," we first need to understand what interpretation is (see 1.1) and what it is not. Defining interpretation is somewhat difficult, because the word has many different, sometimes conflicting, meanings.

Louis Jonker, a South African Old Testament scholar, defines interpretation as a method of determining the significance of signs. He says that a sign could point to the representation of an object that implies a connection between itself and the object (Jonker, 1995:100-115).

According to Anthony Thiselton (2000:83-84), renowned for his work on biblical hermeneutics, interpretation uses signs that point beyond themselves to other signs and sign relations; they identify markers of thought or ideas. Jonker (1995:100-115) adds that these signs can be complex or simple and are dependent on what Thiselton (1992:536) calls the codes, conventions and horizons out of which meaning is determined and constructed. In Sleeper's view (1968:445) interpretation refers to the task of

Trying to understand, from within one's social and cultural setting, symbols which originated in a context totally different from one's own, yet we understand them in our present time. For this to happen we would need to possess wisdom and skill with which to handle the movement from the context as the point of departure to the text where we are illuminated by it and back to the context to generate meaning for ourselves.

In view of this, one may conclude by stating that any form of communication involves signs, which acquire meaning and connotations that can be interpreted by someone who uses them to discern their significance. Interpretation in this sense ought to be the determination of the biblical text as a signifier to form meaning for the reader in a context familiar to the reader of the text (Jonker, 1995:100-115). Lategan (1985:67-75) and Rousseau (1986:40) had already affirmed this in their use of different terms

(which are synonyms) such as sign, communicator and receptor (one who receives the sign and referent as that which points to reality). These represent the interrelatedness and dynamic character of the components.

The communicator is the author who encodes the text, while the receptor is the reader who decodes the text. The communicator and the receptor have certain presuppositions in common, as well as some presuppositions that are different, and thus textual communication is a phenomenon of the act of human communication in its wholeness. To understand the communication process, a sender encodes the message through an understood code or language; this is done through a medium to a receiver who decodes the message in an agreed code or symbol (Lategan, 1978:23-28). Through this process, the receiver understands the message from the sender in his/her context. Interpretation of any biblical text, therefore, calls for an ethics of reading as a vital component, as it introduces a reader to several options from which to decide as one chooses to read a text in a particular context. In this case, the challenge is to assess what 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 may say to Zambian communities of faith, particularly the RCZ, in the twenty-first century.

South African New Testament scholar Jan Botha (1994a:36-45) looks at vital questions in the process of choosing texts to be interpreted: who (which individual or group) reads which Bible (what view of the text does the interpretive community hold, what authority does it grant the text), how (using which method), and why (whose interests are at stake, what the interpretive community wants to achieve with their acts of interpretation).

Adding to this, Mouton affirms that when one chooses to read a specific text in a set context, there are questions that can help to determine the selection of that text. The proposed sets of questions are as follows:

Why read this particular text and not another? How do we consider this text to hold answers for our personal and social needs? On whose behalf are we reading it? What do we expect from it? Why use this method of reading and not another one? Do we perhaps (more often unconsciously) project our own fears, hopes, desires and interests onto the text even before we start reading? Or, do we allow it to continuously surprise us, to speak for itself in its 'otherness?' (Mouton, 2002:11-12, with reference to J. Hillis Miller and Jan Botha).

By considering these fundamental questions that deal with the ethics of interpretation, interpreters always have to be responsible and accountable for their reading and the choices of interpretation they make on behalf of others. Daniel Patte (1996:269-270) echoes this view as he says that there are various reasons for conceiving of how and why choices of certain readings are made.

Richard Hays (1990:42) situates these perspectives well when he states that when readers are engaged in reading texts, many factors come into play, most of which derive from practical everyday realities and encounters. This is echoed by Beverly Gaventa (2008:314), who states: “The Church ... is called to interpret texts, symbols and practices so as to discern the Word of God as a word of life amid ever-changing times and places.”

In Africa, Old Testament scholar Madipoane Masenya, among many others, has used feminist criticism to raise concerns about the reception of the Bible (Masenya, 2000:49-50). This has led Phyllis Bird (2001:204-205), Old Testament scholar from North America, to conclude that from a feminist perspective the Bible (originating from within patriarchal contexts) wears a different face in Africa than in North America, as it is seen to be a problem rather than a solution when it comes to addressing issues of dignity of women and children.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1988:15) discusses texts termed as “crucial” whereby she contends that to be accountable in reading these texts, they should be considered from their Mediterranean socio-cultural setting before we apply them to today’s context. To achieve this Samuel Abogunrin (1986:13-14), a Nigerian scholar in New Testament studies, calls for a cautious approach to biblical interpretation and appropriation in Africa, if the Bible is to be relevant and meaningful in every culture today. This is a huge challenge to be confronted by African scholars, more importantly for those in biblical studies. This dissertation wishes to address that challenge and contribute to that discourse.

The next section discusses how to read biblical texts and remain accountable for that reading.

1.6.6 How should we read a biblical text and be accountable for it?

The Bible is supposed to be good news for all people. It is supposed to heal lives and to offer hope to the hopeless. In the words of Njoroge (2001:214), the Bible should be a blessing and not a curse in the lives of those affected by it. This situation calls for

healthy or balanced interpretations of biblical texts which should affirm the dignity of all. For Schüssler Fiorenza (1988:5) the ethics of interpretation is to be understood to mean a reading that accounts for the “rights” of the text. The authority of the text can only be maintained if it is *first* read as good news for its original audience, and then – with the literary signals and pointers of the text respected – reinterpreted in later contexts. With this idea in mind, I agree with Rousseau (1986:390), who says that we need to affirm the biblical documents as they appear in their original form and context, while we take seriously our own contexts as today’s readers, and develop a discussion between the two contexts – that of the reader and the text. This is what we should strive for in any reading that we hope to undertake of the biblical texts.

Hays (1990:46) affirmed this perspective, while Fowl and Jones (1991:13-14) added that what is seen depends on where one stands, the kind of spectacles one is wearing, and the attitude or character one creates at the back of one’s mind while forming one’s opinion. It is McDonald’s hope (1993:169) that readers and interpreters will do justice to the biblical texts because, she says, these texts are always historical material and should be treated in that manner. In this regard, Patte (1995:17-27) proposes the need to remain accountable to our readers in any act or event of our interpretation that is made on behalf of the community.

Interpretation of biblical texts entails taking interpreters of biblical texts into account and holding them responsible in all matters or actions that pertain to the interpretive models that they choose/seek to use. This requires that even past interpretations of biblical texts have to be accounted for. Such a review is carried out to ensure whether they were done in good faith or not (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1988:3-17). As indicated, this necessitates that readers/interpreters of God’s Word need to be accountable for any action they take to interpret any biblical text that is done/assumed to be done on behalf of others.

Therefore, to be accountable, interpreters can choose both to start with the ancient text and hear what it says, or first immerse themselves in the socio-historical context of the text (and that of later readers) before engaging with the text itself. A vital point of departure should be to discern between the two worlds: that of the text and that of the interpreter (West, 2014:2-6).

McDonald (1993:200) agrees that texts are read with integrity when both the implied world of the author, as well as the reader’s world, are considered and interrelated in the process of understanding. Patte (1996:269) argues that readers have

opportunities to choose among (potentially) different readings of given texts; these readings are undertaken for various reasons and readers have a choice to make as to which readings make sense. An important point to note is that texts may have different (competing) voices or perspectives represented within them. It is the faith community's responsibility to discern which of the voices is the Word of God and which is the voice of culture or history. For instance, reading the Bible as a woman might be a different experience from reading the Bible as a man. For example, Musa Dube (1995:13) states that for her, reading biblical texts is to relive the pains of Christianity (as a woman) in that the Bible does not favour them because of its patriarchal contexts and language.

What is of the utmost importance for the church today is to recover the fine art of reading the Bible, while interacting with it and sharing new insights that were gained by others (Botha, 1994b:296-306). We are particularly challenged to take full responsibility for the (often life-threatening) consequences of the interpretations that we make on behalf of others. This is because we hope to bring about and create healthy communities where life is valued for both women and men.

Schüssler Fiorenza (1988:4) observes that biblical interpretation, as a scholarly inquiry, has a communicative function. Each time we are involved in the reading/interpretation of a biblical text, she argues, we should be made aware that we are entering a circle which goes round and round. For South African Old Testament scholar Gerald O. West (2014:3-8), the determining factor is context, which leads to the text and then back to (present-day) contexts.

The discussion leads me to consider an important ingredient in the exegetical process: how biblical texts should be understood in new contexts.

1.6.7 How biblical texts should be understood in new contexts today

The writings of the Bible should be understood according to their nature, namely as texts meant to communicate a message to people of a specific time in history. Though these documents originally existed as individual books or letters, they were eventually brought together to form one canon – through a long and complex process during which the church ascribed authority to them. Hence, their message is regarded as authentic by the church (Smit, 2015). Therefore, when we read and interpret these documents we must bear in mind that we are not the first respondents. These texts

were in fact written many centuries ago and were meant for other audiences far removed from us in time and place.

The historical dimension arouses further challenges for contemporary reader/s and interpreter/s of biblical texts in that they have to examine the Mediterranean social-cultural world of the first century. The movement is from the author in his/her context to the reader in his/her context (Rousseau, 1985:57, 264, 413).

In a nutshell, critical exegesis increases our awareness of the hermeneutical problem that Scripture poses rather than the way it resolves it – this is because there are several ways in which a text can be approached. Care must be taken to ensure that the text maintains its voice in all the exegetical processes involved, notwithstanding the context which could determine what the text implied/implies in consideration of the socio-cultural and historical of the world of the text.

The researcher will now discuss the rhetorical dimension of a biblical text as a crucial element of a multidimensional approach to Scripture. This is an important component of the research, because it addresses the appropriation part of what the text implied within its socio-cultural historical context, and how the same text can be appropriated by later readers in their own time and space.

1.6.8 Rhetorical dimension of biblical texts

Rhetoric can be defined as the art of communicating a message from a sender to a receiver through a medium, or the art of persuasion. Rhetoric implies the expression of our thoughts and ideas to other people, and that this ought to be done in the most effective manner (cf. Hein, 2005:3-10).

According to very nature of the New Testament texts, these documents are meant to communicate a message to specific audiences. We are far removed from them by the historical distance, yet we communicate ‘the same’ message for twenty-first century readers. The rhetorical dimension of a biblical text deals with how it was meant to witness and appeal to its first readers, and how it can be appropriated in today’s context. This is where the interpreter engages with the text in all its dimensions and where the analysis of a text reaches its peak in terms of what the text was supposed to ‘do’ to its original and later readers (cf. Schüssler Fiorenza 1988).

For Gorman (2001:116), the rhetorical dimension of a text pertains to the purpose and function of that text, while for Thomas Long (1989:87-88), the emphasis is on focus and function. Focus concerns the perceived intention of the author in a text

or what it wishes to communicate to a reader or the audience, and whether it succeeds in doing so. However, it is not an easy task to determine this, as can be seen from what was at some stage called the “intentional fallacy” debate.⁹ Function deals with what the text was supposed to do in the context where it was created (in other words, what its significance was supposed to be). All this focuses on the biblical text as it witnesses to a particular event (historical context). Simply put, the rhetorical dimension has to do with the way we react to what a text says – both in its original context and the contexts where it is received since then. Furthermore, how is it supposed to, and how does it, affect our lives in the present day? (Gorman 2001:130-131).

Mouton (2002:50), referring to Vorster, notes that the thrust of biblical texts is how authors used linguistic devices to enable readers to understand what they were supposed to mean, and how contemporary readers use various strategies to grasp that thrust.

Mouton (2002:50) states that we live in this world affected by the way we think, act and interpret history. She explains that if there are changes taking place in our world, they will affect the way we interpret biblical texts. In addition, the long history of interpretation of these texts also influences the way we perceive the world. This may encourage us to relearn certain things, including the symbols we use, and interpret them from new angles. In the process, we may even revisit those texts termed as “texts of terror” (Trible, 1984), which in the past were used to marginalise others. The dissertation wishes to take up this challenge with regards to 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

To align with what has been stated above, a multidimensional approach to this text will be considered under the themes outlined below.

Church and culture will be dealt with noting the functions of the church and that of culture and how these concepts interact in processes of interpreting the gospel. This will be enhanced by critically discussing how gospel and culture relate to each other. A theory on how the text has been and still is received in the RCZ and Zambian society today will also be considered.

⁹ “Intention is design or plan in the author’s mind. Intention has obvious affinities for the author’s attitude toward his work, the way he felt, what made him write”; however, “design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art” (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 1954:1). The same can be said of the intentions of the authors of biblical texts. Readers do not know what the authors intended; we have only the texts and no direct access to their minds.

A critical exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 will be considered to account for the literary, historical and theological aspects of textual communication. This section will also attend to how 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 was supposed to be understood as authoritative Word of God, and how it functioned and was appropriated within the Pauline church – in other words, how this text was supposed to function rhetorically within the literary and socio-cultural contexts of first Corinthians.

In similar ways, I will deal with how this text was received and appropriated within the RCZ, as the Synod council allowed women into all official ministries of the church. An outline of the chapters of this dissertation is presented next.

1.7 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter and offers an orientation to the study, discussing men's abuse of power in the church and culture. The methodology chosen for this research is a multidimensional approach to the interpretation of texts in their contexts. The study concerns itself specifically with 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 in relation to how women could serve in all ministries of the RCZ.

Chapter 2 deals with the communities of faith in relation to the RCZ and will address the variety of ways in which 1 Corinthians 14 has been interpreted to understand the many different views that communities of faith share in the process of interpretation. The chapter will further focus on the reception of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 in general and then in the specific context of RCZ. The chapter will discuss the processes of how women's ministries came to be recognised and included in all the ministries of the church.

Chapter 3 concerns the empirical aspect of this research, discussing the position of women in the RCZ in view of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. It will focus on the establishment of the RCZ and how women undertook their roles within the women's guild called *chigwirizano cha azimai*, as a ministry of its own kind. This history will be considered together with the fact that women were not allowed to take up leadership positions in the church (probably) because of the patriarchal cultures in which the text was written and of the receiving RCZ community. Yet this assumption had to be explored and nuanced carefully. An empirical study was therefore conducted through a survey to analyse how the RCZ received this text. This was done through Bible study groups that assembled for this particular purpose in various congregations located in the Kabwe District of the Central Province of Zambia.

This survey was meant to elaborate on the research questions of the study and to provide some background for the discussion in Chapter 4. This chapter elaborates on a multidimensional approach to 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 with a focus on socio-historical aspects. It will discuss the socio-cultural world “behind” or rather “of” the text, which many readers (still) do not consider important for understanding the (meaning of the) text.

Chapter 5 will focus on literary and theological-rhetorical aspects of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. It will deal with aspects of the implied reception of the text within its particular originating context (as discussed in Chapter 4) as well as in later contexts.

Chapter 6 provides a summary of the findings, limitations and conclusions, and offers some recommendations for the way forward.

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH IN RELATION TO THE RCZ

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I outlined the scope of the research and will now proceed to discuss the reception of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. I will briefly attend to how this text was received in general by different communities of faith at different times in history, and finally how it was received by the RCZ in relation to the admission of women to the ministries of the church.

I will now address some broad trends in the treatment of women through the centuries in relation to 1 Corinthians 14. I will scrutinise the reception history of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 specifically, as this directly concerns women. In the penultimate section of the chapter, alternative voices from feminist liberation movements will be considered with reference to the influence this text has had on the oppression, suppression and marginalisation of women worldwide, throughout the African continent, and in the RCZ in particular. Finally, I will explore how the RCZ and other churches in Zambia have been influenced by different interpretations of this text. I will do this through examining various church documents. This examination will show similar themes to those found in the empirical research (survey) amongst lay members of the congregation (cf. 3.7).

I will discuss the reception history of 1 Corinthians 14 in the light of the RCZ being called and commissioned to interpret the Bible on behalf of its faith communities. This is a responsibility especially given to those trained in the field. For the RCZ, it is the ministers and evangelists and most often elders who act as custodians of interpretation on behalf of the congregations.

2.2 Interpretation of the Bible through the ages

As I discussed in the introduction to the dissertation (cf. 1.6.1), biblical interpretation refers to a process of sense-making, of determining meaning from a (biblical) text as it is interpreted within a certain context. According to North American biblical scholars Carol Newsom, Sharon Ringe and Jacqueline Lapsley (2012:1), this is not an easy process at all, because we cannot take for granted that we understand the assumptions and language of the authors of the Bible, who targeted specific audiences or communities. Today we have different interpreters of the Bible and all seek to understand the Word of God within a particular locality. Women, for instance, do

read the Bible in their own right, from the perspective of their own experiences. However, the Bible is often interpreted on behalf of women and these interpretations can define women's roles. In this case a brief and careful study of the reception history of the New Testament and the relation between church and culture through the centuries may help to create greater clarity about what this relation entailed through the centuries, and what it may mean today (Bosch, 2011:55).

Therefore, for the interpretation of the Bible to be life-giving and -affirming to both men and women, we need to seek ways of reinterpreting these texts with hermeneutical approaches that will enhance equality and dignity for all people.

Nyambura Njoroge (2001:213-215) is writing from an African perspective, while Newsom et al. (2012:2) are writing within North-American contexts. However, all of them argue that the Bible still has authority in many societies today, and for that reason it is used to shape people's lives in the church, as well as the culture and traditions of communities all over the world. In many African cultures, the Bible is understood to be the standard by which life is measured (Mwombeki, 2001:121-128). In these communities, it is used by all groups of people including the old, women and men, as well as the young. Nonetheless, the Bible, when read in contemporary culture, can be misinterpreted because contemporary readers may not understand what was originally intended. This is true when we deal with certain themes that concern women (Newsom et al., 2012:2).

Hence, there is a desperate need to resolve this problem of interpretation, so as to bring harmony to the claim of the authority of the Bible for both men and women (Newsom et al., 2012:2-3). Njoroge (2001) calls for a rescue of the Bible from misinterpretations, if it is to be respected by all disciples of Christ. This call includes a reinterpretation of the role of the women who have been and are still being marginalised in Africa. As such, biblical texts that were read in the past demeaning women should be read with empathy and the purpose of liberation (Lander, 2006:103-117; Newsom, 2012:3).

Moreover, the Bible has been interpreted in contrasting ways in different contexts with different motives, convictions and expectations (Tienou, 1982:436-448). For instance, Laurenti Magesa (1977:219) sees the New Testament as the fulfilment of the Old Testament carrying a message of liberation which has an end in Jesus and whose motif is the reconciliation of all people in a single humanity. However, Musa Dube (1995:15) sees the same Bible as a colonising text in that on

many occasions it allows the subjugation of African people by foreign nations. From such views, we note how the Bible has been interpreted in different ways and, therefore, that biblical interpretation is a complex task.

Is it possible to give a precise account of the different complex multilayered readings of the Bible that has occurred so far from the first century to date? A definite answer to this question may not be suitable. This is because many strides have been made by various readers and interpreters in their different fields of research; for example, Tienou (1982:436-448) struggles with questions of how we can understand the Bible while holding to its authority as we read it in our different contexts. In order to answer this question, it may be important to discuss how the Bible was received by its first readers and subsequently by later readers. This background information should help us to plot the development of where we stand with regard to the use of the Bible today.

2.2.1 A brief account of how the New Testament was received by its first readers

The formation of the New Testament was itself an act of interpretation. The crucial issue here is to see how this process came about from a collection of individual books to one single book with a liberating message that has authority for humanity.

Merrill Tenney (1985:401-404) and Luke Johnson (1986:532-541) both affirm that the formation of the New Testament was a miracle from God; they do this by looking at the processes which the Bible underwent to produce the text that we have today. In contrast, Lander (2006:103-117) and Smit (2015:3) attest that the New Testament canon as it is today was an act of interpretation of oral accounts of Jesus Christ's deeds and words that were later put into writing.

The process of writing took place over a period that extended long after Jesus had conducted his ministry. The books were written as a fulfilment of what was promised in the Old Testament books, which spoke of the promised Messiah (McDonald, 2012:85-105). The gospels were viewed as a court of final appeal in view of differences in doctrines (Lohse, 1978:27). Evidently Paul's letters were used quite early within the worship services in the church as they could have provided a measure for doctrine. By the second century the gospels and Paul's letters formed what is contained in the canon (Lohse, 1978:27-28).

However, the church ascribed to the collected texts the authority that they deserved. The canonisation process should be viewed as yet another act of the

interpretative process of the church that involved various hermeneutical processes, which were completed by the fourth century (Roberts and Du Toit, 1979:78-80). Religious authority ascribed to these texts by the church guided the process and no additional books were to be added to the collection and that is the form in which we have it today.

The canon created a platform that from then onwards was seen as one book standing as a unit with a particular message. Crucial questions can therefore be asked concerning what this book called the Bible is now, what it says, as well as what it means for today's readers, and how the church and society should read it; one could also ask from where it draws its authority to make sense of what it says (Smit, 2015:3-4). Having looked at interpretation of the Bible in general, the focus will now shift to how the Bible has been interpreted at different stages in history. The importance of this is to show how various users have handled and interpreted the Bible in each generation.

2.2.2 Reception history of 1 Corinthians 14 in the early church

In the early church, the Bible was frequently used for moral instruction (Tenney, 1985:416-417). The interpretations were made through approaches that were allegorical and typological in nature, and were the typical form of interpretations that existed in the Jewish synagogues at the time (Smit, 2015:3). But when we look at 1 Corinthians 14 and how it was interpreted as the text was used during the time of the early church on the issues concerning women, the following account emerges.

Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner (2010:718-728) consider women in the early church as a neglected group, because women were not counted among those who mattered. Women were largely invisible in the early church. For instance, a woman did not show herself to the public and if she did the whole community's focus was turned towards her in wonder as to why this happened. A woman's life was to be controlled, protected and guarded almost all the time against those who would harm her and so the secure place was her home.

Speaking in public was not supposed to be her role, for anything that could expose her to the public view was perceived to be in bad taste. This meant even her voice was prohibited in public areas, for the place where her voice was heard was also considered an indication of her moral standards. The type of speaking and the tone of voice either safeguarded her, or she was or exposed and invited abuse.

The woman appearing in public was also connected to her husband. People questioned how the husband could allow his wife to be that exposed. In this case the reputation of the husband was also at stake. When it came to doing business, a woman had to be escorted by someone to markets, as she could not walk alone or people would question this as such kind of behaviour was not permitted by society. For anything to do with public appearance, a woman had to seek permission from her husband to do so, even when it concerned an important topic of discussion (Ciampa and Rosner, 2010:725-728).

Concerning marriage, it was also advisable for a young man to marry a young woman who had not been married before. This was because it was believed that a young woman was easier for her husband to instruct than a woman who had experienced marriage. There was another belief that a young woman who had not been in marriage was a shapeless lump and her husband could shape her into a better vessel (Ciampa and Rosner, 2010:728-729).

Life in public which attracted arguments, market places, councils, courts of justice, working in large companies, going to war, peace-brokering as well as attending public assemblies were considered the domain of men. Women stayed indoors except when they were going to places like the synagogue to pray, though they had to be escorted. This type of context could perhaps have attracted or prompted Paul to tell the women in Corinth to keep silent in the church; if they had anything to ask about, they were to consult their husbands at home.

From the early church, I wish to proceed to the Middle Ages to see how interpreters of that time viewed women in the light of the same text.

2.2.3 Reception history of 1 Corinthians 14 in the Middle Ages

The Middle Ages represents another stage in the use of the Bible. Three phases were developed in the use of the Bible during this period. Thus, we have the Bible used in monasteries, cathedral schools and medieval universities.

From the sixth to twelfth centuries, the monasteries took a centre stage in the use of the Bible, because learning during this time was very much alive in these institutions. The focus was on edifying the soul and this involved the reading of the Bible, contemplation and prayer. But how did the people in those times read and understand 1 Corinthians 14, especially regarding the issue of women? To start with, women of the Middle Ages were regarded by society as second-class citizens (World

History Online 2011-2012:1). The church could treat them as such because of the patriarchal nature of that society, coupled with the biblical texts which often were cited such as Paul's comments on women in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

Many of the statements assigning an inferior role to women can be attributed to church fathers such as Tertullian, who is quoted as saying, "Paul himself gives no licence for women to teach or to baptise," and also to 1 Corinthians 14:35 (Thiselton, 2000:1161). Another example of men's dominance in the church and culture of this time is Augustine's view on women, which paints a bad picture in terms of how women were regarded. This is evident through his comment as quoted by Mowrey (1996:120): "Man alone is the image of God and will be complete if only the woman is joined to him; otherwise woman on her own is not the image of God" (cf. Chapter 1.1).

C. N. Trueman (2015:1) contends that medieval society was purely controlled by men who had the upper hand in almost everything. A woman was only able to have a hand on matters which affected the home. He further attributes the birth of a male in a family to have been of vital importance as it promised continued family existence according to the laws of patrilineal inheritance. A girl child had to remain within the confines of her father's home for the rest of her life, unless she married. Even after marriage to a man whose choice was not her own but negotiated between families, she remained under the guardianship of her husband. The medieval period thus seems to have maintained the legacy inherited from the early church fathers of subordinating women to the control of men.

I will now look at the reception history of 1 Corinthians 14 within the Reformation period which will elaborate further on how women were treated in church and society.

2.2.4 Reception history of 1 Corinthians 14 in the Reformation

The Reformation can be described as the most crucial stage in the development of the reading and interpretation of the Bible. This is because it proclaimed the Bible as ultimate authority (Abogunrin, 1986:19). Here the Bible was understood literally. It outlines three key issues guiding the Christian faith: Scripture, faith and grace (Reventlow, 2010:22-23). During this period there was an awakening or surge of wanting to go back to the original sources of the biblical documents. It also involved

translating the Bible into the vernacular, so as to enable readers access to biblical texts in the language they understood well (Smit, 2015:5-6).

The Reformation gained greatly from men who stood their ground amidst great criticism in the way they handled the Bible and its authority now that it could be accessed by the public (Roberts and Du Toit, 1979:258-259). The church at this time emphasised visionary interpretation, covenantal interpretation and prophetic interpretation, which were understood as a means of showing obedience in public life. Public life was measured according to what was dictated in the Bible, as it became the standard or measure in public life (Burnett, 2006:142-144).

The question that concerns me is how they read and understood 1 Corinthians 14 in relation to the position of women. To answer this question Katheryn Kleinhans (2015:1-2), McCoy Family Distinguished Chair in Lutheran Heritage and Mission at Living Lutheran, alludes to the value the Reformation gave to the status of women in the community. Whereas in the medieval period women were confined to dealing with domestic responsibilities, the Reformation tried to bring women into more visible positions by improving their standards of education – no longer in convents but in public schools. The drawback here, however, was that they could not go very far as the boys could, because they were either being married early, or lack of support by the family did not allow the girl child to continue with school.

There was another remarkable achievement of the Reformation, which was the emphasis that was placed upon marriage; Luther and Calvin both promoted this as man and woman had equal in value in terms of love for one another as marriage was viewed as a blessing from God (Stjerna, 2011). In the same period women were seen doing some church work. But this work was more related to being a mother in the home environment, which still had to manifest obedience to the husband (Thompson, 1992). The wife of the minister took on a new role which became more influential, involving charity work and leading women's guilds.

However, the sad development about this period is that though women became slightly more active in public areas as the convents were closed by Luther, the reading or understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 did not change to allow women to be equal with men.¹⁰ Both Luther and Calvin maintained a firm stance on not allowing women into the leadership of the church. Calvin, for instance,

¹⁰ Convents were secluded places which many women could withdraw from the public for spiritual discipline and growth in order to attain faith in God.

emphatically refused to allow women to occupy the office of a teacher in the church. I refer to his comment regarding women, as quoted by King:

If the woman is under subjection, she is, consequently, prohibited from authority to teach in public. And unquestionably, wherever even natural propriety has been maintained, women have in all ages been excluded from the public management of affairs. It is the dictate of common sense, that female government is improper and unseemly. Nay more, while originally they had permission given to them at Rome to plead before a court, the effrontery of Caia Afrania led to their being interdicted, even from this. Paul's reasoning, however, is simple — that authority to teach is not suitable to the station that a woman occupies, because, if she teaches, she presides over all the men, while it becomes her to be *under subjection* (King, 1847-50).

This development was no improvement on the medieval phase, where women were subordinated and not treated on an equal basis to men. What is worth noting in this era is that the view of women as not fully human and not equal to men was changing.

The next section deals with women in the Enlightenment period. It hopes to give a glimpse of how women were viewed in the light of the dominant perception of women deriving from the Greco-Roman and Pauline injunction for women not to speak in church.

2.2.5 Reception history of 1 Corinthians 14 in the Enlightenment

The Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible (2005) helps us to understand the European Enlightenment period as referring to a time in Europe and America where cultural and intellectual movements took centre stage while pushing aside the teaching of the church. During this period reason was promoted above anything else, and affected the way societies perceived the role religion played in life. In this era we see cultural issues infiltrating into the church (Abogunrin, 1986:19). However, the church understood this intellectual era as a period of personal ability, where an individual could engage in the public practice of the Christian faith (Reventlow, 2010:180-181).

This development occurred because the Bible was seen and read against the background of cultural understandings. What brought about the fall in the status of the Bible are the following three aspects: the rationalistic mindset, historical awareness

and the secularisation project. The rationalistic mindset brought people a wealth of discoveries, and as a result more disciplines emerged that challenged the Bible and questioned its authority.

Historical awareness brought with it other major teachings and subjects as the thinking of people advanced. Subjects such as philosophy, knowledge of ancient cultures, literature and the history of biblical documents, and many others were introduced in institutions of learning (Smit, 2015:6-8). In addition, what was so significant about this period was the presence of scholars who noticed a growing gulf between social location and the church when it came to interpretation (Pelikan, 2006:99-117; Donahue, 2006:155-160).

With these developments taking place in this era, and the values of biblical texts being reduced within the church, women's public image improved slightly, though their roles were still defined within the realm of a home. The Saylor Foundation (n.d.:1-4) contends that women maintained the same usual roles of wife, mother and daughter within a home, while their reproductive roles were greatly emphasised as they were not allowed to take up professions. Their primary duty was defined as satisfying the needs of a man in fulfilling his happiness.

Barbara Cattunar (2014:1-9) describes various views which philosophers were engaged with for the purpose of putting women in the position where they belong – that is, on an equal level to that of men. This is in view of what was happening within this society, which had a less strictly hierarchical class system. For the women it was believed that their innate feminine characteristics were perceived as inferior, weak and childish. One theme running through from the Greco-Roman period CE to the Enlightenment was that women were regarded as sexually seductive, but in another sense they were seen as pure, good loving wives, and virtuous mothers if restricted to the home.

Among the notable philosophers whom Cattunar (2014:2-3) discusses is John Locke, who envisioned that all people are born without innate ideas but that all knowledge is acquired after one comes into this world. He notes that the notion that men are superior beings than women was an invention of men which is reversible. What is surprising is that Locke believed in the suppression of women as he called it – “that's the woman's lot though not her destiny”.

In response to Locke, Claude Adrien Helvetius said nothing in human being is innate; all knowledge is acquired without regard to sexual or ethnic differences.

Helvetius said men and women do have the same kind of brain and intellectual abilities; what differs is the education opportunities that is offered to women and that is what makes them vulnerable. If they are given the necessary education, they will be equal to men. Equality for women and men was not given its due attention because of the embedded patriarchal culture that was inbuilt within the society. This era saw women not attaining equal status to that of men (Cattunar, 2014:3). The good part about this period is that discussions about women to be given that equality was addressed as the philosophers of the time engaged in heavy debates trying to solicit this equality.¹¹

I will now address the reception of 1 Corinthians 14 in the modern and postmodern eras.

2.2.6 Reception of 1 Corinthians 14 in the modern and postmodern eras

The reception history of 1 Corinthians 14 refers to the way this text has been read, received, interpreted and appropriated by those who use it.

We saw in the Enlightenment era that the Bible had lost ground regarding its authority and its use in moral construction within society. But for modern and postmodern people this book became good news shared in many different contexts. This is because the church is viewed as a hermeneutical community in which the Bible is read and interpreted (Jorgensen, 2006:260-262). It is also noticeable that as a community we understand the biblical texts in the way they speak and address us within our specific contexts. Even though we have differences in cultures and traditions, these cultural and traditional differences which dictate how we coexist (men and women) within societies should be acknowledged and respected (West and Dube, 2000:29-50; Carroll, 2000:184-196).

Because of the nature of the text of 1 Corinthians 14, many people have received it in several different ways as a result of the different approaches and questions interpreters have used to understand it. Some seem to have done justice to the text, while others have not; some have ultimately produced good results, while others have not. Some have indeed had good intentions, while others do not as they continue to insist that the text (1 Cor14:34-35) is one that does not allow women to

¹¹ One result of these debates was the emergence of salons. Salons can be regarded as places (clubs) where women could present their views without being intimidated or silenced. Today this can be compared to organisations such as the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (known as “The Circle”).

take up leadership both in church and culture (cf. 1.1.1). As a result, to construct the reception history of the text becomes a huge challenge.

In the modern and the postmodern period there is a wealth of literature that has been produced concerning what 1 Corinthians 14 says, particularly when we talk about women.

2.2.7 How different interpreters view 1 Corinthians 14 in the postmodern period

Different interpreters view 1 Corinthians 14 as being about the conduct of worship in the church (cf. Horsley, 1998:179-180), and how the worship was supposed to be conducted in Corinthian worshiping assemblies using the gifts given to them. This is presented in two major parts: the use of the gift of tongues (which is difficult to understand and requires an interpreter) and the use of the gift of prophecy (which is spoken in a known language that can be heard by everyone). These two gifts are then contrasted with each other. The good part about Paul on this issue is his approach to resolving the conflict (Ruef, 1977:147-156) within the congregation of Corinth.

At this point I consider how 1 Corinthians 14 is viewed by different interpreters. In the postmodern period interpreters of 1 Corinthians have focused on different topics arising from 1 Corinthians 14, for instance, unity in diversity, tongues, prophecies and women. There have been a range of different interpretation on each of these topics, leading to a variety of meanings for worshipers. This may have led to some confusion about how to understand this text. Therefore, in this section I address 1 Corinthian 14 stage by stage in the light of some of the most influential of these interpretations in order to examine the impact of this text in communities where it is applied.

2.2.7.1 First Corinthians 14:1-5

In these verses Paul defines the model that must be followed by the congregation as they come to worship God in their assemblies. Paul planned to define the model because he noticed the problem that had arisen as a result of speaking in tongues and some prophesying during the service. This confusion and disorder arose as members and leaders of the congregation could not wait for one another to speak. Paul calls on the members to pursue love, which can enrich others, and to strive for gifts that edify, build, console and strengthen the body of Christ. He then moves on to talk about the named gifts, tongues and prophecy, and their characteristics (Lenski, 1963:575-580).

2.2.7.2 *First Corinthians 14:6-19*

This section specifically deals with public worship in terms of tongues and prophecy, and how the two gifts can be utilised for the benefit of all the members of the congregation, so that each member who attends the worship is edified and experiences spiritual growth. The two gifts are explained, whereby speaking in tongues is downplayed and the gift of prophecy is encouraged among church members. People who speak in a tongue speak to themselves in their spirit and only God understands them, apart from their own personal spiritual growth. The one who speaks in tongues needs to pray for the gift of interpretation, or there should be someone who can interpret for them so that the audience can hear the message God has for them and they may respond and say, 'Amen'.

Prophecy, however, is different in that what the person speaks is heard by all who are present without there being the need for interpretation. Paul, therefore, favours prophecy for its simplicity and clarity, without needing an interpreter. He gives some examples that could have been familiar with the worshipers at Corinth of how important it is to use the language that is understood by everyone. The church at Corinth is then challenged to evaluate the position of the use of tongues in the worship service and to take up the gift of prophecy for its constructive power (Talbert, 1987:86-90; Lenski, 1963:582-596).

2.2.7.3 *First Corinthians 14:20-25*

This section covers the admonition part where Paul asks the church at Corinth not to behave as infants in their way of dealing with the issue of prophecy and tongues, but to be mature in their conduct and listen to him. Verse 22 makes it clear why they should behave in a mature manner. It is because God had sent prophets to Israel to speak their word but God's people would not listen, so God sent the Assyrians who spoke in a foreign language, which was still a problem for the people of God. The same would apply here, where tongues leave the hearts of the unbelievers unchanged (Lenski, 1963:660-662).

Paul now brings prophecy into its rightful place, where the hearts of unbelievers are turned towards God because they are convicted of their guilt and are enriched with God's message. The outward appearance will become visible as a sinner submits to the authority of God by saying God is really present among you.

Prophecy leads to the growth of the church in a way that speaking in tongues does not; therefore, the church at Corinth should not be self-centred but should focus on its growth and keep a link with outsiders.

2.2.7.4 First Corinthians 14:26-33a

First Corinthians 14:26-33a forms a very good background to understanding the subsequent verses (verses 33b-35) in that Paul sets the stage for what is to follow. The next part (verses 34-35) has sometimes mistakenly been treated as an interpolation or an insertion from another source when the context of 1 Corinthians 14:26-33a has not been taken into account.

Paul here alludes to his previous discussion on prophecy and tongues, and how these two gifts have impacted negatively on the Corinthian community. He begins by stating “so therefore” to describe the consequence of the state of affairs of what he has just finished talking about in the previous pericope and introducing what he is yet to say in moments to come. Following Thiselton (2000:1147), who has done extensive work on this text, the passage is one of the most complicated to deal with as it concerns matters of worship at Corinth, which was performed in the most acrimonious way. Each worshiper wanted to show off the gift that he/she possessed by putting it into practice and without waiting for each other, everyone just burst out speaking uncontrollably.

For Paul, this raises concern and he calls on the Corinthian church to focus on the gifts that bring edification to the community as they gather for worship. Paul’s principal motif, according to Perkins (2012:163-164), is to build; nothing should take place within the assembly that does not lead to the strengthening of God’s people. Therefore, any speech given by any leader or worshiper ought to lead to the edification of its members. For this reason, Paul put a restriction on both tongues and prophecy (Witherington, 1995:275-281) in the way they were to be conducted; thus, two or three were to speak, while others evaluated (the content of) what was spoken. This was to ensure that the church remained within the framework of the worship.

With this kind of regulation, order should have returned to a church that was being thrown into discord by some of the Corinthian members (Ciampa and Rosner, 2010:708-718). For God, through the Spirit whom they were worshiping, is a God of order and of peace, as Paul had observed (Perkins, 2012:159-160).

Having covered the essence of prophecy and tongues, Paul enters another level of the discussion where he mentions other gifts that were also in practice in the church. He stresses the order to be followed in putting these gifts to good use. The limitation is also set for speaking in tongues; at least two or three speakers may speak and others should listen, and if there is no interpreter silence should be observed (Kistemaker, 1993:495-504).

The same with prophecy – two or three people are to speak and others are given the privilege to discern what has been spoken. This order, according to Paul, is in line with what God desires. When this order is followed, all members in the assembly of worship will experience growth (Lenski, 1963:607-613; Talbert, 1987:87-91). After discussing the order that should prevail in the church, Paul then moves on to address the issue of women, which posed another challenge in the worship service. This is my next point of discussion.

2.2.7.5 First Corinthians 14:33b-35

Oppressive structures and the marginalisation of women have taken centre stage in churches and communities because of the way we have come to understand and interpret this text that is attributed to Paul.

The apostle has just concluded in verse 33a calling on the Corinthians to note that God is not involved in disorder or confusion in any of the congregations spread across the board, the Corinthian assembly itself included. So then, whatever they do should carry the character of God, who is the source of peace and order. Paul then turns to talk about women with a surprising statement:

As in all the congregations of the Lord's people women should be silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about anything, they should ask their husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church (1 Cor 14:33b-35 NIV).

Several questions arise as to what Paul implied in this text. Was there a problem with women speaking in the church? What about verse 11:5, where the authority to pray and prophesy has already been granted to women? One could ask whether Paul is contradicting himself on what he has already said in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16?

An example of how this text can be interpreted negatively for women can be found in the work of Steve Atkerson. He says that because Paul talks in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 about women who should not hold office, women are not allowed to hold office to this present day. If they do, then it becomes an act of disgrace or shameful according to God's order of creation. Here is what he says among the many arguments he has produced on the text:

... Instead, women should "ask their own husbands at home." Why? Because "it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church" (14:35). If Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declares a certain activity to be "disgraceful," then it is as if Christ Himself were declaring it to be disgraceful. Ultimately, how do we know what pleases our Lord unless He tells us? In God's household, it is disgraceful for a woman to speak to the gathering of the church (2014:6).

In reaction to such views Ciampa and Rosner (2010:718-730) have attempted to give their suggestions about the women in this text, stating that the women here could have assumed the role that was theirs and Paul turns to rebuke them for that. This comes because of the cultural values of the first century Greco-Roman world which, they proceed to say, cannot continue as our environments are quite diverse from those of the first century.

Affirming the views of Ciampa and Rosner, PHEME PERKINS (2012:164-165) also says that these verses reflect what was happening in the first century, when women were conditioned by their cultural values within the Greco-Roman society in which it was questionable for a woman to speak in public. Perkins also suggests that Paul is directing this statement to female prophets who got involved in evaluating prophecies, but not all women were included here.

Bray and Oden (2006:142-145) suggest another view: that Paul barred women from speaking because of what they term as women being authors of the original sin of their disobedience to the law of God. This view is taken after analysing the history of the ancient writers, such as Chrysostom and others.

But Joseph Fitzmyer (2008:528-531), after presenting various views on this text, describes the women speaking as those who were married and who found freedom for their new-found faith in Jesus, and who with that freedom had gone to the extreme. Hence, Paul tries to regulate them by calling for silence in worship. Burge

and Hill (2012:1301-1304), while affirming the married women, adds that the women who were being disruptive in the service were frustrated women, who could not obey their husbands at home.

This is what Paul strongly opposed, while appealing to the law of the Old Testament (for most scholars this refers to Genesis 3:16). Meanwhile, contributing to the same debate on the silencing of women, Beardslee (1994:137-140) sees the passage to be a later addition coming from the Pauline tradition, which wanted to relegate these women to a middle level where they belonged and not where they were putting themselves.

In the opinion of Leon Morris (1989:197-198), a British scholar, the silencing of women comes far back from the Jewish background and also the Greco-Roman times when women were not allowed to speak in public places, but rather could only speak and express their view to and through their husbands. He further understands the prohibition as pointing to the Matrons who got themselves involved in the interpretation of the Word of God which was delivered by the prophets. He also points out the educational levels of the women at that time which were very low; hence their knowledge on issues could have been somewhat inadequate. This is because men were most often considered for educational opportunities.

Discussing the same subject, George Ladd (1987:528), an American New Testament scholar, understands this text to mean that women were looked down upon from Judaism to the Greco-Roman world of the first century, and he states that this is the strongest reason why Paul commanded women to silence. In this case he says “women are to show their subordination by never participating in public worship without having their heads veiled” (1 Cor 11:4-6). Furthermore, he says Paul does not allow women to speak publicly in the gathering for worship. It may be stated here that Ladd understands this text literally, unlike Luke T. Johnson (1986:285), another American scholar, who understands this text as dealing with social decency, which had broken down in the Corinthian church, as the main reason why Paul had to silence women in the passage.

Thiselton (2000:1147-1166), who has dealt extensively with the Greek text, puts forward the following detailed analysis: the passage is a complicated one in that Paul uses terms and words which convey different meanings. Yet the usage of such terms or words would imply that the receivers of Paul’s message were aware of what Paul was saying to them in their own world. Contributing to the same argument

Bassler (2012:564-565), a scholar in New Testament studies, affirms that the inclusion of these strong words in this part of the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is unfortunate, because this has affected the way Paul is being read and understood in his relation to women. The liberating aspects that Paul has been identified with elsewhere in Pauline correspondence are in this case obscured and subverted. The very fact that these words are attributed to Paul as his own words simply creates an ambiguity, making it more difficult to assess Paul's own words on women.

New Testament scholars have expressed different views on the passage. Some say that the text is an interpolation; others say that it is a quotation from the Corinthians themselves; still others are citing the Pauline tradition.

Those who say that the text was not written by Paul look at the textual variations within the text. It is argued that the text does not have the same verbal range as the theme being discussed. Also, there is a problem that disrupts the discussion causing the understanding of the text to be difficult. Those who attribute it to the Corinthians themselves do so because Paul makes a quotation from his earlier letters 6:12; 7:1; and 10:23 (Thiselton, 2000:1154-1166). Having analysed 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35, I cannot conclude without mentioning verses 36-40, which act as Paul's concluding remarks to the whole of 1 Corinthians 14. What then are Paul's concluding words? This is discussed below.

2.2.7.6 First Corinthians 14:36-40: An analysis of Paul's authoritative words

Trying to give instruction to the young church Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 14:1-25, 26-35 about spiritual gifts, and how they are to be implemented and used for the benefit of all members. He now concludes in verses 36-40. In these verses, it is interesting to note how Paul challenges the Corinthians to listen to him. For the words he has spoken or written to them (the Corinthians) do not come from him but the Lord. It is clear from what Paul is stating here that he had anticipated the Corinthian assembly would defend their position and argue about some issues that were raised (Witherington, 1995:285-290).

By asking for order and peace when these gifts were in operation in the church Paul shows that he was quite aware of the impending opposition. Pheme Perkins (2012:165) says Paul is reinforcing what he has already said about those who spoke in tongue (verses 27-28), prophecy (verses 29-30) and the women whose talking was disrupting the worship (verses 34-35). Paul had given rules or guidelines for the

church to follow. But in the event of opposition from them, he is determined to challenge the members by insisting that his word is from the Lord; therefore, it should not be doubted and questioned. Hence, he reacts as he does in verses 36-40.

Therefore, people who regarded themselves to be a prophet from God or, those who could have been spiritually sound, should only articulate words that had authority from Christ. Those words were not their own, but were the Lord's own command and therefore should not be questioned, regardless of the persons involved and their status within the Corinthian community (Crüsemann, 2000:19-36).

In Thiselton's view (2000:1162-1166), the stress put on verses 37-39 goes to show that Paul has emphasised what he has already said in the whole of chapter 14. For that reason, everything must be adhered to, not only by some individuals who practised speaking in tongues or who prophesied, but also by all members of the church.

The rest of the verses (39-40) sum up the chapter of 1 Corinthians 14, which seeks to emphasise the need for order and decency as the church meets in worship: "Be eager to prophesy and do not forbid speaking in tongues" (ζηλοῦτε τὸ προφητεῦειν καὶ τὸ λαλεῖν μὴ κωλύετε γλώσσαις). However, a condition is set in verse 40: "But everything should be done in a fitting way and orderly way" (πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω). It looked logical and natural for Paul in the final stages to conclude his discussion on the whole chapter of spiritual gifts in this way, as the entire pericope from verses 1-40 presents itself in that order (Preato, 2005). The challenge is therefore in the hands of the church to maintain order and peace as it continues to be a witness to the world. This is how 1 Corinthians 14 has been understood and interpreted for the most part of the modern and postmodern era. Affirming women in their God-given positions as leaders in the churches has been a subject of debate for centuries. This is intensified by the different cultural and traditional background at the back of our minds.

Having analysed some of the many views on 1 Corinthians 14, it is interesting to note that a lot has been said about Paul and the women in Corinth. This has been so because of the different hermeneutical approaches which have been associated with this text as well as different schools of thought on the subject. By way of looking at the whole text of 1 Corinthians 14 and the flow of Paul's discussion, interpreters do not differ much on what precedes this passage (1 Cor 14:1:33) in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries. The difference comes in vv. 34 -35, where some scholars and

theologians opt for theories such as an interpolation or insertion, while others still attribute these verses to Paul. The fact is that no matter how this can be explained, if the text appears in the way it has been laid out within the Bible (most often the vernacular translations) it will always generate debate. Meanwhile ordinary readers of the Bible do not know or understand the background that led Paul to state his case in the way he did (1 Cor 14:34-35). While this might not be a challenge elsewhere in the world, in Africa it poses a challenge and more particularly for the Zambian women.

For now, my next task is to discuss the relationship between the two passages 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 and 11:5, to find out if these two passages could co-exist or not. Some think Paul was contradicting himself to ban women from speaking in the church, while he affirmed them in other places. It is important to clarify the difference or the similarity to understand Paul and how he reacted to the women better.

2.2.7.7 First Corinthians 14:33b-35 in relation to 11:5

In an analysis of the two chapters 11:5 and 14:33b-35, Talbert (1987:86-96) shows that there is a relationship between the two passages, in that these passages relate to worship in the church. The two passages allude to how worship was to be conducted among God's holy people. Paul promotes, among other things, order and decency as the church comes together for worship and states that the leaders should not borrow certain practices from other cults that seemed to have infiltrated into the church, but his critics seemed to disagree with him (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1978:160-161).

Thiselton (2000:1156-1158) concurs with Schüssler Fiorenza (1978:160-161), who says that Paul could have been concerned about the practice in the cults where women might have played bigger leadership roles. Otherwise, the text is not meant to silence women or refuse them leadership roles. Morris (1989:148-149) affirms that the passage 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 deals with women who felt they were free in Christ to pray without headgear, contrary to the custom practised by Jewish women which Paul himself supported. But John Heil (2005:190) adopts a slightly different perspective by suggesting that 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 is all about men and women who needed to respect and maintain their place in the church as the order of creation for the harmony and peace of the church to prevail. In my view the two passages do not create any conflict, but should be seen to be in harmony as both texts are trying to cultivate a worship that is godly and nurtures the intentions of our God, as John 4:23-24 says (taking into account the social-cultural values behind this text).

2.2.7.8 What challenges did women bring into the church?

Thiselton (2000:1159-1162) wrestles with this question, which has revolved so much around cultural and traditional values. It seems that private and public spaces were the core issues that created problems in the church, as the first-century core values of the Greco-Roman Empire were based on honour and shame, 'public' concepts we shall discuss in Chapter 4 under 4.4.4.

Thiselton explains that in the Jewish culture, as well as in the Greco-Roman world, it was considered dishonourable for a woman to speak to or to question her husband in public. Women were not allowed to appear in public, as that was the domain of men. Women were to be confined to a place called home. Corinthian women were seemingly posing such a challenge in the church, especially when the prophets who spoke the Word of God in the church had uttered their prophecies. He further says that women took the challenge of questioning matters that could have been addressed at home by their own husbands. This was bringing ridicule and shame to their husbands, who were also present at the service. Thus, the text should be understood in the context where its aim is not to silence women but to put a stop to an attitude that could have turned the worship into a question-and-answer session. This is how postmodern thinking continued to view women, whose standing in the church has not changed much from those of the early church through to the twentieth century. Women are still under the control of men and in many instances women suffer oppression and marginalisation under patriarchal cultures.

I have so far discussed the reception history of the text in different periods as related to 1 Corinthians 14 and its interpretive environment, as well as how the text has been used, and continues to be used, by various interpreters to formulate an opinion on how they feel about the place of women, and what direction the church and society should take on women. The different perceptions of women by different communities in relation to 1 Corinthians 14 over the centuries have had diverse effects on the dignity of women. The relationship of church and culture has contributed negatively to this effect, which is a sad development. I now look at some of the critical voices of concern speaking about the injustices, oppression and other vices that have occurred because of the many biblical texts that portray women as not fully human, including 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15. This is important so that we will be able to appreciate the struggles that have occurred in

trying to affirm women as equal in status to men as God intended it to be from the very beginning of creation, as shown in Genesis 1:27 (understood within its socio-cultural setting) so that we may all live dignified lives.

2.3 Voices of concern over women's freedom in the light of 1 Corinthians 14

The history of interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 cannot conclude without looking at the views of liberation theologians and scholars who on different levels and at various times have spoken about the issues of injustice, suppression and oppression experienced by women. These vices have often been evident at different times in every generation in the church and in society. Vorster (2005:3-8) alludes to the fact that the position of women in churches and in society has always been neglected, adding that this has been the case for many centuries. Vorster refers to Schüssler Fiorenza, who attributes such an attitude to religion, which she says has continued to play a significant role in the domination of women by men both in the church and society using the Bible. But in this contemporary period, Vorster (2005:5-8) continues, the liberation of women by faith communities has triggered heavy debates. These debates are focused on women's leadership in the form of ordination in the church, which has been seen by some as a problem in the past decade.

Notwithstanding this stance, scholars, theologians and ethicists have formed the view that if women cannot quickly take up the same positions of leadership in the church as the men, then their position will remain a source of worry and continue to be inferior for many years to come. This perception of inferiority might as well continue to flourish in all the other spheres of the church life and society, as has been witnessed in many churches and communities. It is therefore essential that this situation should be reversed (Vorster, 2005:3-8).

For many the domination of women comes mainly through four routes. The first is the church's abusive use of Scripture, which is a result of the way in which Paul is being quoted on 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15, together with African cultural practices that are masked in normal day-to-day living which treats women as being inferior to men (Moyo, 2015:179-189; Zulu, 2015:81-94). The second is the patriarchal hierarchical structures that existed in the first century Greco-Roman world propagated by Greek philosophers (Downing, 2013:9-34, 201-203), which had an influence on the New Testament as the writers/authors of the New Testament lived during this period (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1983:53-56, 251-259). Third,

there is a general understanding and depiction of God as a male deity through our use of language, for instance, by using the pronoun 'he' at the expense of the feminine use of 'she,' when God's gender is nonspecific. Fourth, our own cultural traditions have elevated male power over and above female power in our daily experiences. These reasons have contributed to justifying and entrenching unbalanced gender relations in both the church and society; the case in point is the way the RCZ exerted a dominant power over women for many years and continues to do so in subtler ways. For instance, although on paper acknowledging women's equality with men, the church does not in practice treat women in the same way it treats men, because it does not afford women the same opportunities for advancement in the church hierarchy.

It is at this point that invitations are being extended to join hands with those who are already a community of advocates such as the World Council of Churches (WCC), World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), and on the local level, the CCZ and EFZ, which are running programmes through churches that are affiliated with them, creating public sensitisation to the struggle for the freedom of all humankind. The CCZ and EFZ have together established gender desks¹² to deal with gender-based violence amongst church member affiliates. The researcher is one of the facilitators of this project.

When it comes to gender-based violence and injustices, these vices are taking centre stage in the lives of many women in Africa by the very fact that men have dominated women with an attitude that the Bible supports them in doing so. These acts of dominance are viewed from the perspective of the cultural masks worn by men which, according to Edwin Zulu (2015:81-94), have to be removed in order to bring freedom to women. Therefore, silence in the areas of oppression, suppression and marginalisation of women should be a major concern for all of us, especially in the time of HIV/AIDS, which is ravaging many African homes.

Men, who are supposed to emulate the teachings of Jesus in setting humanity free (John 4:34; 8:1-11), are the ones in the forefront subordinating women on the basis of cultural values and biblical texts such as 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35. In this way, the Bible as the Word of God and life to humanity (though written by humans and dominated by men) has been misread, misinterpreted by many, and is instead

¹² This is more of a department with fulltime employees working with member churches to sensitise them on issues of gender-based violence against women and children. It also serves as an advocacy team on human dignity.

used as a tool to deny women their God-given identity, ability and power with the divine.

Liberation theology offers a possible solution to this situation. This type of theology is concerned with freeing oppressed people and achieving equality for everyone. For this type of theology to be able to achieve this goal, it needs to be accepted and affirmed by all people, according to a South African practical theologian, Denise Ackermann (1998:17).

She notes the role played by liberation theology in any liberation movement ought to have its starting point from within the boundaries of analysing what women experience in their daily lives. All those who are oppressed and marginalised should call on the oppressors to be accountable and to revisit their oppressive elements through which the potential for transformation becomes a reality (Ackermann, 2014:4).

In her quest to define liberation theology, Ackermann (1988:17) views liberation theology not through the lens of addressing males or females as oppressed or oppressors, but rather through addressing what she calls a system of hierarchical structure within the church and society, where the oppression of women is categorised in terms of race, class and marital status. Therefore, she proposes the need for a review of the way theology is done, where the hierarchical structure that dominates ought to be broken down and attention should be given to a partnership in which men and women are viewed as equal partners within the framework of God's creation.

Njoroge and Reamonn (1994:30) reaffirm what Ackermann has said by stating that "A call for partnership is a call for participation and community building where mutual love, justice and respect for all life are the building blocks" in a community. Such a partnership and the gifts given by God should be affirmed by all, according to Kapuma (2001:5), a Malawian theologian, who concludes that therefore no one must be seen as a superior being by the other. Such liberation is what should be sought by those engaged in any kind of liberation movement.

But coming back to Ackermann (1996:34), in her conclusion she observes that we can be identified as true liberationists by focusing on reclaiming justice and freedom for all humanity and for healing in the lives of those affected groups. Ackermann (1985:41) invites the church as a body of Christ to make use of gifts that the church has at its disposal to be fully utilised in the service of one another, just as Jesus calls all believers to servanthood.

This idea, therefore, falls in line with God's word, the Bible, which is there to liberate us by removing the burden of bondage and set us free. The example is Jesus Christ, who affirmed the dignity of all people – the lame, the sick, the outcasts, women and children who suffered rejection by their communities of the time. This freedom is what Jesus died for and the church ought to teach and preach its gospel so that it can unveil the traditions and cultures, which have for a long time hindered the progress of others, in this case women and children. In this vein, it becomes critical for any reader and interpreter of God's word at this time to be well versed in the hermeneutical exegetical tools that are made available to the exegete through theological training. This is especially so for the ministers within the RCZ as we have received the call to lead the congregations to true liberation found in Jesus Christ, which should allow congregants to realise true freedom, freedom that is meant for all humankind. For the gospel to qualify as good news, it should be liberative in nature and affirm justice for all and not marginalise any group.

Commenting on the marginalisation of people on the basis of their gender, race, ethnicity, age and abilities, Isabel Apawo Phiri (2006:121-123), a female theologian originally from Malawi, says this is a way of undermining and challenging what has been given by God. She cites examples of women's frustration that gender difference is used to separate women from men and regard their gifts as inferior in value.

Phiri (2004:422-431) rekindles her hopes that one day we may see the end of sexism and welcome the establishment of a more just society of men and women who seek each other's wellbeing. She says that women theologians are actively involved in seeking restoration in the present life from death-promoting activities so that holistic healing is given to today's world, which is polluted with HIV/AIDS.

In agreement with Phiri is Linda Thomas (2007:11-19), an African-American scholar, womanist theologian and anthropologist, who speaks strongly against oppressing women in church and culture. She says missions have always been God's missions, through which Godself by the Spirit continues to reach out to all humankind, regardless of their gender. However, she says these missions are disfigured by ideologies of economic, political and social systems, which create situations that oppress African women in ways that violently destroy the *imago Dei* (image of God) that is found in each African woman. What should be known,

according to her, is the fact that the oppressing of African women is in fact an oppression of Godself image and energy.

Thomas is of the view that church and society should live with open arms of fellowship welcoming all humanity, both men and women, into one fold, receiving and experiencing the Word of God as one people and cherishing the *imago Dei* found as an imprint on people with whom we do not share anything in common.

Adding the male voice to that of the females who have already spoken about the injustices that women are going through, Daniël Louw (2009:95-110), a retired Professor in Practical Theology, Pastoral Care and Counselling at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, discusses gender in its relation to feminism and highlights cardinal issues relating how feminism should be understood, and how wo/men can live in relationship and harmony with one another.

Louw (2009:99), who refers to Culbertson, looks at four views which contribute to patriarchy: (a) “that male physical strength is part of intended natural law;” (b) that families and societies are naturally based on aggression, domination, procreation, and spouse and child protection; (c) that property, production and the distribution of goods are the natural domain of men; (d) that male superiority, dominance and privilege are a part of received religious revelation.

The four views are points of power behind oppressive behaviour that result in the domination of one gender over another. Louw insists that feminism has come to fight beliefs such as those outlined above and seeks to dismantle any walls that may want to hide any form of oppression, suppression and marginalisation, so that both women and men may live in freedom. Feminism should therefore be understood as one kind of theology that understands men and women as created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26-27), who are equal in authority and power (Galatians 3:28), and ought to enjoy life in its fullest sense (John 10:10). That is, feminism tries to remove (deconstruct) all death-dealing powers that exist in communities that view others (particularly women and children) in negative terms, and it promotes the gospel of Jesus Christ that brings freedom to women and all people of good will. These views are also shared by Jones, a South African scholar and Anglican priest serving in the office of Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, (see Jones, 2000:14).

To achieve this freedom in the most successful way, Gauntlett (2002:2) proposes that men – who are most of the time the perpetrators – are the ones who must revisit and change their actions by facilitating change that enables them to value

and cherish love, family and other relationships. Doing this would require men to revisit their understanding of power, possessions and achievements. Nussbaum (2001:62-80) takes a slightly different view, contending that the starting point for attaining the freedom for all people should be a broad understanding of human beings and human functioning, and thinking about human equality in terms of having equal abilities and gifts as is affirmed in the Bible (Galatians 3:28). The focal point must be on what is common to all people and not their differences, valuing human life above all else, so that everyone can live in a more dignified manner.

Differing on the approach to fight for the rights of women is Ksarjian, at the time of her writing a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago and also a member of the committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion. Ksarjian (1998:46) notes that feminist and liberation theology should not be used by scholars who seek to use the Bible as a proof-text for defining women's identities. These scholars are seeking legitimacy from a patriarchal document written by men, edited by men, and canonised by men, thriving in male-dominated cultures. Ksarjian continues that the Bible is so much a part of a culture that many scholars, feminist or otherwise, do not realise they are defending it when they think they are critiquing it. She proposes to work through the historical developments and see what has happened in the past, so as to reconstruct the present without using biblical texts because of the many challenges they pose.

Feminist and liberation theology are both concerned with fighting for justice for marginalised people, although these theologians might disagree about biblical interpretation and use. Such types of theology could be useful when considering communities such as the RCZ, especially because Zambia does not have a faculty of theology at any of its universities, so exposure to different types of theology is not occurring widely.

My next task is to address the understanding of first Corinthians in the RCZ in view of women's ministries and how the Word of God influenced the direction of the church. In the first chapter of the dissertation I laid the foundation by giving background information about the problem of the RCZ not allowing women into all the ministries of the church. From the inception of the RCZ church in 1899, women played informal leadership roles. However, women's leadership was accepted formally in the church in three stages of formal decision-making: in 1989, 1998 and

2000. This means that for a period of 90 years RCZ women were only involved in informal ministries.

I first and foremost consider how women were not allowed to be a part of the leadership circle of the church as a result of the influence of Paul's comment on women in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. And secondly, I consider how women were permitted into all the ministries of the church serving side by side with men in the church. I discuss the reasons for this in 3.2.8.

2.4 Understanding 1 Corinthians 14 in the RCZ in view of women's ministries

This discussion is undertaken firstly against the background of RCZ being part of the generations of people joining the interpretation the text of 1 Corinthians 14 over the centuries, and secondly, in the light of the empirical research which follows in Chapter 3 and also research question 3 which asks: Since 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 seems to have influenced the RCZ processes of decision making regarding women in leadership in crucial ways, how has this text been received by the RCZ from 1899 up to 2000 when the Church allowed women in all ministries of the Church? And how could this be ascertained? Bearing this in mind, I hypothesised that within the RCZ 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 was received with the understanding that women were not allowed to take up leadership roles in the church. Rather the RCZ formed part of the long reception history of this text as it had been inherited from its predecessors; the RCZ also followed suit in regarding the text in dual ways.

The Synod council had often deliberated about when women were going to be considered for leadership at all levels. The response was that the Bible does not give women permission to venture into any leadership positions. Here now I will deal with how the RCZ ministers, evangelists and other preachers (elders) charged with the responsibility of handling the Word of God had so far adhered to the teaching of the church as prescribed in its Constitution under Article 4, 5 and 10 (1) of the confession and order which state:

2.4.1 Article 4: Scripture and doctrine

- 1) RCZ is founded on the Bible as the holy and infallible Word of God;
- 2) The doctrine of the RCZ is contained in the doctrinal standards, namely, the Belgic Confession and Westminster Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism

and the Canon of Dort (1618-19), or such other confessions as may be approved by the Synod Council;

- 3) The RCZ also recognises and subscribes to the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed through which the church expresses her connectedness with the Catholic Christian Church;
- 4) The liturgy of the RCZ shall conform to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as the centre of worship (RCZ Constitution, 2010:12).

2.4.2 Article 5: The governance of the Church

The RCZ shall be governed by:

- a) The Word of God;
- b) The Constitution and by-laws;
- c) The decisions of the councils; through
- d) The Presbyterian system of governance (RCZ Constitution, 2010:12).

2.4.3 Article 10 (1): The office of the minister or evangelist

The office of the Minister shall include proclamation of the Word of God and the service of prayers, administration of the sacraments, leading worship services catechetical instruction, Congregation overnight governance and administration of discipline over the Congregation. He/she shall also be responsible for initiation and supervision of works of charity and mission together with elders and deacons/deaconesses house visitation, pastoral care of the Congregation and leading Congregation council-meetings (RCZ Constitution 2010:11).

This new constitution spells out who this minister and evangelist are who carry out the outlined functions as an ordained minister or evangelist in the use of the pronoun “he/she”, while the old constitution only used the pronoun “he” – this old constitution was one left by the missionaries. The pronoun “he/she” shows now who has the powers or authority to act on behalf of the church as male/female ministers and evangelists both engage in the preaching of the Word of God.

I wish to state here that some of the church records of the RCZ were not available. This includes some of the minutes, reports and letters which could not be found at the time this research was being undertaken. I depended on a few documents which were available at Justo Mwale University archives, whose resources were very

limited. A few that were found were in Afrikaans and difficult for me to read. The archives of the University of Stellenbosch had limited resources on the subject. The head office in Zambia did not have the necessary documents because (a) during the move of the head office from Katete to Lusaka some documents went missing; (b) during the year 2000 to 2001 the church experienced a break-away church which formed what is known today as BIGOCA (Bible Gospel Church in Africa) and the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of the church was one of those who left leaving only a shell of an office; and (c) in the recent past thieves broke in on two occasions and stole computers where some information was stored.

The DRC mission or mother church was contacted at the time when this dissertation was being undertaken but did not respond in time. And even if they had responded in time, they also would have depended on what was supplied by the RCZ in Zambia. This left me with a few options: to use some of the personal copies of minutes and reports I had and those which I have already mentioned above – thus minutes and reports of 1981, 1983, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1996, 1998 and 2000.

From 1979 questions as to why the Synod of the RCZ was not utilising women in its church offices were being asked by the general membership of the church. These questions were directed to the Presbyteries, who in turn forwarded them to Synod. The first of such questions came from Migodi¹³ Presbytery in 1979; the question was:

Why does the RCZ leave out women in the leadership of the church? In Nyanja, *Kodi ni chifukwa chani chalichi yathu siigwiritsa nchinto adzimai mu utsogoleri wake mu mipingo monga mipingo yina monga UCZ* (Synod Report, April 1979).

Answering this question, the Synod council said the Bible does not permit women to become leaders in the church, and those who had forwarded this question to Synod were asked to read 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15. A word of caution was also given that reprimanded the Presbyteries and congregations not to entertain such questions. The Synod council also advised that this question should not find its way to Synod again. But in 1981 another question was sent to Synod. The question reads as follows:

¹³ Migodi changed its name to Copperbelt and was later subdivided into the Nkana, Mufulira and Ndola Presbyteries.

Why has the RCZ not included women leaders within the church ministries?
In Nyanja, *Kodi ni chifukwa chani Mpingo wa RCZ sungwiritsa nchito a adzimai pa utsogoleri mumpingo?* (Synod report 1981).

And the Synod council through its *ad hoc* committee debated this question and concluded as follows:

The Bible does state that women cannot lead or preside over men and 1 Corinthians 14:34-36; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 1 Peter 3:1-6 should be read which are very clear and straightforward and do not need any further explanations (Synod Minutes, S/81/94).

The Synod at the time stressed it would maintain the status quo and emphasised that no such questions should be sent to Synod again. Synod stressed that we should not allow ourselves not be swayed by seeing what other churches are doing and practising. But a repeat of the same question still from Copperbelt Presbytery came to the Synod council just a year after the Synod council of 1981. In 1983, the question was:

Has the time not come for the church to allow women in its ministries to serve as deaconesses, elders and reverends? In Nyanja, *Kodi nthawi sinafike kuti adzimai aloledwe kutumikira ngati atumiki, akulu a mpingo ndi abusa* (Synod Report, 1983; Synod minutes, S/96/83).

However, the same answer was affirmed by stating that Synod council had already stated its view on the matter (cf. S/81/94).

Nonetheless the general membership of the church seemed not to be satisfied with the answer and kept challenging leadership at all levels to explain why women were being side-lined in church leadership. In 1985 yet another question was sent to Synod council from Copperbelt Presbytery:

Is this not the right time for Synod to allow women leadership in all its ministries of the church such as deaconesses, elders and reverends? In Nyanja, *Kodi Synod azalola liti adzimai kuzenza maudindo onse monga utumiki, ukulu wa mpingo* (Synod Report 1985).

This time Synod council responded:

The status of women not to ascend to all ministries of the church is maintained; the Synod will appoint a constitutional committee to investigate this matter; and this committee shall present its findings to the Synod meeting which shall take place in 1987 (Synod Minutes S/123/85).

Following the resolution of the Synod in 1985, in 1987 Magwero Presbytery forwarded this question to Synod:

Has time not come for women to be given the opportunity to preach the word of God just as male elders do on Sundays in the RCZ? In Nyanja, *Kodi nthawi siinakwanire kuti adzimai azilalikira mau a Mulungu pa sabata monga amacitira a azikulu mu RCZ?* (Synod Report, 1987).

While this question was received by Synod, Kabwe Presbytery also sent almost the same question to Synod which read:

Is it not possible for the church to allow women to become elders and deaconesses? In Nyanja, *Kodi sikwabino kuti azimai azikalako onyang'anira ndi utumiki mu mpingo?* (Synod Report, 1987).

I should mention here that already in 1985 a constitutional committee had already been tasked to investigate the idea of women to become deaconesses and elders in the church. This only added momentum to their quick resolution of this matter. The constitutional committee presented their report to the sitting Synod of 1987 and Synod council resolved not to allow women to lead or preach the word of God on Sundays based on what was resolved in 1981. This unfortunate resolution was taken despite the many questions that congregations forwarded to Presbyteries, which were in turn forwarded to the Synod with the hope that Synod would act in favour of the women who were working so hard to develop the church.

In 1989 almost all Presbyteries had sent the questions and requests that women should be allowed to serve the church in the capacities of deaconess, elders and reverends. In this year, the Synod of the RCZ passed a resolution to allow women to serve as deaconesses after years of debate and refusal.

Synod resolves to allow women to be elected to positions of deaconesses. Synod directs all its congregations to start electing women as deaconesses right from the month of September. This decision has been taken because of the vote which has been cast whose results are 91 for and 47 against (Synod minutes, S130/89).

This was a step in the right direction, but for the positions of elders and reverends Synod council resolved that these two positions should wait to see how effectively deaconesses would perform their functions and, after four years, a view would be adopted which would be a determining factor in the whole process of taking a further

step. However, the church should be commended, for it took many years to attain this landmark.

Not many were happy with this decision of women attaining the status of deaconesses as seen from the Synod of 1991, where some Presbyteries had asked Synod to reverse its decision which allowed women deaconesses, as they said it was unscriptural. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 were the basis of their argument. This was subjected to a debate and it was agreed that women should continue to serve as deaconesses but not as elders. The Western Region Synod, held at the Youth Training Centre in Lusaka from 31st October to 7th November 1993, raised a concern which came from Matero Presbytery:

Matero presbytery wishes to find out as to why Synod resolved to allow women to the position as deaconesses. Does this position conflict with what the Bible says with regard 1 Corinthians 14:34; 11:1-12; 1 Timothy 2:9-15; Revelation 22:18? (Western Synod report 1993:30).¹⁴

The researcher's understanding of the concern that was raised by Matero Presbytery is that even though the church had passed the resolution to allow women to serve as deaconesses in the church, for years afterwards many members within the church were not comfortable with the decision, as it was believed to be against God's Word. The interpretation of these passages in the opinion of the congregations who raised this question to the Synod through Matero Presbytery was that the cited texts barred women from taking any leadership roles in the church, when in fact these texts might not represent such reading or interpretation. They asked how the church could engage women when the Bible was very clear and plain that "women should be silent in the churches," implying that they are not allowed ever to preside over men in church.

This view leaned towards a one-sided interpretation, which in the past was the focus of most of the preaching that went on in the church. It seemed like the church through its training institution at Justo Mwale Theological College offered a very specific form of training in dealing with the Word of God, and this approach was emphasised by many reverends and evangelists in the congregations. Interpretation focused mostly on a literal understanding of the biblical text without taking the socio-cultural and historical aspect of the texts into consideration.

¹⁴ Synod of the Reformed Church in Zambia of the Western Synod held at Youth Training Centre 31 October to 7 November, 1993.

In 1996 more questions were sent to Synod council (Synod Report, 1996) to allow women to take up the positions of elders and that of reverends, but the Synod response was that it was not yet time for women to ascend to those positions (Synod Minutes S/96/80). However, what was interesting was that 65 delegates to this Synod registered their names in solidarity with the oppressed women. So then from 1989, when the RCZ resolved the issue of allowing women to serve as deaconesses, ten years went by before the RCZ Synod could allow women to serve as elders in the church – a decision that came in 1998. At this Synod council, it was stated that women could serve as elders in the church

The Synod of the Reformed Church in Zambia resolves to allow women should start to serve the church on the position of elders. Therefore, those deaconesses who have served for the period of two or four years qualify to be elected to this position with immediate effect (RCZ Synod Minutes S/98/32). However, for the position of reverend the Synod resolves that the time has not yet come for them to serve in this position; a vote was cast whose results were 32 for and 82 against (Synod Minutes 1998/33).

In 1998 the bold decision that women were allowed to become elders (Synod minutes S/1998) was taken partly because of the influence of the young reverends, who at this time had come with full force to support the motion. Also, the young leaders who had assumed leadership on Synod level (such as Rev. Dr Japhet Ndhlovu, Rev. Dr Edwin Zulu and Rev. Moses Mwale) were coming with a new vision for the church. Having such leaders represent the church in many forums, both local and international, where issues related to women were discussed, it was not long before another landmark was reached. This point is discussed further in Chapter 3 under missionary orientation.

In 2000 a decision was taken that women reverends were subsequently allowed (Synod minutes S/2000). But prior to the decision of women being allowed to serve as reverends, the women at their National Conference sent a request to the Synod council to allow women to become ministers of Word and sacrament (RCZ Synod Minutes S/2000). This was resolved at their National Conference in March 2000 before the Synod council in August that same year. It was as though this was a preparatory meeting for the decision to be taken. The women based their argument on biblical texts such as Joel 2:28-29, Galatians 3:28-29 and 1 Peter 3:7. It was also a way to strengthen the decision already taken that women should be allowed to

become reverends and evangelists (the decision taken at the working Synod in 1999, when the church was celebrating its centenary, theme being passing on the gospel) (RCZ working Synod S/1999).

In the year 2000 the Synod resolved once and for all to allow women in all the ministries of the church, the last of which was the office of the ministers of the Word and sacrament.

The Synod of the Reformed Church in Zambia has resolved during this Synod sitting to allow women reverends to serve in the ministry of Word and sacrament. This decision has been arrived at after this Synod has unanimously voted to do so following the resolution of the 1999 working Synod while celebrating the centenary which agreed to authenticate this matter in this august house (Synod Minutes 2000/34).

This is how the whole process went for women to be allowed to serve all ministries of the church in the RCZ.

This section cannot end without sketching the resentments of those who did not fully support the decision to allow women's full participation in all the ministries of the church. Their concerns I now discuss below.

2.4.4 Reasons given for excluding women from the ministry of the Word and sacrament

It is important at this stage to highlight some of the critical concerns of members of the church as well as clergy about allowing female ministers in the church and hence their decision not to support women in all the ministries of the church. Some of the reasons given were that: (a) the Bible is against women standing in front of men to preach as they are the weaker vessel (1 Peter 3:7) and cannot undertake house visitations on their own; (b) women menstruate making them unclean, and therefore cannot stand in front of men during this period; even when they are in that process they cannot announce it; (c) the question as to why the Lord only appointed males as his disciples and never women has not adequately been answered; (d) during the time of Jesus, women remained on the periphery, out of the limelight, so why should they do that now; (e) if, in Paul's understanding, women ought to learn in silence, why should they want to be teachers today? (1 Timothy 2:11); (f) women should be happy and content themselves with belonging to the Women's Guild, where they can exercise their leadership skills without any interference; (g) above all else Paul does

not allow women to stand in front of men as this is tantamount to insubordination and is a shameful act, so why should the church violate Paul's principle? (1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:8-15).

The above reasons demonstrate that some of the members of the RCZ were against women leadership and their understanding of the Bible was that women should not ascend to any leadership position in the church; this was further substantiated by the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, as it was often quoted by many.

This decision to include women in church leadership brought mixed reactions in some of the RCZ congregations, even to the point where some contemplated leaving the church for other denominations that had not passed such a resolution. However, people restrained themselves from such actions, although some members in Lusaka could not come to terms with this resolve. In the John Laing RCZ congregation Lusaka, for example, some twelve male members openly refused to partake of Holy Communion that was served by a woman minister proclaiming that they would always resist as long as the female minister remained in their congregation; in Chawama Central (another RCZ congregation in Lusaka), some members left the church to join Lusaka Baptist Church, where women were not taking leading roles in the church.

At Chipata compound at Sinai (yet another RCZ congregation in Lusaka) some elders refused to serve side-by-side with female ministers and therefore opted to step down. There were many other such cases elsewhere countrywide, which were handled by able leadership teams of the Presbyteries and were resolved.

2.5 Preliminary conclusions

The abovementioned examples show the types of interpretations that were being made by some members of the RCZ. Phiri (1992:275-276) struggles with such interpretations of the Bible, which she considers fundamentalist in nature and says they do not account for the situatedness or context of the text being read or interpreted.

This one-sided approach of interpreting the Bible has caused several feminist scholars, ethicists and theologians to rise and challenge these interpretations, which have led to the oppression, suppression and marginalisation of women in communities of faith. The current study is trying to address interpretations such as these, so that biblical texts can be approached and interpreted with more critical exegetical practices

that may help interpreters to account for various ways of looking at a biblical text. So far, we have seen how 1 Corinthians 14 has been interpreted as it suited a particular culture. People interpreted 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 from within their specific patriarchal cultures and allowed a literal understanding of the text to dominate without proper regard for its socio-cultural context and broader literary perspective.

In Chapter 3, I proceed to discuss the position of women in the RCZ, specifically in view of how the church understood and interpreted 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. At the same time, I will conduct an empirical study through Bible study groups to survey people's understanding of this text. The aim is to strengthen my argument that women have been marginalised through the (ab)use of biblical texts such as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and upholding patriarchal cultures. The results of the survey will be analysed, explained and interpreted to see how they influence my hypothesis in the first chapter of the dissertation. Central to this endeavour is addressing the injunction Paul made about women in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, namely "that women should remain silent in churches."

CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE RCZ IN THE LIGHT OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I showed how societies in general viewed women with reference to 1 Corinthians 14, how this text has been understood and interpreted through the centuries, and how the RCZ struggled to allow women in all ministries of the church according to their understanding of this text. Two groups of people stand out clearly: one affirming the place of women in church and its ministries, while another group felt this should not be so. The latter group continues to look at the Bible (1 Cor 14:34-35) as a text that does not allow women to preside over men and resists going against the church's culture since its inception in 1899.

The current chapter deals with an empirical study on the reception of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 in the RCZ. It focuses on how women are perceived through the lens of culture in the RCZ. The aims of the chapter are (a) to show through a survey (Julien, 2008:846-848) how this passage has been received within the general membership of the RCZ; and (b) how it affects women's participation in the ministry of Word and sacrament. The chapter also explores the cultural biases and attitudes of men towards women in the church. It will show how men and women in the RCZ read the text in relation to the church's cultural values, which contributed to women not being allowed in all the ministries of the church for almost a century.

The purpose will be to assess the steps the church took to allow women into all the ministries of the church, and how this has been received by the general membership of the church. In the course of conducting the empirical research I will at the same time briefly discuss the RCZ's origins within the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). This will be discussed under the section on the Women's Guild, which brought women together in the Women's Fellowship popularly known as the *chigwirizano cha azimai*, which served as an alternative ministry for women. I will also show that despite women not being allowed to serve in the ministry of Word and sacrament, there were informal women's ministries (according to the church's official position) started by the missionaries' wives (Cronje, 1982).

3.2 The establishment of the RCZ

Having been established in 1899 the RCZ is well spread through all parts of Zambia. Its strongest roots are in the Eastern Province, where it started when chief Mpezeni of the Ngoni people sent two men from his area to Malawi's Mvera Mission to address two issues that were paramount to him: (a) missionaries to be sent from Mvera to serve among his people; and (b) two of his men should be allowed to train in mission work at Mvera. Mpezeni was at this time the paramount chief of the Ngoni people. The Ngonis came from South Africa in 1835 when they fled from the wars of Shaka, the Zulu King. Their leader, Zwangendaba, crossed the Zambezi River into what was later called Northern Rhodesia¹⁵ and settled there (Cronje, 1982:135).

From 5 July 1899, when the missionaries settled at Magwero, mission work grew rapidly as the people were very receptive to the Word of God. The DRC in Zambia, which later changed its name to RCZ in 1968, grew from ten congregations between 1901 and 1936 by crossing the Luangwa River to Lusaka and the Copperbelt province. By 2014 there were well over 175 congregations (Cronje, 1982:135-150; RCZ Synod Minutes, 2014).

The church operates in all ten provinces of Zambia (RCZ Executive Synod report, 2014). Kabwe, where this research was being carried out, had its first congregation established in 1936, after establishment of the railway line and the mines, which provided labour as people migrated in search of jobs. The RCZ as a product of the DRC is a well-established church in Zambia.

Having briefly described the establishment (history) of the RCZ, I now want to talk about the role that women played in the RCZ prior to their being admitted into the different ministries of the church. This is to serve the purpose of understanding what brought these women together, and more importantly, how the growth of the *chigwirizano* was fostered in a male-dominated, patriarchal and hierarchical structure as an alternative ministry.

3.2.1 The birth of *chigwirizano cha azimai* in the RCZ

The beginning of the *chigwirizano cha azimai* (Women's Guild) in the RCZ dates back to the time of the DRC missionaries. Its formation started in the mid-1920s under the leadership of missionaries' wives. Meanwhile, in the year 1935 at Nsadzu Congregation, women started to hold formal meetings as they were inspired by the

¹⁵ Northern Rhodesia became Zambia just before independence in 1964.

wives of missionaries. Here women gathered in wattle and daub huts to hold prayer meetings. Growth took place rapidly, spreading to other parts, eventually reaching the town of Lusaka. The first congregation to have such meetings was at Kamwala in Lusaka, almost in the same year (Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1982:186-187).

These groups functioned independently until a missionary's wife, Susie Theron, formalised them as the *chigwirizano cha azimai* at Chipata RCZ, formerly known as Fort Jameson. Vigorous in establishing such a fellowship of women, she also visited other places like Madzimoyo and Kamoto to ensure that the women were conducting meetings, though the name *chigwirizano cha azimai* itself may have been coined only later. This initiative started after observing that the Mother Church in South Africa had set Thursday as the day for regular Women's Guild meetings (Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1982:187-188).

In section 3.2.3 I will return to discussing how the *chigwirizano* was organised by the women themselves through training and developing their different gifts. This serves to indicate that their leadership was focused, in terms of the vision and mission of the *chigwirizano*, and that women can achieve great things with their God-given talents and abilities.

3.2.2 Training of female ministers

Ministers of the Word and sacrament have always received their training at Justo Mwale University. This institution belongs to the RCZ but operates in partnership with other churches and has existed from the 1960s as a college at Madzimoyo. Years later the college was moved to Lusaka. Many developments took place after that and the college was upgraded to a university college at the 2012 Synod. Two years later, in 2014, it was given the status of a fully-fledged university.

From Justo Mwale University's inception in the 1960s, according to the church's policy, only male ministers were trained and licensed to be ministers in the RCZ. When missionaries arrived they imposed their existing cultural structures, with good intentions but perhaps without the critical awareness that we have today. These structures were hierarchical and patriarchal, and filtered through to the church structures. Under these circumstances women could not serve as ministers because the contemporary interpretation of the Bible would not allow them to preside over men. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 was used as front-liner text by many ministers in

congregations, presbyteries and at synodical meetings to indicate what women's place should be.

However, from the 1980s, questions were raised by congregations through Presbyteries to Synod council, asking the highest policy-making body in the church when women were going to be accorded a chance to serve (officially) in the ministries of the church. In 1989 the first positive response came when deaconesses were allowed into the ministry of the church. In 1998 women elders were allowed and finally in 1999 an agreement was reached during a working Synod to allow female ministers into the full ministry of the Word and sacraments. However, this did not happen until the year 2000, when the RCZ changed its constitution to pave the way for female ministers to be ordained. By this time Justo Mwale had already enrolled some women who were to graduate by 2003. By 2012 there were 10 female ministers serving in the church, while in the same year male ministers totalled 113 (Hendriks, 2012:29). Nonetheless, more and more women are being admitted into theological training.

The question is what led to all this struggle of women being allowed into these offices? The RCZ women saw women from other denominations being recognised and working in such offices. However, there was another important factor which contributed to this outcome. This is that women were (and still are) well organised on all levels – in congregations, presbyteries and Synod. Their organisational structure has seen much growth over the years because of their gifted and skilled leadership. Below is an account of the organisational structure of the *chigwirizano cha azimai*, which seeks to prove how organised the women were/are. The most comprehensive source of information on the RCZ and *chigwirizano cha azimai* is Verstraelen-Gilhuis (1982). It has to be noted that there is not much in terms of resources on this subject in the RCZ. Other less comprehensive sources are available in Afrikaans at the Justo Mwale University library.

3.2.3 Organisational structure of RCZ women's leadership

At first the *chigwirizano cha azimai* leadership was in the hands of the wives of the missionaries; they are the ones who spearheaded it with the help of the missionaries themselves. The wives of the evangelists were trained first and then they in turn dealt with the women's general membership. It was later when the *chigwirizano* had settled and established itself that it was overseen by the *Msokhano wa akulu* (Congregational

council) so that the *chigwirizano* does not depart from the constitutional governance of the church through its rules and regulations within the church structure (Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1982:247-248).

The wives of the missionaries brought in the idea of having a uniform for the *chigwirizano* and when they visited South Africa they sought the same kind of uniform that was worn there. However, the local women redesigned and opted for black skirts with a white blouse and a black headpiece with black shoes. This uniform is worn to this day as a mark of women's identity.

Women also had their own Central Committee to oversee the running of the *chigwirizano*, which was the same on higher levels (i.e. the regional and national levels), but still fell under the Presbytery and Synod as supervisory bodies not only to avoid their departing from the teachings of the church, but also to maintain control through the constitution¹⁶ popularly known in Nyanja as *zolamulila* (Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1982:250). The *chigwirizano* saw itself growing rapidly in number with many being attracted to it because of the good leadership that was in place.

In order to put the women and their *chigwirizano* into focus, I will discuss their role in the church, which was considered an important element within the mission of the church. Besides the leadership of the *chigwirizano*, other women who were not leaders played alternative roles that facilitated growth. Below is an account of how each member of the Women's Guild had to play her role, which has continued to this day.

3.2.4 The role of the *chigwirizano cha azimai* as an alternative ministry

Verstraelen-Gilhuis (1982:247-249) explains the role of those women who had chosen to belong to the *chigwirizano*. First and foremost, it was a matter of self-expression to belong to this group. Secondly, it was an opportune occasion to do something and create a sense of belonging. And their coming together on a particular day, which was usually a Friday, meant gathering together for prayers, reading the Bible and encouraging one another to be strong, continuing to endure all hardships in the faith. Furthermore, they carried out hospital visits with much prayer and demonstrating works of charity.

¹⁶ This is the document in the RCZ which, besides the Bible, helps to govern all structures of the church.

Cleaning the house of worship (the church building) and its surroundings was another duty that was performed only by these women and it continues to this day as dictated by culture. In doing all these works the women were on a mission to touch the lives of other members of society. With this development the church grew faster as more and more women joined the *chigwirizano* both as converts, as members of the church already but not members of the Women's Guild. According to the definition of 'church' (cf. 1.2), this work of the women does indeed form part of the ministry, but the church would ironically not recognise it as an official body.

Unlike the Men's Guild, which was dormant most of the time, the Women's Guild flourished because of its leaders. This was seen to be in accordance with understanding the church as the body of Christ, where all members play their roles with the different gifts God has given to them (1 Cor 12:1-31). I discuss these roles here to show how they were performed in the church.

3.2.5 Women's leadership roles in the RCZ

Other than the *chigwirizano* choosing leaders among themselves in the 1960s, the church as a whole did not recognise and consider women for any leadership position within the church in any of its ministries. Just as the women themselves lived in a culture that was somewhat patriarchal, according to Verstraelen-Gilhuis (1982:258-259), the missionaries who came to them were often raised in a patriarchal society as well, and thus carried this orientation with them wherever they went, and this had an impact on women's positions in the church. This might have been in line with the Mother Church of the DRC. (I return to this question in 3.2.8.) In this context, only men could ascend to the position of elder and deacon, even when women were seen to be more active than men in the guilds.

Though this was the case for the DRC's mission, in the North missionaries from the London Missionary Society (LMS) had a different approach to the issue of women. For them, women were amongst the leaders to be chosen by the church, and, as elders and deaconesses, they posed no challenge to men and women of that epoch. Interestingly, the two mission societies had almost the same traditions and cultures of being Protestants and Calvinistic in nature (Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1982:328). This shows that although these two different groups of missionaries shared the same religious beliefs, their cultural beliefs affected how they practised their faith beliefs, especially those which concerned women.

Another aspect of cultural oppression that I will now elaborate on is the abuse of women in terms of gender-based violence (GBV) within the church, a trend that has continued in the church even to this very day but in a silent manner that may not even be noticed. For women to be open about this outside of their home is deemed an act of shaming their spouse and I will show how this is associated with cultural practices. The purpose here is to show that these acts of violence are a big issue that the church needs to address in order to promote human dignity among its members and the community.

3.2.6 *The abuse of women in the church*

The abuse of women in the RCZ cannot be documented properly as this vice often takes place in the home. It has become so prevalent, while at the same time is happening inconspicuously to the extent that the church has often ignored or failed to address it. The common social cases that have reached the church councils are those of adultery and marriages that have taken place outside the church, rather than violence within marriages. The most common abuse has been GBV where women have been battered by their husbands, and property grabbing, which takes place after the death of a spouse. One such case is narrated by Verstraelen-Gilhuis:

There was a divorce case in the Church Council. Chipangano's wife came to complain that her husband had beaten her up. I was about to call witnesses when Agrippa the church elder stood up in full dignity to protest against the procedure: 'But bwana, look, this is no case'. And turning his face to his fellow church elders: 'we all beat our wives, don't we brothers?' Fortunately the elders realise that they have to act with moderation, just like we whites do (Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1982:250).

This is one kind of scenario out of many in the church that members have learned to live with to this very day in many marriages under the guise of *ichupo kushipikisha* (marriage means remaining faithful as a woman even when you are hard pressed). Thus, it was a firm belief that a wife must never disclose what she was enduring in her home even to her fellow women as they were considered outsiders. Nonetheless, some women have had the courage to report such instances to the police, who have helped to resolve some matters through their counselling unit, popularly known in Zambia as victim support.

Considering the bigger picture, women experience abuse, GBV and marginalisation owing to the traditional and cultural belief which states that God created man first and woman second, and that a woman has a soft body which is dependent on man for most of her needs. Moreover, Paul was and still is being quoted (Synod Report 1993) as having barred women from speaking in the church (1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:8-15). The RCZ contributed to the conspiracy of silence both in the past and now, especially when it comes to GBV, meaning that the church has not come out strongly on this point. Driven by the oppressiveness and marginalisation of incidents such as these through the patriarchal cultures and traditions that we have inherited, it is important that the church's voice be heard on this point.

GBV can be attributed to different types of cultural contexts. Moreover, these contexts influence how people interpret biblical texts. The next section will examine how the RCZ interpreted the relevant biblical texts.

3.2.7 Interpreting the Bible in the RCZ

The Bible has been read and interpreted in the RCZ in different ways in different periods and has shaped the faith of its church members accordingly.

As for the RCZ, the Bible¹⁷ is regarded as a book of God through which Godself has issued instructions for the life of a Christian. Many members read it differently and this depends on the results they want to achieve with it. It is mainly read to feed the soul and to enrich one's spiritual hunger (Plaatjie, 2001:117-118). When a problem arises in one's life the Bible is consulted; it is used as a magic book to ward off the problem or the evils that have befallen the family. In the night, for instance, it is sometimes put under the pillow to chase evil dreams away. Yet little is known about how it was written or the socio-cultural and historical backgrounds which are related to the texts.

However, contextual Bible study is one method of doing Bible study in which we can apply the Bible to our lives so that the Bible can be meaningful to our Christian faith. This is because contextual Bible study assesses the context of a reader, then goes on to the context of the Bible (text), and then comes back to the reader in application of what was read (West, 2014). This is how we can best apply the Bible in our lives for it to be appropriated and be meaningful.

¹⁷ The understanding of the Bible is that it must be obeyed without question. It is a norm/standard through which life is measured; anyone who questions the Bible will be termed unchristian or unspiritual.

I now wish to discuss how missionaries initiated the Christian faith in the RCZ, which contributed to the delay in admitting women into leadership circles.

3.2.8 The missionary orientation in the RCZ

According to Musa Dube (2001:52-60), almost all missionaries who came to Africa taught the Word of God by suppressing local cultures with an imperialist agenda that did not mean well for the continent of Africa. It is also important to note that these missionaries came to Africa together with colonists from Western cultures who had other motives, such as securing land or resources (Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1982). The goals of these two groups may have been similar in certain ways, but may also have diverged in others. One difference is in the way the groups exerted control over the local communities. The group seeking land and resources used force and violence, while the missionaries used the Bible and the constitution of the church.

And in the case of the RCZ having been in existence for over hundred years, the missionaries governed the church through the Bible as the Word of God. In addition to the Bible there was the church constitution. These two instruments of power complemented each other. Where the Bible seemed to have been silent, the constitution was applied, and vice versa. Meanwhile when it came to the issues of women, the Bible was interpreted in more patriarchal terms and the constitution remained silent.

When it came to church leadership roles only men were recognised, trained as ministers and evangelists. Later they were posted to serve in church ministries. Men also were given leadership roles to serve as deacons and elders. Women were moved to the sidelines. This missionary dominance continued up until 1966, when the local leadership was given autonomy. However, the traditions did not change. The continuing patriarchal attitude was in line with the teaching of the DRC at the time and other members of the Reformed churches followed suit (Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1982:77). This position is likely to have been copied or inherited from earlier centuries, which also confined women to the private and domestic sphere of life.

This possibly included a mission policy of not appointing (allowing) women to leadership positions in any official (formal) ministries of the church, such as deaconess, elders and reverends. The local leadership also took a period of close to fourteen years to loosen that same grip up to the early 1980s (Synod Report, 1981). This could have happened because the age of the leadership of those who received

power from the missionaries was well advanced. It was enough for them to have taken hold and celebrate the governance systems of the church which was in their hands than to think about the inclusion of women in all church ministries, which was not their agenda.

However, things changed in 1989 when the first women deaconesses were allowed to serve in the ministry. Subsequently, women elders (in 1998) and women reverends (in 2000) were admitted to serve in the ministry of Word and sacrament. Major reasons for this decision could be described as the impact of national and international ecumenical gatherings in which the young ministers were exposed to different biblical interpretations and various ways of including women in ministry. For example, some of the international meetings attended were the WCC (World Council of Churches) and WARC (World Alliance of Reformed Churches). Many of these meetings took place during the early and the mid-1990s. These meetings discussed the role of women's ministries in the church. On the national level such gatherings include the CCZ (Council of Churches in Zambia) and EFZ (Evangelical Fellowship in Zambia) from the 1980s into the 2000s, when issues affecting women were discussed at length. Member churches were asked to implement some of the resolutions made.

Another factor which greatly contributed to this was the training of ministers, which was enhanced by the coming of the new lecturers from the DRC Orange Free State in South Africa. These missionaries came with revolutionary approaches in hermeneutics that changed the perception of the church and its mission at Justo Mwale University, a training institution for the RCZ. And so students who graduated after that undertook to rectify the inequalities that existed between men and women in the church (Dziwani RCZ Newsletter 1991). I now explore some of the ministries which existed alongside church expansion from 1899 to 1966, when autonomy was given to the local leadership.

3.2.9 Other ministries in the RCZ

Apart from the planting of churches by the missionaries, which was a priority of the mission church, there were other ministries that went along with their work. These ministries were in health and education and saw the establishment of hospitals and mission schools. The hospitals were established at Kamoto and Nyanje mission stations and these health facilities are still operating to this very day.

In education, every mission station had a school established alongside the church and it operated hand in hand with the missionaries. Later the government came in to help by granting aid and these schools become government-aided schools. Of special mention in education are specialised forms of education being managed by women, who were either wives of missionaries or those who were married to white farmers. Specially mentioned amongst such gifted women was Mrs F. van Eeden (Cronje, 1982:143-145), who was a teacher at Magwero School of the Blind. She established the school in 1905. When she died of black fever in 1910, her work was taken over by Mrs Ella S. Botes, the wife of a missionary, who became the missionary in charge of the school and worked very hard to improve the status of the school. She continued to enrol more pupils during her 53-year stay at the school with unbroken service until 1965. This meant that all other missionaries, including male missionaries, were reporting to her (Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1982:85-87). Her work became well known in Central Africa in caring not only for the blind, but also the deaf. Magwero School of the Blind and Deaf is still in existence to this very day.

Besides taking care of the needs of the women in the *chigwirizano cha azimai*, excellent work was done by women in the education sector. Many of them were involved in the health sector, but not much is mentioned about them as the church understood these to be “unofficial” ministries. Regarding the ministry to the hospitals, they operated under the leadership of missionaries from the Netherlands. The church in the Netherlands is supporting this ministry until today. The hospitals being supported in this way are at Nyanje and Kamoto in the Eastern Province of Zambia.

So far, I have given background information on how the women belonged to the women’s guild grew into a large following, how they provided leadership within their own ranks, and how the church interpreted the Scriptures to exclude them from the formal church leadership positions. I also have shown how some women carried out special ministries in education, which the RCZ did not recognise as official ministries and yet were as important as the (so-called) formal ministries.

I now turn my attention to the research methods used to collect, compile and interpret the data for the empirical research as I outlined in 1.4 question (3), which reads in part: 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 seems to have influenced the RCZ; how has this text been received by the RCZ from 1899 up to 2000, when the Church allowed women in all ministries of the Church? And how could this be ascertained? My projected answer – as I discussed in 1.5 (3) – was that within the RCZ this text of 1

Corinthians 14:26-40 was received with the understanding that women were not allowed to take up leadership roles in the church. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that research ethics are observed, that the data collected are put to good use and that no harm is done to anyone involved in the research processes.

3.3 Research methods

As mentioned in 1.6.3, empirical research was done by means of contextual Bible studies that were conducted with women and men of the RCZ. The purpose of the contextual Bible studies was to enable me to collect data in the congregations showing how men and women understood/received the text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 within the socio-cultural context of the RCZ.

For the survey, two questionnaires were designed (one with eight and the second with four questions – cf. Appendix A). This was done by preparing particular Bible study groups for the survey, according to a method adapted by Hansen (2014), and which the researcher used in designing the survey (see 3.8). The questions were formulated in the light of how biblical texts are interpreted. In the field of contextual Bible study, Hans de Wit (2012:7, 19) has demonstrated that

A text does not have a single, closed meaning, but a ‘meaning potential’ ...

He goes further by asking questions such as:

On what verse do people concentrate and why? How do people fill in the narrative gaps of the text? How do they perceive the actants in the text – with which of them do they identify, and why? What do they consider to be the central idea of the text?

These questions seem to align with the process through which I surveyed how targeted RCZ Bible study members interpret 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 within their context.

The questionnaires were circulated by the researcher amongst five RCZ congregations within the Kabwe District (within close proximity to one another). The questionnaires had two different aims. The first was to test Bible study groups’ understanding of the text. The second was to find out how culture influences people’s understanding of the position of women in the church.

3.4 Qualitative approach in data collection

A qualitative approach attempts to capture and categorise social phenomena and determine their meaning (Webley, 2010:1-2). This approach was used in the survey. The researcher tested how participants in the Bible study groups understood 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. This approach is explained by Padgett (2008:9-10):

The researcher observes organisations and/or communities to understand the behaviour, interactions and tacit understandings that shed light on the problem being advocated against ... as well as potential solutions

3.5 Sample size

The survey with Bible study groups formed for the purpose of collecting data for this research was conducted in five RCZ congregations. Ten people were targeted in each of the five congregations, bringing the total number to fifty participants. These participants had to volunteer themselves to be participants and a gender balance of five men and five women was maintained per congregation. Participants with an average age of 35 and above were to be in each group. Kabwe District has five RCZ congregations which are dotted around the district with a total membership of over 4,000 members.

The rationale behind the selection of the men and women of 35 years and above is that most of them would have been young adults at the time the RCZ was still deliberating whether to allow women leaders in the church during the years before 1989, 1998 and 2000. It is also anticipated that these women and men were aware of the debates concerning Paul's injunction in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 that women must keep silent in churches, or not allowed to speak, and submit themselves to the law says, or should ask their husbands at home if they want to enquire about anything. It remains therefore very important that these congregants' voices are heard in view of how women leaders were/are being regarded.

3.6 Data collection

Data for this research were collected between February and April 2015 by five facilitators in the congregations. They were all ministers (reverends). The researcher trained these facilitators for their job prior to the particular Bible study sessions. They were specially trained to observe and capture aspects related to the research. This

method was chosen because it complements the design of the research. These men and women are representative of all members of the RCZ.

Their voices are important, because it is from them that we can note whether women are fully accepted in the RCZ or not, and whether women's ministries are appreciated. More importantly, it will allow us to see whether the text of 1 Corinthians 14: 26-40 is well understood in the church or not. Furthermore, noting the views of these participants may allow us to understand how we can all move forward together in a new direction as a church to promote justice for all. So far, the *chigwirizano cha azimai* has been very strong with the women leadership in place, and therefore, engaging women at every level of ministry in various offices in the church would entail strengthening the leadership of both men and women.

The very fact that deacons and deaconesses, elders and ministers/reverends are decision-makers in the church means that decisions and information would easily reach the targeted groups who are church members, as these women are ready disseminators of information in their chat teams and can interact better than the men. One more important point to note is that women are more committed to church affairs than the men. Statistics show that in almost every congregation two thirds of the members are women, while only one third are men. In this case, allowing more women in the ministry would bring faster growth to the RCZ.

A good example of how allowing women leaders in ministries can help a church to grow can be seen in the UCZ, a so-called sister church of the RCZ. The UCZ allowed women leaders in its ministries very early, almost during the missionary period and their church experienced very fast growth. To this day a woman holds the position of General Secretary in their church, and another from the African Methodist Church holds the position of General Secretary of the CCZ. This affirms that women are hardworking and greatly foster development in the church as well as in society.

The researcher had to use the reverend in each congregation to assist with the collection of data through conducting contextual Bible studies in their congregations. The reason for using the reverends in the congregations is that they command respect and a certain level of authority because of their theological training, and furthermore, members know very well that these men and women do read the Bible on a daily basis. Another factor is that the reverends are familiar with their members and it becomes easy to deal with them on a personal and group level. In addition, there is already an element of trust present.

The groups had to interact very well and break the ice for all members of both sexes to be able to speak to one another without fear and intimidation. The reason for this is that all the members needed to feel free to participate in the contextual Bible studies.

The researcher's role was to visit the reverends to consult with them when their day of contextual Bible study was due to take place, and for the researcher to collect data in the form of responses to the questionnaires I had formulated in contextual Bible study one (1) and contextual Bible study two (2). Contextual Bible study one was answered in a group, and contextual Bible study two was answered by the same members in the group but in their individual capacities. In Bible study one, open-ended questions were asked in focus groups, with the group members interacting and providing the responses together. The chosen secretary of the group had to write down the responses in the form of answers to the questions. The two questionnaires served as a tool for capturing the data which were to be analysed and interpreted.

The raw data were then organised and the responses categorised in terms of prominent themes that surfaced through the process. Two groups emerged: one that was in favour of women being leaders in the RCZ, and another that was opposed to the idea and felt that the Bible has always been against this idea, and that the church made a mistake to have allowed women in leadership positions in the church. These were subject to non-cross-sectional data organisation (Mason, 1996:128-129; Ritchie and Lewis, 2005:220-262).

I obtained ethical approval for the study from the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee to continue with the processes of conducting the research (see the appendix B for the notice of approval). Apart from being a prerequisite for the research itself, this ethical approval served the purpose of ensuring that everyone felt secure. Below are the research ethics guidelines.

3.7 Research ethics

For this research to be carried out it was imperative that ethical clearance was obtained from Stellenbosch University's Research Ethics Committee. The letter showing the approval of the Committee had to be issued and signed so that participants could give data with a clear mind and conscience.

For the purpose of maintaining confidentiality no names were used on the questionnaire but instead numbers were allocated in order to identify the congregations that participated in the contextual Bible studies. The congregations were numbered 1 up to 5. The text for the contextual Bible study was 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. The groups were required to answer the questions outlined in the group contextual Bible study, as well as those on the second questionnaire. To ascertain the responses the researcher had to evaluate the answers to the contextual Bible studies, which were conducted on different days and at different times, according to the arrangement made with each congregation and the facilitator involved. The period within which the contextual Bible study was to be done was limited to three weeks or a maximum of four weeks if three weeks was too little time.

Having put everything in place, the research method, data collection and code of conduct to participate in the contextual Bible studies, the actual contextual Bible studies were conducted. I now report on the research findings as the outcome of what the participants had to say on the text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. The importance of this is to show how the text was received/understood within the congregations in the RCZ and also how leadership is perceived within this church.

3.8 Empirical findings of the research

These are the findings of the research from the data that were collected through the contextual Bible studies¹⁸ that were held in the five RCZ congregations. The questions and responses are dealt with below. Five men and five women were chosen in each of the five congregations, i.e. ten people from each of the five congregations – a total number of fifty participants. The facilitators reported that the contextual Bible studies facilitated an atmosphere that was conducive to the research, for which most of the intended participants turned up except on one or two occasions (for reasons that were not given). I received the questionnaires which I distributed to the said congregations. The first questionnaire helped me to describe how the participants understand the text, while the second questionnaire assisted me in understanding how they view the relation between church and culture in view of (their understanding of) women's ministries in the RCZ. Observations and conclusions are given at the end of the process. A summary of the findings follows below.

¹⁸ The contextual Bible study is the method of doing Bible study employed here, with questions that were guided by Dr Len Hansen, head of Research Development and Support at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University.

3.8.1 *Analysing question 1*

In the first place, the facilitator organised that the group came together in a round table fellowship. The meeting began with a word of prayer to thank God for the contextual Bible study and the good lives that Godself had provided for the participants.

The first question was read aloud to all the participants to hear, especially for those who could not read for themselves and could only hear from the facilitator, who was also the one guiding the whole process of the contextual Bible study. Photocopies of the questionnaires were also provided for everyone in the group to ensure that all participants follow the process step by step.

All five congregations responded to the questionnaires and I discuss the responses below. After reading through the responses, I developed themes that allowed me to discuss the responses of the five congregations together. The congregations' recorded responses are kept at Kabwe Main congregation cabinet and may be accessed upon request.

Question 1. Listen to 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 as it is being read. In your own understanding, what do you think the text is talking about? In Nyanja: *bvetselani m'mene Buku lopatukika ali kuwerenga mu 1 Akorinto 14:1-40 kodi mubvera mau awa onse akamba zotani?*

The importance of this question is that it will determine what the whole of 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 as a chapter is talking about. See how well the chapter flows from verses 1 to 40 and see if there are any breaks in Paul's speech within the text.

Responses

The five congregations responded: The text is about order in the worship service. It is about spiritual gifts given to the church. It is about **tongues and prophecy** and how the church is to use them.

3.8.2 *Analysing question 2*

After concluding question 1, the groups went on to discuss question 2, which is formulated as follows: **Now read the passages 1 Corinthians 14:1-25 and 26-40. Is there continuity from verses 1-25 and 26-40, and if so, what themes connect the**

two passages to form a unit? In Nyanja: *Tsono werengani mau apa 1 Akorinto 14:1-25 komanso 26-40. Kodi ndime izi zionesa kuyanjana kwa mau pa ndime 1-25 ndi 26-40 kapena ai? Ndipo ngati ndi tero zapamutu zimene zilumikiza umozi pa mau onse ndime 1-25 ndi 26-40 m'ziti?*

Responses

The five congregations responded as follows to question 2: some said that there is continuity between the two passages and what connects 1-25 and 26-40, whose theme is of prophecy and tongues in orderly worship within the church. Both passages are concerned with spiritual gifts and how they are to be exercised in the church. Others said no there is no continuity in this passage, because 1-25 is centred on prophecy and tongues, while 26-40 is centred on women not speaking in the church, even if they have something which bothered them. Women had to live in submissiveness to their husbands.

3.8.3 Analysing question 3

Question 3 reads as follows: **Read 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35, a text that has been controversial for many centuries. Do you notice any differences in Paul's language when he talks about women and then about prophecy and tongues? If so, what are the differences? In Nyanja: *Werengani 1 Akorinto 14:33b-35 mau amene akhala osautsa kwa zaka ambirimbi. Kodi pali kusiyana mucilakhulidwe ca Paulo pamene alakhula za adzimai ndi pamene alakhula za malilime ndi pamene alakhula za masophenya. Kodi kusiyana kwake kulipati?***

Responses

The five congregations responded as follows to question 3: all congregations said that regarding prophecy and tongues Paul seeks interpretations, while on the issue of women, Paul says, they should remain silent in the church. For prophecy and tongues Paul demands order to be followed, but for women, all they have to do is remain silent in the church. They are not allowed to speak. Paul became harsher when he addressed women than when he addressed tongues and prophecy. Paul was not helpful at all because of his language.

3.8.4 *Analysing question 4*

Paul is talking to the church in 1 Corinthians 14:33b – 35. What is the difference in this text to what he has already said in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16? Do you think there is a contradiction? How can this be explained? Also give reasons you think why Paul is saying this. In Nyanja: *Paulo ali kulakhula kwa a mumpingo wa Akorinto mwa 1 Akorinto 14:33b-35. Kodi kusiyana kulipati pazimene alakhula apa ndi zimene analakhula pa 11:2-16. Kodi pali kutsusana. Mungafotokoze bwanji? Perekani zifukwa zimene munganiza Paulo ananenela tele*

Responses

The five congregations responded as follows: there is no contradiction as both chapter 11 and chapter 14 are talking about orderly worship in the church. The two chapters are outlining the roles of men and women in the church. There is a contradiction in 11:2-16. Paul had given women authority to pray and prophesy, and in 14:33b – 35 Paul contradicts what he said earlier. He may have been speaking to two different cultures, that of the Jews and that of the Greeks. Paul may have been dealing with other cultures or traditions, or otherwise he was selfish in what he says.

3.8.5 *Analysing question 5*

Do you think there are cultural values related to this text, and if so, what were they? In Nyanja: *Kodi munganiza bwanji panali kukhalilana kotani pa amai ndi abambo monga mwa myamwambo mwa zopezeka mu mau awa 34-34 monga analakhula Paulo kwa Akorinto?*

Responses

The congregations responded as follows: it was obvious cultural values existed, in that in Corinthian culture a woman was expected to obey her husband in all matters. It was as if the women were not conducting themselves well to the extent that Paul had to intervene in matters of worship. Maybe at that time the Corinthians and the surrounding people honoured men more than women; thus, Paul was addressing both here. He may have been talking to different cultures that existed that time, Greeks, as there were Romans and Jews. This text seems to subscribe to Jewish cultural values of the time, where men and women were separated in a house of worship. Even in the church today seating arrangements are the same, where women sit on one side and

men sit on the other side without the two ever mixing; this is an inherited cultural value from them. It was started from this period of the New Testament—that is why we sit like that. We should maintain the status quo.

3.8.6 *Analysing question 6*

Question 6 reads as follows: **Explain how these values influenced how men and women were treated in the period of the first century? In Nyanja: *Fotokozani mwakuganiza kwanu cikhalidwe cha azimai ndi azibambo mu nthawi iyi yoyamba pamene a Roma anali muulamuliro wao?***

Responses

The congregations responded as follows: both men and women were restricted in terms of prophecy and tongues, and then, additionally, women were called to silence. Men were always held in high esteem, even when it was not supposed to be so. What men said was taken as the absolute truth, even when it was not the case. In these cultures, it may seem, men were considered superior and women inferior beings. A woman in the first century had to remain submissive to the man, even to their husbands, who controlled their lives at home. Women were treated as second-class citizens, as we can possibly see here. Women were not thought of as being fully human, while men were highly regarded both in the public and private sphere. The capabilities of women were always underrated and down-played by men. The Bible was written by men; hence, the men are favoured. That is the main reason Paul speaks very strongly against women. He wants to show that man still has authority over a woman. Men were generally insensitive to issues affecting women, which is different nowadays.

3.8.7 *Analysing question 7*

Question 7. **Do you think Paul is speaking generally to include all women to this day or he is specifically addressing the Corinthian community here in this text of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35? Give reasons for your answer. In Nyanja, *Kodi muganiza kuti Paulo analikulakhula kwa adzimai onse kufikila masiku ano kapena alikulakhula kwa adzimai aku Akorinto cabe apa pa 1 Akotinto 14:33b-35? Perekani zifukwa pa yakho yanu.***

Response

The congregations responded as follows: some said that only women in the Corinthian congregation were the culprits and not all women who are living in this age. Paul was speaking to the Corinthian women and subjected them to lower positions in the church. Today women cannot be told to be silent. They have the freedom to speak in Christ. Others said that Paul was speaking to women in the church of Corinth and most certainly even those who are present today too. Why should we separate these groups of women when women are the same?

3.8.8 *Analysing question 8*

How does this text (1 Cor 14:34-35) speak to our respective contexts? In Nyanja, *Kodi mau awa (1 Akorinto 14:34-35) alakhula zotani m'mene tikhalirana wina ndi zace masiku ano?*

Responses

The congregations responded as follows: that when gifts of various kinds are discovered in the church, they should be used in an orderly manner. Despite what Paul said, the equality of men and women should be upheld, though women should be mindful of their way of dressing these days. This text requires a lot of teaching by the reverends so that many in the church and society can appreciate the equality of men and women. The text frustrates women to become leaders in the church, which should not be so. The use of traditional cultural values has continued to degrade women who want to become leaders in the church. Many churches today have ignored Paul's words and counsel because of political pressure and human rights groups that have come out from other sectors of society other than Christianity. The West (Western Europe) has for most cases been sponsoring churches and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) championing women's rights as we witness on television these days and the church has become voiceless. Some congregations deliberately and subtly avoid calling women to serve as reverends in their respective congregations. Sometimes their fellow women who are not reverends do support such ideas that we cannot have a women reverend here in this church, as such a lot education should happen. There are still RCZ congregations who remain uncomfortable with women leadership even to this day owing to what this text says.

3.9 Observations from the first questionnaire

What follows are the findings and observations on the responses to the first round of questions from the contextual Bible studies.

With regard to the first question (what the text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 says): some participants acknowledged that the passage was about the spiritual gifts that God has given to the church and that they are to be used in the church for the edification of all its members. This was evident to the participants in the way Paul encouraged the Corinthian congregation to be zealous to receive the gifts of the Spirit in verse 1. Also seen here by the participants was the order and peaceful way these gifts are to be exercised in the church.

It was also generally agreed that there is continuity in the passages that connect verses 1-25 and 26-40 with the themes of prophecy and tongues in the orderly worship of the church, centred on the edification of its members. However, some participants observed that there is no continuity in the two passages, as the one passage is talking about spiritual gifts and the other is centred on women who were speaking in the church. This reflection on the responses to question two indicates the difference of opinion in the way biblical texts are read and interpreted using different approaches.

The participants noted that for prophecy and tongues, Paul seeks an interpretation and, if there is none, then they should remain silent; his tone of the voice here seems compromising. In contrast, for the women, the silence demanded appears to be harsher without any compromise or alternatives, and the tone of voice can be judged as being high in pitch, indicating that there was something very disturbing to Paul about the way women were speaking.

Other participants observed that there is a contradiction in the two passages because Paul had allowed women to pray and prophesy in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, but in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 he forbids them to speak. Here we can deduce that perhaps the authors are two distinct individuals, with different intentions. However, some participants did not notice any differences as they said that the two texts spell out different roles that men and women perform in the church. This is owing to how participants interacted with the two texts they have observed. Concerning cultural traditions and values they noted:

There existed cultural values within the congregation of Corinth coming either from the Greeks, or the Romans, and perhaps even the Jewish culture as well.

It could indeed be a patriarchal society that influenced this kind of portrayal of women during this time, especially when he addressed the women. The church was still young at this stage, but Paul could have been responding to cultural values at this time coupled with certain laws that were at play during this first century period, hence, this kind of reaction to the women.

When it came to question six, which addressed the relationship of church some participants observed that:

Both men and women were restricted as none could speak in the absence of an interpreter and prophecies were supposed to be given in succession of one another. But when it came to women asking questions, they were restricted and were told to remain silent. No proper reason is given for this situation, although this culture it seems men were always held in high esteem and occupied the public space. The value systems favoured men more than women, which was unfair.

Some participants also noted that Paul might have been addressing his own context when talking about women who should remain silent in the church. These participants stated that these words should not be treated to mean that women should not speak even to the present day; they said:

The context in which Paul spoke these words should determine the meaning of this text. This is because 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 in the way it is, has delayed development within our churches in that it took over one hundred years for us in the RCZ to realise we had excluded the women within our ranks. Now we should accelerate the admission of women into all the ministries of the church, as time does not stand still yet again.

There was, however, a contrary view where some participants felt that the text was addressing the Corinthian context and at the same time it is speaking to the current day context where women should remain silent in the churches; they stated that:

The RCZ made a wrong decision in allowing women into offices of the church. The church ignored Paul's words as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 do not permit this. This is nothing but political pressure and human rights issues that we see manifesting as we witness on television today.

They noted further a concern that the church could be submitting to donors who may be funding the operations of the church. Thus, they said leadership on the highest level has betrayed the church. In this order these participants condemned the decisions

of the church to have allowed women at all levels of leadership, especially those which are official in nature.

In summary, according to the first survey, the text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 was interpreted in terms of two opposing viewpoints: those who say that the text does not and should not be used to stop women from participating in all the ministries of the church. The contrary view was expressed by those who think that the text does affirm that women cannot and should not be given lead in the church when men are present. In short, it can be said from the participants' point of view that some believe the Bible through this text does allow women leadership positions and some say it does not allow women leadership positions.

Having observed the responses to the first questionnaire I now go on to look at the general trend found in the responses and the reasons why the two groups of participants say what they say from the first questionnaire. It is important to establish the reasons some participants said women should continue in all ministries of the church, while some other participants expressed the contrary view and said women should continue to be silent in the church.

3.10 Analysing themes in the first questionnaire

Looking at the responses given to the first questionnaire, two themes emerge from analysing the text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40: some say women should continue to be leaders in the church, while others say that they should not continue to be leaders. I now proceed to analyse these two themes as key issues from the survey (Thomas, 2006:242; Le Roux, 2014:84).

3.10.1 Women should continue to be leaders

A certain constituency of participants observed that the church did well to admit women as leaders in all the ministries of the church. Furthermore, they submitted that the church delayed doing so as they observed other churches doing this many years back. It was also stated that the Bible does support women coming into leadership: from the Old Testament to the New Testament women have been leaders. Therefore more women should be encouraged to enter the ministry. It also was observed that culture should not be a factor for women to be leaders; rather our culture and that of the first-century Greco-Roman world are completely different. We are living in a culture which is more civilised than before and which should furthermore understand the Bible well, especially the New Testament where we see Christ coming as a

liberator. Below I discuss reasons for women to continue serving as leaders in the RCZ.

3.10.2 Reasons for women to continue with their leadership roles in the RCZ

Participants who affirmed that women should continue in their leadership roles in the RCZ gave the following reasons.

The church needs more leaders in ministry and women are part of that ministry, therefore, they should not be hindered. While Paul says, “Women should remain silent in the churches,” one has to place this passage in the context in which the author lived, surrounded by his own problems, whereas our context is very different; we cannot mix or equate the two contexts, as we are far removed from each other by centuries.

In Galatians 3:28 we have an affirmation by Paul who said, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are one in Christ”. With this verse in place, why should women be stopped from being leaders?

In the RCZ, women outnumber the men if we are to take a countrywide census and they play a more active role in the church than men; thus, women deserve to be in leadership positions.

Others within the contextual Bible studies groups held contrary views. They may not be many, but it is important to give attention to what is being said by this group. Here is what they said concerning the text under discussion.

3.10.3 Women should not continue to be leaders in the RCZ

A group of participants were opposed to the leadership of women in the church. They stated that it was a mistake for the church to have admitted women leaders in the first place. Their wish was for the RCZ Synod to reverse its decision and revert back to old ways of how the church was before women were admitted into the ministry. They did not just oppose the idea of allowing women into all the ministries of the church, but they also gave reasons why they felt it that way. Below are the reasons for opposing the idea.

3.10.4 Reasons women are not to continue in their leadership roles in the RCZ

Those participants who said women should not continue in their leadership roles in the church gave the following reasons.

Women are naturally weaker human beings; they are not strong-willed and cannot handle the pressure of leadership. Culturally and traditionally women are not supposed to be leaders, because of how God has made them. For instance, when they menstruate, this is a personal and private matter known only to them; however, as a result of this, they cannot serve any Sacrament.

In the Bible, women are not only barred in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 from speaking in the church but also in 1 Timothy 2:8-15, where they are not supposed to preside over men. Do these texts not give enough evidence and speak for themselves that women cannot and should not be leaders in the church?

As an institution, the church is not supposed to submit to donors for the sake of money, as it seems to be doing now. These issues of women's empowerment have arisen because of the West (Europe) having the money to hand out and the church has fallen prey, as a result, disregarding its principles in preaching the gospel for the sake of financial assistance and therefore we are allowing women into leadership. We need to stand on our own principles and not those from our friends.

Having analysed the first responses to the first questionnaire, I now go on to review the responses to the second questionnaire. The significance would be to note the differences when participants answer questions in a group and when they answer as individuals. If participants maintained the same stance as they did in the first questionnaire and the second, then it would be deduced that the participants maintained the same views without any undue influence, though I must admit that it is difficult to measure this.

3.11 The second questionnaire

The second questionnaire had different questions, yet they were related to the first contextual Bible study questions and were answered by the same participants. The second set of questions was answered on an individual basis. The rationale behind the second round of questions was to capture more information about women's participation in the ministries of the RCZ in view of the relation church and culture and how this influenced people's understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

Additionally, the second round of contextual Bible study was more closed than the first, in that the participants completed the questionnaire without discussing the answers with the other participants in the group. The rationale for doing this was to ascertain the true feelings of each participant and obtain answers that were not

influenced by any of the members in the group. An individual perspective of what was felt about women leadership in the church (RCZ) was to be captured here.

Question 1: Do you think that women in the RCZ were allowed to participate in all the ministries of the church based on the Bible, or was it for cultural reasons? If your answer is the Bible, then what do you think of the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35? In Nyanja, *Kodi muganiza kuti azimai analoledwa kukhala Atsogoleri m'maofesi ake onse amumpingo mokhazikika pa mau a Mulungu kapena pa miyambo zathu cabe? Kangi ndi pa mau a Mulungu muganiza bwanji pama vesi awa I Akorinto 14:34-35?*

Responses

Based on the Bible: Opinion of both women and men

From the Old to the New Testament women were used by God through their varying gifts in leadership positions. We have women like Miriam, Ruth and Deborah from the Old Testament. In the New Testament we have several others who served the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who served in the same ministry together with Paul such as Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphena and Julia (Romans 16:1-16). Paul also reminds us that we are all equal before God (Galatians 3:28). And so the decision that the church took to allow women in all ministries of the church is based on the Bible.

Based on culture: Opinion of both men and women

Women and men are equal in the sight of God, with the only difference being the duties and responsibilities that God assigned to men and to women. Since men and women are all infused in culture and cannot be removed/isolated from it, we all belong to that culture – hence our identity. Culture thus plays an important role in shaping us.

Not based on the Bible: Opinion of men

Allowing women in all the ministries of the church is not based on the Bible. This is because the Bible is very clear that women are not to hold offices as ministers, nor to address men. Since creation, men have always been above women. God ordered things that way so why should we challenge God's creation? Woman was created as a helper to man, and not vice versa. What we have seen today is that the church has

become liberal in its message and character. Therefore, we are not surprised that women are being included in ministry because these are the last days. We are entering a world of compromise in response to the funds of donors, which means we are obligated to do what they require, such as including women in the ministries of the church and permitting homosexuals into the church.

Question 2: Have the church members of the RCZ welcomed women leadership in the church, or not? Please justify your answer. In Nyanja, *Mamembala a RCZ analandila bwino za azimai kukhala Atsogoleri mumpingo apena iai? Fotokozelani bwino maganizo a yanko yanu.*

Responses

The church has welcomed women: Opinion of both men and women

Yes, the church has welcomed women's leadership. Women's leadership is good, because women are more organised, more focused and more committed to church activities, unlike the other groups of men and the youths.

The church has not fully welcome women: Opinion of men

Admitting women in all ministries of the church was done in bad faith. The church has compromised its position by doing so. We need to reverse this situation and return to where we were before.

Reasons are: it is evident that women have not been fully welcomed in some congregations; for example, women are not being well represented in the church councils, presbyteries and Synods. Furthermore, a very small number of women are elected into ministerial offices, meaning that there are still suspicions within our church circles regarding women leadership.

Additionally, when a congregation calls a reverend to serve in that congregation, they opt for a male reverend rather than a female, as male elders say they find it difficult to approach and work with a female reverend. This creates a gap between male and female reverends, resulting in a number of challenges in the ministry for female reverends.

Question 3: Do you think the RCZ was true to herself as a church or acting in opposition to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 when it allowed women in all the ministries

of the church? *In Nyanja, Kodi m'maganizo anu muyesa RCZ ana cita bwino mwa iye yekha polola azimai m'maudido ake onse m'kacisi kapena anacita mosusana ndi mau apa 1 Akorinto 14:34-35?*

Responses

The church acted in opposition: Opinion of men

The Bible teaches about women remaining silent in the church; this is found in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and 1 Peter 3:1-5. So then women are not allowed to preside over men, and in this case should not be allowed to do so even now. The church allowed women in leadership because of pressure from donors; this is evident as those who were leaders when and after getting self-governance did not involve women in leadership, so why do so now? The modern-day liberation movements are also playing their part in undoing what the Bible says concerning women. Human rights movements are also fighting the Bible on whatever they think is right for them. The political world is championing a political agenda for women and the church is following suit. This remains a challenge to the modern-day church. However, we ask the question: where is the church going?

The church acted in good faith: Opinion of both women and men

The church acted in good faith by allowing women in all the ministries of the church. Both men and women are given spiritual gifts to serve God and the church as we see in 1 Corinthians. The Old Testament already shows a context where women were leaders and Miriam, Ruth and Deborah are examples. In the New Testament we have Jesus, who promoted equality of all people; we have Apostle Paul, who worked with women (Romans 16:1-4); he also echoes equality of all people in his letter to the Galatians 3:28.

Church members may not understand what Paul meant when he said women should remain silent in the church. This could have applied to the Corinthian church and culture and not to our culture in today's church. The Spirit works in both men and women as long as they both keep trusting the Spirit, so why should women not be leaders? Paul did not mean that this should be a permanent silence to last forever, and those who think like that are misguided, as the text is dynamic and speaks anew every time we read it. We thank God for the Synod for taking a decision to allow women in all leadership; this was done at the right time and through the Spirit.

Question 4: In your mind, what is 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 all about? Can you explain its message, particularly verses 34-35, that women should remain silent in the church? In Nyanja, *Kodi mmaganizo anu 1 Akorinto 14:26-40 alikulakhula zotani makamaka pandime izi 34-35 zimene zinena kuti azimai asalakhule mu kachisi?*

Responses

Opinion of both women and men

The effective use of spiritual gifts, which should bring edification to the church and where order and decency must be maintained. There must be unity as the church gathers together for a worship service. Verses 34-35 state that women should remain silent in the church, but this could be due to cultural and traditional factors of the time and therefore we do not know why Paul said this to them. Maybe there were quarrels in the church for him to state that, or there could have been other things he wanted to prevent from happening which we do not know about. However, our times are different and we cannot base and compare our women to those of that time. Our culture today is different from in the time of Paul. And so therefore we cannot refuse women from occupying offices in the church by what Paul said. Let women lead and live their own lives in the RCZ; do not disturb them.

Opinion of men

This passage is about women who should remain silent in the church. This was meant not only for Paul's time, but it was also meant for this time, for the word of God continues to be the word of God. It does not change and never will it ever change. For as long as the Bible has spoken and is the written Word of God, there is no difference: we are bound by it. Women should not have been given the platform to preach and lead the church in the RCZ. Other churches who have not allowed them, like the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglicans here in Zambia, are better off than us, for they have not allowed women to be in leadership like us the Reformers, who always want to copy everything from some of the unstable churches and what is happening in the world at large. Allowing women to be in leadership is misleading, because it is not only 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 which is against women holding office in the church but also these other biblical texts such as 1 Timothy 2:8-15, Ephesians 5:22-33, Titus 2:1-

6 and 1 Peter 3:1-3. So then women should be content with where God has placed them.

Having obtained the answers to the four questions, I now analyse the trends of the first questionnaire in relation to the second and this is what was observed.

3.12 Observations and analyses

Four questions were addressed in this questionnaire. The idea behind these questions was, firstly, to find out whether the Bible was understood in its relation to culture when admitting women in all the ministries of the church. The response again was twofold, where some participants viewed leadership as coming from the Old Testament with the trend continuing into the New Testament during the time of Jesus and Paul, who served alongside women as discussed in 4.3.2). On the other hand, others felt that the church allowed women for purely cultural reasons as the Bible forbids women to aspire to leadership roles when there are men around.

Secondly, when asked whether the RCZ members have fully welcomed women into their leadership ranks or not, because of the Bible or culture, some responded in the affirmative, while others responded in the negative. This was an indication that there are still two views on this issue of admitting women in the RCZ.

Thirdly, in trying to situate the passage of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, bearing in mind the crucial verses of 34-35, the responses were of two contrasting sorts. Some viewed this passage as being about the effective use of spiritual gifts in the church, which should bring edification and growth. Other participants felt the passage has led to confusion in the church brought about by women wanting to speak where they are not supposed to. This, according to them, should teach the church today not to allow women to take leading roles because this would result in much confusion.

3.13 *Preliminary conclusions*

The results obtained from this survey of selected Bible study groups are the result of careful application of my methodological approach. I interpreted the results by establishing themes of similarity and difference between the responses. The responses to the survey revealed at least two groups in the church, with differing views on the matter of women being allowed as leaders in the church. These groups both based their views on their understanding of the relation church and culture, and their interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. Just as the first responses to the questionnaire showed, the two groups are those who said women are to be leaders and

that the Synodical council moved in the right direction to admit them in all ministries of the church, while others said that the Synodical council was wrong to take this decision.

This latter group, however, was somewhat smaller than those who supported women being admitted into all ministries of the church. However, what I have found interesting is to see how each group in the developed themes contended that their view on church and culture and the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 was the 'right' one. These varying views continue to show the problematic relation between church and culture, and how women's ministries have been received in different faith communities through the centuries. It has also shown that culture has had a great influence on issues of women's ministries throughout the centuries, as is the case with the RCZ. This has been so since the first century CE and has been running through all ages to the present. In other words, culture has been playing and is still playing a pivotal role in our understanding of the world, including our faith perspectives.

After these preliminary conclusions, I move to the next chapter where I will discuss a multidimensional approach to 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 as a response to the threatening interpretations of Scripture in the past and present. I start with a general overview of socio-cultural and historical aspects pertaining to the first-century city of Corinth where the believers lived to whom Paul addressed the letter of first Corinthians. It will reveal how this part of Paul's message to the Corinthians became a text of terror, as I will demonstrate by tracing the cultural influences that prescribed the role of women as being submissive and silent.

CHAPTER 4

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO 1 CORINTHIANS

14:26-40, FOCUSING ON SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, I discussed the position of women in the RCZ in the light of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 and I conducted empirical research through a survey to ascertain how men and women in the church understand this text. The results of the survey showed two groups of participants who exist side by side. These is one group of participants who affirm women in their God-given positions and another group of participants which does not affirm women as such. This survey was to attempt to answer the research question: “Since 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 seems to have influenced the RCZ processes of decision making regarding women in leadership in crucial ways, how has this text been received by the RCZ from 1899 up to 2000 when the Church allowed women in all ministries of the Church? And how could this be ascertained?”

And in response I hypothesised that within the RCZ this text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 was received with the understanding that women were not allowed to take up leadership roles in the church. This is in regard to the many times Synod council deliberated about when women were to be considered for leadership in all ministries of the church at all levels.

In this chapter, I discuss the first dimension of a multidimensional exegetical approach to 1 Corinthians 14, focusing on socio-cultural aspects of the text, particularly regarding the Greco-Roman context of the first-century Mediterranean world. This is in view of my undertaking in Chapter 1 (1.6.3) that I will discuss the socio-cultural historical aspect in this chapter, while in Chapter 5 I shall discuss further the literary and rhetorical aspects of this text. Considering Paul’s argument expressed in 1 Corinthians 14, it is very likely that he and the church in Corinth could have been influenced by the cultural context and values of that time. Interpreting texts that originate in this era requires that we understand them against the background of both their context of origin as well as their long history of interpretation, before appropriate them to our contexts today. I have chosen to begin with the socio-cultural historical aspects of the text, since this has been the most neglected aspect of the text during the processes of its interpretation.

In this chapter I suggest an alternative exegetical approach to the ancient canonised text of 1 Corinthians 14 by using the following subheadings: (1) The Corinthian culture, which looks at various social, economic and political aspects I regard as important for understanding 1 Corinthians 14; (2) Paul as an apostle to the church in Corinth, in which I explore who the apostle was, his role in the Corinthian church, and his rhetorical arguments; (3) Women in the Greco-Roman world, which looks at the core values of honour and shame, and how these related to public and private spaces; and (4) The socio-cultural setting of Paul's letters to the Corinthians, which looks in particular at how the aforementioned aspects might have related to 1 Corinthians 14). I consider all these aspects as crucial for an adequate understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

Thus, in this chapter I refer to some of the many aspects of the socio-cultural historical environment which could have influenced how first Corinthians was formed. What was happening in the church at Corinth could have been influenced from outside. This is because members of this church also belonged to a larger community whose cultural values, lifestyle and rhetoric could have filtered through when they joined the new *ekklēsia* in Corinth.

Analysing these aspects will hopefully help us toward a better understanding of the context of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. We should also have a better understanding of what transformation the apostle underwent in order to write this letter in the form we have it today, especially the arguments found in 1 Corinthians 14. Even a mere glimpse at the history of the city of Corinth could also strengthen our understanding of the text. The selection of categories that I have made here is simply meant to illustrate how vast the subject matter is when trying to understand Paul and the silencing of women in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

4.2 Corinthian culture

Simon Kistemaker (1993:5-6) has noted how the Corinthian church adopted values of the Corinthian community in the first-century CE Greco-Roman period. He states that this life was primarily religious in nature. Richard Horsley (1998:22-29) affirms that the city had a number of temples, which were spread all around the city. The community in Corinth lived a fairly liberal life, as Paul refers to certain behaviours that he issues strong warnings about (1 Cor 5:1; cf. 6:9, 15-20; 10:8).

The book of Acts talks about the happenings of the early church as it records how the gospel was spread by the apostles, of whom Paul was one of the major figures. Although one needs to consider the different genres and audiences when comparing Acts and Paul's letters, this information fits most of his letters well. With the information provided in Acts 15:36-16:5, it seems probable that Paul undertook his second missionary journey to visit several (house) churches (Kistemaker, 1993:5-6). The exact time of writing the Corinthian correspondence, however, cannot be ascertained, but it is clear that he was responding to issues that the Corinthian church themselves had written and asked him about (1 Cor 1:11). The next subsection looks at the city of Corinth to find out how life around this city was clustered. Important will be the location and the socio-cultural values that prevailed and which might have contributed to Paul's carrying out his mission in Corinth. This will be done through a literature review that will highlight the important traits and connections that made the city famous and well-loved.

4.2.1 The city of Corinth

As I discuss the city of Corinth, I will focus on the first century CE to highlight the New Testament world during the time when the Romans were in control. Corinth was a city of great fame and was destined to be a centre of political and economic activities (Keener, 2005:13-14). Ideally located on the narrow isthmus linking the Peloponnesian peninsula to the rest of Greece, Corinth was in control of the commercial traffic between the Corinthian and Saronic Gulf, and entry into Peloponnesus itself (Broneer, 1951:78-96).

According to Gordon Fee (1987:2), the city of Corinth experienced a great number of people coming from the East and West pursuing trade and commerce, which was widely available there. Punt (2010:3) contends that by the first century CE the city of Corinth had a cosmopolitan and international makeup, with easy access to crucial trade routes, adequate manufacturing and a blooming business culture. The Romans, who were firmly in control, also brought with them their law, culture and religions as part of their package of administration. Punt further asserts that Corinth was a city of Greek origin that had been rebuilt by the Romans, but it retained some of its Greek roots despite the Roman influence.

Adding other factors which greatly contributed to the city's fame, Gordon Fee (1987:1) holds that sociological, economic and religious factors are the reasons that

made the city of Corinth such a great and magnificent city in the first-century CE period of the Greco-Roman world.

The activities that took place in this city in the first century CE, as pointed out by Ciampa and Rosner (2010:2-3), indicate that it was fairly prosperous, cosmopolitan and religious, with plural worship of gods and regularly visited by travelling speakers. People came from all over the Roman Empire to settle in the city in search of opportunities. These people had no regard for the religious life which existed and the institutions that were there (Murphy-O'Connor 1983; Kistemaker, 1993:5-6). It is postulated that annual sacrifices were discontinued and syncretism was on the increase as a result of more frequent exposure to other faiths. Acts 18:4 records that amongst the diverse faiths there was also a Jewish community present in the city, as can be seen from inscriptions that date from the apostolic period (Horrell, 1996:63-75).

The Jews are said to have had their own synagogue in this city and Paul felt their influence as he could have attended synagogue prayers before turning to the Christian church (Acts 18:22-34). The Christian community most often met for prayer in their homes, which were known as house churches (Fitzmyer, 2008:32-35); these presumably were large enough to have accommodated a good number of people who met there (Acts 18:12-17).

At the time Paul was there, Corinth was known as a city of lax morals as one of its attractions was the temple of Aphrodite, where the goddess of love had more than a thousand temple prostitutes who served her cult. Corinth was at that time a world-class city like few others in the first century CE (Horsley, 1998:27-31). With the sea routes both to the East and West being accessible, more travellers came to Corinth in search of opportunities and Corinth became attractive for business. It is also important to talk about the trade which could have contributed to the city becoming more famous and adored. This will show how well connected the city was with the outside world because of its geographical position, good roads and sea routes that made travelling possible and convenient. Hence Paul utilised the same travel routes to do mission work.

4.2.2 Commercial trade

Fee (1987:2) says by the time Paul was in Corinth the city had already been the chief centre of industry, commerce and amusement in Greece. Joseph Fitzmyer (2008:31-

35) agrees and contends that during the time Paul spent in the city of Corinth, Athens was declining as a political power, as well as in its economic and intellectual life. The reasons were that more and more entrepreneurs, free workmen, were leaving Athens for Corinth because life and business were booming there. There was also a large population of slaves, which meant that cheap labour was readily available in the industrial and commercial centres.

Similarly, Meeks (1983:14-18) alludes to further development in the city of Corinth because of the Hellenisation that occurred during the first century CE, contributing to its rapid urbanisation. He explains that the Romans, who by the first century were in total control of the Empire, brought stability. Even when the Romans brought the Greek cities under their control in 44 BCE, they preserved the Greek institution of local government, with their system of education still taking precedence. There were also some benefits for those who belonged to the Roman Empire because of their policies on social and economic benefits, which were made relatively easy for the citizens. Mobility in the Greek cities became safer. In a city where power and civilisation were guaranteed, people could experience change that was conducive to future development (Horrell, 1996:63-75). The better sea routes provided an added advantage for commerce and in a way they also provided easy travelling conditions for the Christian community to evangelise the gospel.

The Corinth of the first century CE that Paul knew and to which he wrote his letters was a modernised city whose life was integrated and could have been the basis of the description found in Romans 1:18-32 as it may not differ much from larger cities in the Roman Empire. Punt (2012:3) reaffirms the description provided by Thiselton (2000:1-2) “That competition, patronage, and what today would be called a consumerist culture and a focus on success in various ways, were important elements of life in this city”.

With such a setting of commercial trade in Corinth, it becomes helpful at this point to look at the social setting of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. It brings the Corinthian church, Paul and the Greco-Roman world into dialogue with each other in order to enable us to out find what they had in common. The cultural fusion that took place in the city of Corinth brought people of diverse backgrounds together, which made it easy for Paul to bring the gospel of Christ. I now look at the socio-cultural setting of the letter.

4.2.3 *Socio-cultural setting of Paul's letter to the Corinthians*

Reading the first letter of Paul to the community in Corinth remains a challenge for the church today. However, biblical scholarship in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century is wrestling with the letter concerning the argument Paul has raised. Some scholars and theologians nowadays are beginning to develop a consensus view based on understanding the tensions that existed in the Christian community at Corinth. Their contention is that the letter is not so much theological but more sociological in nature, as it deals with problems in the church community arising from socio-economic divisions (Martin, 1995).

Paul Sampley (2000:782-785) acknowledges the fact that when the letter is carefully read, one notes that both the church in Corinth and Paul bring cultural, social and literary theories into dialogue with each other. These theories can be interpreted in different ways. Paul might, for instance, be issuing a challenge to an ideology of privilege in his first letter to the Corinthians (Punt, 2010). Paul might also be attempting to counter the tensions between the more numerous but lower-status charter members of the community and the wealthier more-recent converts, who were fewer in number, but whose wealth, power and status could not be matched by the rest of the community (Meeks, 1983:117-118; Theissen, 1983:106-110; Elliot, 1994:204-214).

In order to create a dialogue with the Corinthians, Paul must have employed rhetoric as a tactical tool similar to the political rhetoric of the Roman world. Through these arguments we encounter Paul, who gives himself as an example to the Corinthian community. This was so that the Corinthians could emulate him and, in turn, unify the church as the body of Christ, which was Paul's chief concern.

Sampley (2000:782-783) discusses four concepts that are crucial in discussing the first letter to the church in Corinth. These are the concepts of *pater familias*, *honour/shame*, *patron/client* and the *Stoics*. I briefly discuss what these ideas may bring to a multidimensional study of first Corinthians by showing their significance in the Greco-Roman culture of the first century CE.

4.2.3.1 *Pater familias*

Paul and the Corinthian community would have been aware of the role of the father in the household, of the family's well-being together with what is expected of the father in that small social unit. According to Sampley (2000:782), the father remains the

head of the household and his role is to instil values, give direction, guidance and support, as well as strengthen discipline in the family.

4.2.3.2 Honour/shame

I will refer to honour/shame again later in 4.4.2. A significant cultural value for Paul in his letter to the Corinthians was to gain honour at all cost, and to avoid anything that would disgrace the family. In 1 Corinthians 14:35, where women were told to be silent in church, one can read this as ensuring that honour was maintained and shame avoided. This society was characterised by a hierarchical structure and everyone knew his or her place. It was the responsibility of the subordinates to honour people to whom respect was due. The social status of subordinates was well calculated in public places and this followed the level of honour that was accorded. This included where to sit, what to speak about and when to do so, etc. Otherwise, to undermine such protocol would bring shame to the person and the family.

4.2.3.3 Patron/client

In this period of Roman Corinth CE each person had a lord to whom he/she had to pay allegiance as the one who was in control of the affairs of life. In this case, it was not just the slaves alone who were to submit to higher authority, but every individual had to worship a particular god. This god was a powerful lord who controlled nature and so everyone needed to be indebted to him/her. Paul in his arguments cleverly re-inscribes this whole analogy to the Corinthian community implying that they were indebted to the Lord Jesus and their responsibility was to be towards him alone (Oakes, 2010:180-187).

4.2.3.4 Stoicism

Paul employed the philosophy of the Stoics, who taught a concept of removal of human distress, pleasure, fear and desire from the community (Downing, 2013:87). Paul, however, was able to use the pattern of debate that the Stoics used to present his arguments to the Corinthians in certain matters of concern. Examples of such cases are found in 1 Corinthians 7 and also 1 Corinthians 3:5; 7:17 and 12:18, 24. The next sections seek to find the relationship between rhetoric and the letter of first Corinthians.

4.2.4 *Rhetoric and First Corinthians*

Rhetoric was the art of persuasion in Greco-Roman times of the first century CE and became part of the education system for the elite as they could afford it. Written and spoken language was presented in rhetorical form and hence it became inevitable to know how rhetoric functioned. To a large extent, Paul was well versed in this form of communicating and his letters are full of rhetorical tropes. All of what we find in first Corinthians is rhetorical in nature and for this reason any interpreter must be aware of its intent. In general, no articulate rhetorician could use only one form of these rhetorical devices but rather a combination of them was needed. It is also a general view that the letter of first Corinthians has more deliberative rhetoric in its argument than judicial rhetoric.

Mitchell (1991:200) remarks on Paul's first letter to the Corinthians saying that it most likely addressed problems that were brought about by social stratification within the Christian community. Building on Mitchell's work, Punt (2012:3) suggests that not only was the apostle Paul in first Corinthians dealing with these types of "inter-group" relationships (with groups from outside), but he was also dealing with groups that existed "within" the church, who needed to be united to foster cohesion (cf. 1 Cor 12:13).

The biggest challenge was on how life was to be conducted in the midst of these external forces. This is after reports reached him from a group known as Chloe's people, who were seeking help from him. In response, Paul advises them to resolve their challenges and factionalism within themselves and make unity their ultimate purpose. If the church was positioned in relation to the socio-cultural world of the time with Paul writing his letter to this church correcting what was going on in it, this stands as a challenge for today's readers whose context is different.

The next section looks at Paul as an apostle to the Corinthians. In it I try to formulate an understanding of the apostle Paul. Understanding Paul is a challenging task, as James Dunn (1990:186) acknowledges. Paul should be understood on his own terms and in his own time, for in many respects he himself remains unknown, as what he writes does not reveal his true identity. The role of the readers is to interpret his letters in more accountable ways, which becomes a complex task.

4.3 Paul as an apostle to the Corinthians

As an apostle Paul had a very specific type of relationship with the Corinthian church. To help understand the complexity of this, one needs to understand who Paul was. Documenting a reliable account of the apostle Paul is, however, a mammoth task that would certainly demand an entire dissertation of its own, but for the purpose of this study, I provide a concise account as background information about who Paul was in his relation to the Corinthians. Paul was born in one of the Hellenistic centres called Tarsus in Asia Minor. Ben Witherington (1995:35-40), a North American New Testament scholar, describes Paul as a Greco-Roman Jew, and at the same time a Jewish Christian. He says that Paul was a man who experienced three cultural orientations – Jewish, Hellenistic and Roman. He was born from parents who were of Jewish origin but had migrated from Jerusalem to live as Hellenistic Jews (those living in the diaspora) in the city of Rome; but this could be because they were tentmakers. It can also be said that Paul was of Judean descent, though generally his ethnic identity cannot be fixed but rather remains fluid (Johnson, 2005:276, 286).

Paul was sent to study at an early age at a school in Jerusalem. This was under the tutelage of Gamaliel, the great teacher. Later, he became a Pharisee (member of a Jewish religious group). Travelling on his way to Damascus, he had an encounter with the resurrected Jesus (Acts 9:1-19; 22:1-16; 26:9-18) and was converted to Christianity. As a Christian convert he was greatly influenced by his Jewish background in most of his dealings with the church. His intellectual ability is rooted in Greco-Roman culture and, more so, to Judaism (Acts 22:1-3).

As a Roman citizen (Acts 23:27), he was given free access to the whole of the Mediterranean world and beyond, as the entire Empire was under the Romans (Acts 16:37). This gave Paul greater privileges in certain matters, such as having a broader view of Jews and Greeks, women and men, slaves and free persons (1 Cor 9:19-21).

Meeks (1983:14-15) notes that Paul was mostly influenced by Greek rhetorical styles as can be seen from the way his letters are framed and formed (see also Witherington, 1995:38-44). We can deduce that Paul had acquired a superior Greek education, which was of considerable importance at that time. In his self-description, Paul sets himself apart as “an Israelite, descended from the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin” (Rom 11:1). In the letter to the Philippians, he says he was “circumcised on the eighth day, born out of the lineage of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born out of Hebrews, according to the Law a Pharisee, as

to zeal a persecutor of the assembly, as to righteousness I was blameless in the Law” (Phlp 3:5-6). Besides all these descriptions of Paul, he was faithful to Christ (Gal 2:16), and lived his life in faithfulness to God (Gal 2:20).

Meeks (1983:9-13) explains that Paul was a city man, which can be deduced from analysing the language used in his letters, some of which contain good and fluent Greek. It can also be noted that Paul’s missionary work revolved mostly around the cities and not so much the rural areas. This analysis is based on a closer look at the book of Acts, which is a significant source of Paul’s missionary activities.

And when we read Acts 5:34-39, we get an indication that Paul received his education at the feet of a great teacher and counsellor, Gamaliel, who was a Pharisee. Van Wyk (2011:55) affirms that the apostle Paul was a learned person with a good command of both written and spoken Greek, which can be witnessed through his letters and philosophy.

Following the Jewish system of education, Paul must have gone to school at an early age, probably as early as the age of 5. Because of his position in the community as a Pharisee, he had the privilege of receiving the kind of education that was only made available to a higher class in society. Such were the governing class, and also the rulers; thus, we may conclude that Paul had belonged to such a class of retainers (Neyrey, 2003:130).

Van Wyk (2011:55) alludes to the fact that Paul’s level of literacy has significance in that we are able to understand how he uses his rhetorical language and argumentative logic to address his audiences. According to Van Wyk, there are great differences between ancient writers who wrote literary letters and those who were skilled to write strictly scribal correspondence. It seems probable that Paul could have used the literary skills of ancient letter-writing, which were not commonly associated with the education of a scribe at that time. The kind of rhetorical language found in some of his letters may suggest that he learned literary techniques from both the Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions.

These traditions were complex and Paul’s correspondence shows evidence of this complexity. Mitchell (1991:20-39) and later Neyrey (2003:130), for instance, show that ancient traditional rhetorical arrangements of that time consisted of the following major classes of rhetoric: (a) forensic or judicial rhetoric, which relates to debate and formal argument (mostly suited in the court of law); and (b) deliberative rhetoric, which relates to considering something slowly and carefully with the

appropriate method employed in order to arrive at a decision; consolation, admonition and advice belong to deliberative letters, where the intention of the writer is to instil in the hearer and reader a certain sense of what should and should not be done. This is what we find when we read the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians, which entails that Paul wanted the Corinthian community to be instructed in the ways that were stated, whereby the unity of the church was to be their ultimate purpose, while the factionalism that had characterised the body of Christ was to be avoided at all costs.

I wish to emphasise again the description given by James Dunn (1990:186), a British scholar, citing Sanders, who says that Paul must be understood within his own context. Part of that context is the dating of the first letter to the Corinthians, to which I now turn.

4.3.1 Dating Paul's first letter to the Corinthians

The date of Paul's letter to the Corinthians needs to be ascertaining both in terms of when the letter itself was written as well as the context of the writer and the recipients of the letter. This allows us to be more precise in pinpointing which socio-cultural values prevailed that could have influenced the writing of the letter. According to Furnish (1998:229), Paul's first visit to Corinth, and his founding of a congregation there, could be dated circa CE 50-53. This would have been under the Emperor Claudius (around CE 41-54), and while Lucius Junius Gallio was still serving as the proconsul of Achaia, the Roman province of which Corinth was the capital.

But Grant (2001:13-21) states that Corinth was in the midst of a process of rebirth and reconstruction when the apostle Paul arrived there around CE 51 or 52. By that time, Corinth could have been the capital of the province of Achaia, and the centre of the Roman administration in the south of Greece. The official language was Latin, although Greek was not completely abandoned. He further observes that Corinth remained a significant place as a centre for trade and industry.

Having discussed the date of Paul's letter to the Corinthians, it is also important to note that during that time women also played a vital role in Paul's ministry within various communities in which he lived. This brings me to the next subsection where I discuss Paul's referring to himself as midwife and a mother. This section considers how Paul used feminine images signifying his association with women's participation in the ministry in his day.

4.3.2 Paul as a midwife and mother

On a number of occasions, Paul uses maternal imagery in some of his letters in order to talk about his mission, mostly to the gentiles. Sometimes he likens himself to a nursing mother caring for her children (1 Thess 2:7). At other times, he describes himself as giving milk to babes until they come to take solid food (1 Cor 3:1-2). On several occasions he speaks of the pains of his own work (1 Thess 5:3; Gal 4:19; Rom 8:22) as if he were a woman in labour. This imagery indicates that Paul worked alongside women and that they were his associates in ministry. Hall (2008:20) observes that, through the use of such metaphors, the apostle Paul wanted to validate some experiences of female believers and this makes his gospel message more appealing to women.

Paul's thoughts could have been influenced significantly by his female co-workers, and he may have listened carefully to their experiences and language, while he learned from their unique female expressions of God's movement within this ministry. In this way, Paul provided a good platform to collaborate with others in his ministry, especially with women, whom he called fellow co-workers for they were part of his ministry (Rom 16:1-16).

The next subsection looks at first Corinthians as rhetorical and political discourse. Paul used this way of communication because it would have been familiar to his audience at that time.

4.3.3 First Corinthians as rhetorical and political discourse

Reading this first letter of Paul to the Corinthians reveals that Paul used deliberative rhetoric in writing. This seems to be a format of writing similar to other rhetorical discourses in the Greco-Roman times of the first century. The deliberative rhetorical argument was presented in a form of argument with an emphasis on the future, with determined appeals focused on the end as an advantage, and Paul using himself as the best example to the Corinthians with particular themes as subjects of deliberation (Mitchell, 1991:20-223).

However, this view is challenged by Schüssler Fiorenza (1999), who proposes that both rhetorical forms were used in first Corinthians – the deliberative and judicial rhetorical forms. Sampley (2000:783-784) concurs and acknowledges that in first Corinthians the apostle Paul utilised these forms of rhetoric as he presented his arguments.

Mitchell (1991:20-223) and Horsley (2000:72-74) affirm that rhetorically the letter of first Corinthians has some deliberative elements targeted at persuading the Corinthian hearers and readers to act appropriately and move in a particular direction. And for first Corinthians, the interest was centred on building up the church of God, which at the time of writing was experiencing factionalism. Horsley (2000:73-74), however, gives examples of the kind of rhetoric which existed, showing how deliberative rhetoric worked in 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, which is about the ancestors, 1 Corinthians 4:8-13, and 8:13, which concerns Paul himself.

These rhetorical styles found in first Corinthians were developed in Greco-Roman political rhetoric and Paul utilised the same to try and foster unity within the church through the use of terms such as *ekklēsia*, which made reference to the self-governing bodies or politics within the city. However, adopting the deliberative rhetorical standard of measure, the apostle is directing his arguments to another kind of gathering in his reference to the Corinthian community to avoid litigation within their assembly as is seen in 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 (judicial rhetoric); more so, the reference in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22 is targeted at the Corinthian church, where the assembly had to restrain themselves from participating in the sacrificial banquets, an act which shows what was taking place within civil society at the time (Horsley, 2000:73).

Paul makes use of the deliberative rhetoric of oneness and harmony to engage and encourage the Corinthian church to be of one mind, never to be divided but rather live in unity of purpose, as was the case in the Greco-Roman cities of the first century CE (Mitchell, 1991:24). The similarity between the imperial Greco-Roman world of the first century CE and that of the people of God which formed an *ekklēsia* was that Greco-Roman rhetoric united the people. The same is true of the church as the body of Christ – Paul uses this kind of rhetoric to try and unite the congregation which was at the verge of disintegrating. If the deliberative rhetorical standards are properly investigated, this can form the basis for understanding the text of first Corinthians as a whole (Horsley, 2000:72-73). It is also worth noting that Paul's argument should be seen as a reaction to the Corinthian community's social values that were affecting the church (Ciampa and Rosner, 2010:4-5) and the patron-client relationship that existed at that time in Greco-Roman antiquity (Punt, 2012:3; Van Wyk, 2012).

In view of the use of rhetorical language in Paul's letters, it is important to understand how rhetoric was applied in the daily lives of Greco-Roman communities. I offer this account here as it will help to qualify Paul's use of analogous forms in some of his letters.

4.3.4 Paul's rhetoric in first Corinthians in relation to Greco-Roman rhetoric

Rhetoric was one form of address, considered an art, which was often used by public speakers in public places in the first-century CE Greco-Roman empire. The rationale behind its use was to convince the public to form an opinion (educational in nature) on a certain matter of importance. Rhetoric often took the form of public debate, where two or more competitors challenged one another to influence public opinion (Horsley, 2000:80-82; Punt, 2012:2-3).

Essentially, rhetoric played a significant role in Hellenistic culture, particularly in urban areas. Paul employs a similar form of rhetoric in his letters to the Corinthian church. Horsley (2000:74-77) gives an account of how rhetoric was used in Roman antiquity, showing that rhetoric was both a political and cultural issue as it was embedded within the political community of first-century Rome. According to research in New Testament studies on ancient Greco-Roman culture, what brought people together to form a cohesive society were politics, economics and culture, with religion also playing a major part, while rhetoric connected them and helped the authorities maintain power (Mitchell, 1991:26).

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion developed from a political platform in public squares known as assemblies. These were gatherings meant for litigation, celebration, politics, and the display of dominance by the elite who had some form of education as well as by heads of families or households to whom slaves paid their homage. This is where public policy was made around issues such as slavery, women's rights and denial of any rights to those of foreign origin. Rhetoric was also a form of expressing the values of the civilisation; it served the purposes of the Greek oligarchy, where only a few people had the power to exercise control over public affairs (Horsley, 2000:79-80).

Through this kind of system, the Romans affirmed their grip and control on the cities within their sphere of power and maintained order throughout the empire. Eventually the courts became the tool used by those who were powerful and wealthy, using judicial rhetoric as the means to achieve their goals. The *ekklēsia* then assumed

the role of deciding who had a right to vote and to give more power to the emperor and elect the local leadership (Horsley, 2000:78-82; Fitzmyer, 2008:33-34).

The first-century Greco-Roman world also promoted public speaking; the art of speaking in public places was taught to orators who were well established in society and were men of wealth, status and power, and who exerted more influence in political matters, the courts and civic affairs compared to the philosophers, who merely critiqued such behaviour. Rhetoric was considered a form of higher education and those who had the ability to learn it were the elite of society. Society was well defended from external attacks, though the elite were still anxious because of inequality in the system of sharing, with the lower masses being exploited by the corrupt system of the elite (Horsley, 2000:80-82; Fitzmyer, 2008:33-34; Punt, 2012:3-4).

Now that the rhetoric of ancient Rome has been briefly analysed, it is of the utmost importance to note the reference that Paul makes to the assembly in the city of Corinth (1 Cor 5:1-7:40; 8:1-11:1). How they maintained communication demonstrates the link to a system of power relations, with its emperor cult, maintained by public oratory. First Corinthians functioned or was connected to this kind of system in very similar ways, though internal problems in the church did exist that could have divided the community (Horsley, 2000:82).

Sampley (2000:779-783) and Fitzmyer (2008:30-34) acknowledge that first Corinthians epitomises Paul's argument with the imperial power through public oratory, indicating how the apostle disagreed with Roman rhetoric and the Roman imperial order. In addition to this, Horsley (2000:90) says Paul refutes the imperial Roman culture, which seems to have dictated the rhetorical conventions to the Corinthian community, which they seem to have adopted in passages such as 1 Corinthians 1:17-20; 2:1, 4; and 4:19. For example, in rhetoric an orator would make a presentation, not only an argument, but even more so convey his character to try and authenticate and validate his message.

On the one hand, Paul could have used the conventions of Roman rhetoric to present his arguments; on the other hand, he presented himself as a paradigm of what he expected people to be in the church. This becomes apparent in chapters 1 to 4; 8 to 10; and 12 to 14. On a number of occasions Paul shows or appears to be opposed to Greco-Roman norms through his use of terms such as weak, poor, foolish, lowly, despised and so on (1 Cor 4:8-13; 9:15-19). Apart from just opposing public oratory,

Paul employed key terms and symbols of Greco-Roman rhetoric and Roman imperialism to refute/reject the prevailing Roman imperial order. In many ways, he gives instructions to the alternative church/*ekklēsia* that the members should have their own grouping and conduct their own affairs, and not get too involved with worldly matters such as civil courts and participating in meals that were meant for idol worshippers (Horsley, 2000:90-91).

Through the use of key terms and symbols, Paul in first Corinthians advocates for an alternative gospel and an alternative assembly, where Jesus was Lord over against the emperor, who was in control of the affairs of the world. The most important thing that can be noted about Paul in first Corinthians is how the apostle reinscribes imperial images to make them applicable to his alternative vision of the church (Horsley, 2000:90-92).

Having outlined the relationship of Paul's rhetorical ideals with those of the Greco-Roman empire, I move on to illustrate how first Corinthians is seen from the rhetorical point of view, through Paul's arguments to the Corinthian assembly.

4.3.5 First Corinthians seen from a rhetorical point of view

In first Corinthians it is possible to see features that are similar to the public rhetoric that was evident in the Greco-Roman period of the first century. Horsley (2000:82-84) holds the view that rhetorical criticism as a field of study has its focus on the exact context, whereas Paul's address to the Corinthian community in first Corinthians is more complex in nature owing to the many questions the Corinthians might have posed to him and the disunity that is seen when the letter is read.

A speech or letter, for example, cannot be removed from any particular context within which it was created, as there are background interests and circumstances that were involved in the process of writing. Reading Paul's letters as examples of rhetoric helps situate the documents in their socio-historical context. Nonetheless, one needs to take into account some important differences. The circumstances of the Greek elite in their political rhetoric or oratory were different from what Paul envisioned in his letters to his readers, as he was never involved in the rhetoric of the public oratory of his day. However, he was greatly involved in church matters that took place in small groups that he had established and taught in, while he wrote many of his letters afterwards (Horsley, 2000:85; Fitzmyer, 2008:33-34).

The more likely situation is that speech and the process of letter writing were a direct response to a particular historical and political situatedness and the problems that went along with this. In that particular context, letters were more flexible in addressing various complex situations in cultural forms. It seems, therefore, that Paul's correspondence in first Corinthians encompasses a larger context and is intended to play the role of persuasion and communication to a particular known audience with concrete needs, as is seen in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

Unlike in his other correspondences, in first Corinthians Paul seems not to have shared the cultural heritage of the Corinthians. Paul, having been brought up in Jerusalem, a different environment and cultural setting, worked in the Romanised Hellenistic metropolis of Corinth only for some eighteen months (Heil, 2005:9-10). As such, communication could have been difficult, and first Corinthians ought to be seen from that perspective. The letter addresses concerns narrated by Chloe's people, as they could have discussed with Paul what was going on in the church (Horsley, 2000:85-87; Punt, 2012:3-6; 2015:2-15).

Taking into account this complexity of rhetorical analysis of first Corinthians, we can still say that through recent research much has been learned about the way Paul uses the qualifiers and twists, and also about the way he deals with the refusal of some terms and principles put forward by the Corinthians. First Corinthians is written against the background of a people who differed greatly from Paul, including holding a different worldview, which created challenges for and disagreements with him. Paul's primary consideration was to oppose the ideology as well as the impact of imperial exploitation, and in instead have a community that took care of one another within the domain of the city (Strijdom, 2001:620; Punt 2015:3-7).

Horsley (2000:86) further argues that first Corinthians is complicated by the events within the Corinthian assembly, when the figure of Apollos makes an entrance, as we read in Acts 18:24. A closer look reveals that Paul had no better dealings with this man from Alexandria, as is evident in his activities (1 Cor 3:10-15 and 9:12a) and whose teachings might have influenced the church in Corinth. In a certain way, we could say that Paul was dealing with a religiosity of individual spiritual transcendence with its focal point on a personal relationship with a heavenly Sophia, which existed amongst certain members within the church. Paul could have been trying to persuade the people of Corinth by depicting such a contrasting worldview to his own, so that their behaviour should instead embody values that he recommends – and even more,

so that they should perceive reality in the same way as he does – to help them disassociate themselves from dominant social cultural powers and thereby remain united (Horsley 2000:86-87; Sampley, 2000:781; Strijdom, 2001:620).

Horsley (2000:87) shows how Paul uses a rhetorical device which is helpful in re-establishing different voices in the community of Corinth, as they form an assembly of God. He says that Paul could have asked the Corinthian church to discern in what way they are supposed to understand the issues related to Jesus, wisdom, ecstatic prophecy, transcendent spirituality and theology that prevailed, but which he himself did not teach, and should uphold what he has said in his letter so that this understanding becomes a norm for the community.

A major challenge facing the church in Zambia, today is to develop critical interpreters who will take note of Paul's argument in this letter of first Corinthians, in order to understand the Corinthian community and Paul's argument about the relationship of the church and this community (Horsley, 2000:78-80).

Having discussed first Corinthians in its rhetorical context, I will now explore the status and position of women as they were perceived within Greco-Roman society. This continues the discussion on socio-cultural values in the first-century Mediterranean world.

4.4 Women in Greco-Roman times

When dealing with the position of women in the Greco-Roman period in the first century CE we have to understand that information is scanty, as not much was written by women (Fitzmyer, 2008:22-29). Most writings, including the New Testament documents, were written by men for men. However, Cotter (1994:360-367), who is a sister at St. Joseph of London in Ontario Canada, states that within Greco-Roman antiquity there were a number of issues that can be traced regarding women and also literature that has been written focusing on both biblical and non-biblical material.

According to Cotter (1994:36-267), the Romans, unlike the Greeks, provided space for women to join men at dinner parties, though this freedom was limited by the patriarchal culture within which it was found. Daughters were given almost the same education as sons; however, noticeable differences came up as adulthood approached. A married woman was afforded the opportunity to direct her opinions and concerns to her husband; this was in a sense giving a woman some privileged authority. Married women accompanied their husbands to dinner parties, but as a way of showing

courtesy they had to depart early, leaving their husbands to continue enjoying themselves. The role played by the matron (a woman who may be thought of as mature, sensible and of good social standing) was made less subordinate to her husband than it was for non-Romans.

In terms of family (Punt, 2015:5), the Romans saw it as a building block for the growth of its Empire. Family acted as a mirror of the foundational plan upon which the state was to develop. With this focus, the family also took the shape of the state in ranking persons, where the father figure was understood as being at the top and someone whom the family could and should respect. The laws that governed the state also applied to the family as subset laws of the city. Men were encouraged to have one wife for a lifetime, although traces of polygamy could be seen here and there.

Cotter (1994:36-276), in her quest to give a detailed account of Roman women, points to three kinds of women who lived side-by-side – Jewish, Roman and Greek; they lived in almost the same environment under the control of the Roman Empire. The Jewish women were to be veiled when they appeared in public places, although they mostly remained in doors doing domestic work.

However, women who had money could achieve a stronger social profile than those who were poor. In most events, women were shown to have their own identities and not those derived from their husbands, fathers or guardians (Cotter, 1994:36-276). Greek, Roman and Jewish cultures were all patriarchal cultures and women were not allowed to occupy public spaces, as this was reserved for men. Women could not enter political arenas, courts or public offices, nor take up any leadership roles; otherwise they would move beyond their allotted place. The public space belonged only to men who were engaged in politics, legal matters and services in the army, as this was more honourable for them. In the public space, this is where rhetorical political arguments took place.

Wordelman (1998:482) points to the missing links in Cotter's observations by showing a few instances where women held power. For example, Pythodoris, who ruled in the late first century BCE, usurped power from her husband. In Egypt, Cleopatra ruled from 50 BCE to 30 BCE, and her service was in the administration of Egyptian economic and military matters.

The structure of power in the Greco-Roman world was a pyramid with a small wealthy class at the top. Wealth and political power were held and controlled by

them, while the rest of the community had to follow what the ruling classes decided. Married couples (and the household) had a similar structure, where the head of the household was a man. While the family occupied the top social position, slaves were at the bottom. Widows of citizen men, with a few wealthy women, also served as household heads. Some women, nonetheless, owned and controlled property, which they inherited through widowhood.

Osiek and Pouya (2010:46-48) note how femininity played a part in the world of Paul. In this world, according to them, women needed to prove their feminine qualities for them to be recognised as women of character or as women of quality; thus, they needed to be faithful, obedient, gentle, and good mothers and effective managers of their household.

On the one hand, a virtuous woman was one who was more concerned about her husband's honour in a community and had the power to control her sexuality. On the other hand, a woman of bad character was one who disregarded her honour within the community and was further described as being sexually rapacious, unfaithful and greedy, both within her own home and the community around her (Osiek, 2005:347-368).

Describing life around the Mediterranean, Malina (2001:49) argues that in that world no one would associate freely with you in a covenant of relationships unless you were honourable and of good repute. In that case, a good name and family reputation were the most valuable virtues one could have. A shameless person was one who could not observe any social boundaries within the confines of a home and the community.

For those perceived to be coming from poor families or households, life was different, as there was a lack of sufficient space for everyone in the home, hence, no privacy. Children in such households were exposed to sexual scenarios at a very tender age. For example, a girl from a poor family could get married at about the age of 12, while an elite girl could get married slightly later, even in her twenties. Upon marriage, the non-elite girl's task was enormous – she would immediately move into her husband's house and then as a young woman take upon herself all the responsibilities, even though she was without any experience in marital matters, which other young women of a higher class were taught before they got married (Osiek and Pouya, 2010:47).

Meanwhile, those women who could not make a living in the city resided in rural areas producing food and crops on which the urban centres depended. Citizen women were privileged to have rights similar to those enjoyed by citizen men in exercising control over slaves, even those who were former slaves (Wordelman, 1998:484).

Women's class and work have shown that Greco-Roman societies of the first century CE viewed women as representing different levels in society – high class, middle class and lower class. This means that women functioned according to the stratified roles assigned to them by their societies. In the next section I will discuss gender perceptions and categorisations in particular.

4.4.1 Women and men in view of gender perceptions of the first century CE

Gender refers to socially constructed roles, behavioural activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women. Furthermore, gender is considered the state of being male or female (World Health Organization, 2014; Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2012), even though various other categories are acknowledged nowadays. Gender may also refer to differences between the sexes by distinguishing males from females by their sexuality, and may thus be used as a biological term. Therefore, the above definitions should help us understand women and men in terms of gender from the perspective of ancient times, especially when looking at 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, where Paul alludes to the specific silencing of women in the church rather than the silencing of worshipers in general.

Neyrey (2003), who has made a study of ancient literature, understands gender in the Greco-Roman period in stereotypical terms. He indicates that gender in the world of the Mediterranean was divided according to cultural perceptions, that is, how “male” and “female” provided demarcated space for each other. Accordingly, male space (market places, public squares, open fields) provided only for male occupations, whereas female spaces (houses, wells, ovens) provided only for female occupations. “Objects” *per se* were equally classified as male or female, depending on how they were used, that is, whether they were for “public” or “private” use. For example, agricultural implements and weapons of war were male, whereas domestic implements, cooking utensils and looms were female.

Neyrey further notes that private space was equal to female space, and public space was equal to male space. As defined in this sense, females were looked at as

part of the “private” world, where life was restrictive and operations were confined to a certain locale, that is, the house and spaces related to household duties, such as ovens and wells and the like.

Osiek and Pouya (2010:45-48) agree with Neyrey, but add that the people of Greco-Roman times did not think as we do today with regard to maleness and femaleness. Masculinity and femininity were understood to be on two different planes – to be male meant to be superior, and further as a penetrator; and to be female was seen as being inferior, and further as the penetrated.

In this state, as indicated by Osiek and Pouya (2010:45-48), maleness therefore was not a given condition but an achieved state. To be a man one had to appear in all traditional male spheres and prove oneself to be a man, even though this did not need to be to an excessive degree. It appeared more normal for a man to err and still be accepted in society without any prejudices, than it was for a woman to do the same, in which case her actions were never viewed lightly by the society of the first century CE.

Osiek and Pouya (2010:46-48) note that to be considered a man, one had to look for honour and glory; otherwise one fell into the category of women. Virtue and courage were to be pursued by every individual male, even if it was at a cost. He had to do this in order to prove that he was in control over his passions such as anger, greed, self-indulgence and desire. A man had to apply reason and act accordingly. By his actions he also needed to display mastery over women, children and slaves in his household.

Deprivation of the physical was encouraged, just as the Stoics thought this was part of life. For example, one had to sleep on the floor as a form of experiencing the hardness of life. Fasting and wearing rough clothes were other forms of showing manliness. Such acts were deemed symbolic of what it was most desirable for a man to pursue and achieve in order to be regarded as manly enough. The very opposite was valid for a woman and understood as being good, acceptable behaviour by the society of the first-century Greco-Roman period.

Osiek and Pouya (2010:47-48) also discussed gender disparities in relation to the division of labour for males and females in Greco-Roman times and noticed a number of differences.

Women were given the role of supervising domestic work in the home, caring for their children and other members of the household; one most crucial role was to

attend to the husband's wishes and desires, as he required. Men's work was carried out in public sectors and, in order for them to receive recognition and secure a place of honour, they had to participate in the intellectual and political discourses or rhetoric with other men when they were outside their home using available public spaces.

As far as the matron was concerned, as a mother in charge and worthy of respect at that time, she was to exert control over her family's affairs. She was able to move about without restrictions and manage her household well. The matron, furthermore, attended social gatherings in the company of her husband. Women whose social status was deemed higher were actively engaged at many levels as benefactors, builders, patrons and property owners. A woman's authority was increased when she became a mother, and her status was higher when she became a mother of sons rather than daughters.

Men who were deemed not manly enough were classified in the category of having no gender at all. These were male slaves, defeated enemies and so-called barbarians (the term used for uncivilised or uncultured persons). Both male and female slaves were classified as not possessing gender. Hence, they were not able to claim any honour, status, rights or protection based on their maleness or femaleness.

This brief outline of the social position of women and men in terms of gender leads me to consider another aspect which is of importance in understanding the socio-cultural values of the first-century Greco-Roman world. I will now address the material bodies of men and women to show how valued and important the differences between them were in this period. Their bodies are the same, yet there are technical differences in makeup, which show that male and female beings are somewhat the same, yet different at the same time (Punt, 2012:474-477).

Martin (1995:80) states that a man, in order to be different from a woman, had to have a hard body which could not be penetrated and most often had to be dry in order to be understood as being in an ideal state. Anything other than this was considered a condition of weakness. A man needed to be strong and show bravery at all times, never to shed a tear or display any form of cowardice, and he had to have a strong will and mind. Cromhout (2009:8) further argues that for a man to be recognised as ideal and a man of substance, he was at all costs not to be under any form of dominance, neither was he to be under the dominance of his own passions and desires.

As far as Laqueur (1990:62) is concerned, a real man was one who could penetrate and did not allow himself to be penetrated; otherwise he could be classified as a woman. The status of men and women had to be maintained and clearly defined.

Ruth Karras (2000:1255-1256) says gender roles were regarded as important when considering sexuality, where the penetrated fall into the category of feminine and those who penetrate were in the category of masculine. However, those women who showed signs of being active still did not qualify as being masculine, but instead they were categorised as gender invaders, and thus women could not in any way equate themselves to men.

Since the body of a woman could be penetrated and invaded, women were considered dirty or polluted. They were also considered weaker vessels, and their thinking levels were thought to be lower and subject to vulnerabilities that could in the end lead to defilement (Carson, 2002:80-87).

Women's weaknesses were attributed to body moistness tenderness, wetness and body softness. Because of this they were considered tender, emotional and unstable, and in most cases this was seen as leading them to sin. It was believed that women were prone to immorality because of their weak body makeup being wet and soft, which is an indication that they had a high level of erotic desire (Martin, 1995:198-199). This was how men understood women from a gender perspective, which greatly entrenched the lower position of women, both within the church and in society.

I wish to add another crucial dimension to the concept of gender, the aspect of honour and shame as core values that prevailed in this first-century CE Mediterranean world. Below I discuss the two concepts of honour and shame to highlight the respective positions that women and men occupied in this society.

4.4.2 Values of honour and shame

Honour and shame can be defined as concepts or values that society places on individuals in order for them to claim a place of comfort or worth. Malina (2001:29) defines honour as a claim to worth that is socially acknowledged. Rohrbaugh (2010:109) emphasises the concept of honour as someone's reputation in the eyes of society. This is associated with authority, gender and respect. Authority was seen as the ability to control others without force, while gender referred to the different standards of acceptable behaviour that applied to males and females. Respect,

however, referred to the attitude one held towards those who controlled their existence. Honour, in Malina's mind, seems to have concerned mainly claims to honour from other persons, and its attribution was made by a public court of good repute.

Two types of honour have been identified: "ascribed honour" and "acquired honour". According to Malina (2001:30), ascribed honour is the honour into which a person is born, either by ethnicity, family reputation, gender, wealth, etc. Such honour tends to be less dynamic than acquired honour, which can be won and lost on a daily basis through acts of contest. This type of contest arises when two persons or groups of people struggle to resolve their differences to determine right from wrong. In a protagonist contest, one has to diffuse the tension building up by offering an alternative to the challenge or riposte to win some sort of public praise. Crook (2009:593) admits that this type of contest usually took place amongst those who were considered equals and was considered the best way of resolving a conflict.

Both Moxnes's (1996:20) and Malina's considerations of honour take into account the social aspect of honour. Malina, however, does fundamentally emphasise the public recognition of one's social standing. For Moxnes, honour comes in one of two ways. One's basic level of honour, usually termed "ascribed honour", is inherited from the family at birth. For example, a child will take on the general status of honour that the family possesses in the eyes of the larger group or the community in which he/she resides. Ascribed honour, therefore, derives directly from family membership. It cannot be based on something an individual has done. Honour that is conferred on someone on the basis of virtuous deeds is called "acquired honour". By its very nature acquired honour may be either gained or lost in the perpetual struggle or competition from the public arena where recognition can be gained or lost.

Osiek and Pouya (2010:45-46) write about honour and shame, and how in the first-century Greco-Roman cities, people perceived themselves in the eyes of the public. Honour was viewed as a self-regarding phenomenon regulated through competition with one another. The codes of honour were applied to people with different statuses in ways that were unique to each group, from the poor to the aristocratic (or people regarded as higher in status in society), women to men, each group received their honour in ways that were befitting to them, which either reflected or corresponded with relations to one another.

While honour was associated with the male character, shame was associated with the female character and was understood as a passive state with a concern for the honour of others who should be held in high esteem (Crook, 2009:594). On the other hand, shame is understood as an emotional force that could be applied in similar ways as honour (Osiek and Pouya, 2010:47-48). Shame was in itself attributed in relation to others, that is, how one is rated in terms of character within the family or community around one. It is important to understand shame in the context of the Greco-Roman values of honour and shame, especially when we discuss Paul and his letters, as his letters are written against this background.

In the context of the first-century Roman world shame played a very important role in determining the values of life for the first-century community. To be female in that community meant subordination to a higher power authority, which was the male figure. Also, to be female meant to bear shame, which was the opposite of honour. Determining the affairs of the community was the prerequisite of the male, while the female was to obey and move in the direction of that instruction. The basic assumptions regarding Paul's dealing with women in first Corinthians is linked to the notions of honour and shame as experienced in first-century Corinth (Stewart, 2010:156-166).

MacDonald (1988:214) believes that the formation of the church as a community of believers usually takes the shape of the community in which it operates, as the church cannot live in isolation from the community where it is located. On the basis of this understanding, the church in its early years of the first century was shaped in the form of a household, which became an example of the "household of God" (1 Tim 3:15). For this reason, the ecclesiastical ranking took the shape of the domestic and social hierarchy that prevailed within the community. The leadership in turn came from the men of well-to-do households who in their homes acted as masters of their wives, children and slaves. The authority exercised in their homes was similarly linked to that in the church.

If we compare the life of these people to our current situation, we would find some similarities. As in the first century CE a number of communities today (including that of the RCZ) continue to associate men with power and authority in both the home and church, while women remain the recipients of that power and authority. The leadership styles found in both the home and church follow the pyramid type of leadership where males are the head of the household, with the rest of

the family being subordinated to him, a common feature in Zambian society, including the church.

Malina (2001:51) describes aspects of honour and shame from the Greco-Roman perspective in relation to male and female relationships:

A sense of shame makes the contest of living possible, dignified and human, since it implies acceptance of and respect for the rules of human interaction. On one hand a shameless person or group is one who does not recognise the rules of human interaction, who does not recognise social boundaries. The shameless person is a person with dishonourable reputation beyond all social doubt. One outside the boundaries of acceptable moral life, hence a person who must be denied the normal social courtesies.

From the views expressed by Malina, a person (male or female) had to act in accordance with the norms of the community in order to be a reputable person recognised by others in social relationships. Outside this boundary they would become a shameless person whom society repudiates. Therefore, women in this community were supposed to maintain the social boundaries both in their homes and outside. This meant that even at the church the status quo had to be maintained. Any choice a woman made to be disloyal to her husband tarnished the honourable reputation of her husband.

Paige (2002:238) affirms what Malina has alluded to in what he describes as life in the villages of the Greco-Roman world operating on an honour and shame basis:

Twentieth-century studies of modern Mediterranean village societies show surprisingly similar results as to both the ideals for and the actual behaviour of women, particularly when compared with the ancient Greek model. As in the first century, these small village societies operated on a “shame/honor” basis; in which ethical decision-making is governed largely by whether the individuals believe a course of action will cause shame or will improve their reputation in the eyes of the community (Paige (2002:238).

Allison (1988:36) remarks that women were silenced and not allowed to speak in public, which meant that public (social and political) space was male-dominated. Talking was also a male occupation, which played a major role in establishing and

maintaining men's status and a place of honour in communities. Hence, for women to stand and speak in public in the company of men was tantamount to acting in a shameful way.

Paige (2002:239-340) notes that in city and village life in ancient Greece there was a separation of the sexes in the most ordinary social contexts. This was because of the felt need that this type of segregation prevented the danger of compromising situations that would bring dishonour and shame to male authority. Women were viewed as weak, illogical and sensual, and would attract the danger of initiating or giving in to seduction, which would result in loss of honour for the husband and the entire family.

The honour of a wife was regarded as central to the honour of her husband and her entire household in such societies. Her honour and reputation could be lost by losing her sexual purity, or by losing it and having the community discover this. If she was dishonoured, so would her husband, father, brother(s) and son(s) be, who would be regarded as having failed to guard her or inspire her sufficiently.

Women's behaviour or character that steered them away from the perceived normal way of life – for example, taking too long to collect water from wells, being gone from the house too long and too often, or at odd hours – put them under heavy suspicion of misconduct or misbehaviour from the community. This was more serious in cases where it was known to involve contact with a man outside of a home.

In this section I discussed the core values of honour and shame which prevailed in the first-century Mediterranean world. This value system defined men as having honour, while women were in danger of shame. I will subsequently focus on women in the Corinthian house churches in the light of these socio-cultural values. I wish to show how the life of these women was perceived by society.

4.4.3 Women in Corinthian house churches

Women stand out quite prominently in religious affairs of the Greco-Roman world, as this was where they were permitted to play a more public role. The early church did not have buildings as we have today that are marked out as worship centres. Instead believers met in houses which were large enough to accommodate thirty to forty people. Such houses were usually occupied by families consisting of father, mother and their children, and possibly even slaves. Whenever the group gathered for worship it formed an *ekklēsia*. In these churches three categories of women must have

been present as in the rest of the Greco-Roman world and were probably also found in churches in the city of Corinth. Thus, Greek, Roman and also Jewish women formed a cultural fusion of some kind in Corinthian churches as they did elsewhere (Økland, 2004:135-143). It is assumed that when Paul wrote his letter to the church in Corinth and talked about women, all three of these cultures could have had their share in influencing him to recommend the silencing of women in the assembly. This could probably be so because in the young church Corinthian converts could have come from Jewish, Roman and Greek backgrounds (Chifungo, 2014:199-205). The three types of women could have been present in these house churches and could have wished to take leading roles, as Paul had already alluded to them in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. What may not seem obvious could be Paul's intention as he talked about these women in house churches, which were probably spread around Corinth.

I will discuss the intended function of Paul's rhetoric in Chapter 5 when I deal with literary and rhetorical aspects of the text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. For now, I extend this view of women in Corinthian house churches by looking at religion in the Greco-Roman times. Through this I hope to underscore how religion enhanced women's participation in these religious affairs during this period.

4.5 Religious life in Greco-Roman times

In the previous section I discussed honour and shame (4.4.4), which became part of the way of life for the first-century Greco-Roman world. This in turn affected the Christian community in its treatment of women, pushing them into the background in terms of playing leadership roles in the church. This section deals with how religious life was characterised in the Roman Empire, and the role women and men played within this religious environment. The aim is to see whether this religious life had an impact on the Christian community in its treatment of women.

This is because religion entered every aspect of the Greco-Roman world and its citizens worshipped many gods. Numerous temples were built all around a city. It was believed that these gods possessed certain powers that could influence the outcome of the life of the worshipper in ways as far as their faith could take them. In the Greco-Roman world, there were many deities which every citizen had a right to worship without being victimised (MacMullen, 1980:208-218).

Wordelman (1998:487) helps us to understand the situation of the Greco-Roman world in terms of their religious affairs. She observes that almost each and

every city celebrated public festivals to honour a deity or deities. These festivals were of different types and they ranged from solemn prayers to ecstatic dancing frenzies. Wordelman accounts for what was happening in these religious circles, where women could show their leadership abilities, by noting that women were not given a chance at leadership on political and economic platforms. This is how she puts it (1998:487): “In a world that barred women from direct political power these religious associations provided an arena in which women could and did exercise leadership roles.”

Paige (2002:235-237) reaffirms the point raised by Wordelman when he talks about women in the Greco-Roman world who were found participating and officiating at every level in religious cults, both private and public. While inequality between the sexes was present in the political sphere, it appears that in religious circles another principle was in operation where both men and women shared places of honour and responsibilities in more or less equal terms, depending on the contributions made.

Priestesses shared the same rights as those enjoyed by the priests. Religion opened up a platform for Greek women to be treated as citizens during the first century. Married women and virgin maidens appeared in sacred processions and served as hierophants, priestesses and other functionaries. This is the only place where mixed-gender settings prevailed (Paige, 2002:236).

For those who performed household religious practices in their homes, Paige (2002:236) asserts that the *pater familias* (the male figure as the head of family) was considered the “high priest” of his home; his role was to lead the family in prayers conducted daily and, when required, he had to make offerings on behalf of the family to the *lares* (household gods), which were the family’s ancestral deities, or any other minor deity as the occasion required (e.g. gods of planting, harvesting, etc.).

While the man acted as the high priest within his own home, Paige (2002:236) states that the role of the wife was to ensure that the *lararium* was clean and cared for, since it functioned as the shrine for the *lares* from which the family gave offerings to their god. The *lararium* consisted of a niche in the wall usually in the kitchen or an altar in the atrium. The wife’s sole responsibility was to ensure that at least one offering in a month was given and that this came towards the beginning of a new moon Kraemer (1998:46-72) contends that life for the Jewish woman was centred on the synagogue and this can be viewed in terms of Jewish practices that took place within the synagogue; these practices were based on traditional rabbinic literature that was written down and handed over after the second century CE (Mishnah, Talmud),

which explains how women were prohibited from taking part in any leadership role in a worship service or anything that had to do with the teaching of Scripture. The impression gained from this literature is that women would not, and should not, play any leadership role in a synagogue service other than being passive listeners.

However, Paige (2002:237) adds that inscriptional material offers or provides witness to the fact that certain women did serve as patronesses of local synagogues, particularly for those who lived in the diaspora. They also provided funds for building and maintenance of the synagogues, while they held positions in at least some synagogues. They could probably get involved in the administration of finances, participate in affairs of the judicial council, and perhaps even read Scripture or give an exhortation in the synagogue. Titles such as elder, mother of the synagogue, leader, and head of the synagogue were frequently used for them.

Paige further states that women were actively involved in the worship life of the synagogue in the diaspora in the second and third century. These women were even found to sit on the council of elders, while some held public offices. They made financial contributions towards the running of the synagogue; this implies that women were not passive listeners in the Jewish synagogue context. Though this may be the case, women continued to be under the subjection of men throughout the following centuries. Wendy Cotter (1994:370) has argued that even in those religious associations where women exercised leadership roles, the structure had to follow the class hierarchy of the Greco-Roman world where male figures exercised control. This meant that certain rules and regulations did not permit women to study the Torah, as this was preserved for men. This notion is further amplified by Punt (2012:474-476):

Such patriarchal notions were religiously defined and justified which meant that natural order and natural laws were originally seen as such because they supposedly reflect God's design for the universe ...in exercising authority over others. The male body was constituted in opposition to that of the woman ...and thus defined by mastery in the first place of the self but also in exercising authority over others.

This serves to indicate that during this period the church did not regard women as equal to men, despite their involvement through officiating at religious functions, as Wordelman and Paige have shown.

In the following section I continue to examine the socio-cultural aspects of Greco-Roman life, specifically as they relate to 1 Corinthians 14 in order to better

understand the Corinthian scenario. This may help to construct the context within which the apostle Paul wrote his letter.

4.6 Socio-cultural aspects in relation to 1 Corinthians 14

The social-cultural aspects discussed above are vital components in understanding the argument in Paul's letter to the Corinthian community. As Paul was wrestling to bring unity through order to the disordered church in Corinth, we can now certainly understand, read and interpret his letters bearing the socio-cultural historical background in mind, as informed by discussion above. This is especially true when we are dealing with the crucial text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. Situating this biblical text within the context in which it was written aims to underscore the important socio-historical values it embodies, how the people received the same text informed by their own cultural traditions, and how the same text can challenge us to overcome the struggles we encounter in our everyday lives. McDonald (1993:163-166) confirms that the socio-historical context is one important ingredient in the hermeneutical and exegetical process of interpreting any biblical text.

1 Corinthians 14 functions in the whole letter as a pericope where Paul discusses spiritual gifts, and challenges the church to be sober minded in the way it utilises these gifts as the church of God. Seen from the perspective of honour and shame as explained by Malina (2001), with women occupying the private sphere and men the public sphere, women should refrain from shaming their husbands, who occupy a place of honour in society.

When viewed from a gender perspective, 1 Corinthians 14 places the church as a witness to the outside world as it uses its gifts of various kinds. Prominent among these are the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues. These gifts are to be used in proportion or measure, as the church is being built and strengthened. While Paul is trying to encourage such order and peace within the assembly of believers, he resorts to silencing the women who have already been given the right to pray and prophesy according to 11:2-16. Meanwhile, the public viewed women negatively within this same cultural setting. Therefore, Paul must be understood in nuanced ways as he seems to oscillate between the two poles of being moderate and radical at the same time (Boyarin, 1994:185).

The socio-cultural issues raised in this chapter emanate from the first-century world in which Paul lived and carried out his missionary work. Working from such an

environment, he must have been affected by the prevailing cultural issues. This is also particularly true when it comes to the way women were treated. Women lived in an environment that was suppressive, oppressive and even abusive, not regarded as being fully human or possessing the same dignity as men. From this background comes Paul's challenge to the women to remain silent in the churches, an issue that shall be looked at critically in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

Furthermore, the writing of first Corinthians, which probably took place around 52-54 CE, occurred in the same environment and lifestyle where women were regarded as inferior to men. These issues which Paul raises in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 concerning women must have been prevalent in the social world where women were relegated to the periphery, the world of the Greco-Roman Empire, which saw men dominate public life and be granted places of honour. Therefore, Paul was caught on the horns of dilemma which was not of his own causing, according to Boyarin (1994:183-184). He was writing this letter to the Corinthian congregation taking into account the prevailing socio-cultural environment that had a bearing on the church (politically, socially and economically).

It is, therefore, important to understand the environment of this first-century world and its socio-cultural life. As Paul was addressing a context that was his own and unique in itself, he also has a right to be heard within the context of his own time (Dunn, 1990:186), but we must also take into account that what he wrote has a bearing on our present context as it affects our reading, interpreting and appropriation of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

Underscoring the importance of socio-cultural historical aspects as having an impact in the way Paul undertook to write first Corinthians, I now offer a conclusion to this chapter which should indicate the scope of what has been discussed thus far.

4.7 Preliminary conclusions

So far I have discussed a multidimensional exegetical approach focusing on socio-cultural aspects of 1 Corinthians 14, the context in which Paul carried out his missionary work. I discussed Corinthian culture by looking at the city of Corinth itself with its commercial trade and social environment in the early church of the first century CE. I also looked at Paul as an apostle to Corinth, the dating of his letter, and the use of language in the letters (for example, his portrayal of himself as a midwife and a mother). I also considered his letters as a form of rhetorical discourse prevalent

in the Greco-Roman period. I subsequently discussed the social position of women in Greco-Roman times, where I looked at marriage and family in the context of the Greco-Roman setting, before moving on to talk about social-cultural aspects in relation to 1 Corinthians 14.

This is necessary because the text of 1 Corinthians 14 comes from a particular context and cultural environment, where Paul had to deal with socio-cultural issues of his time in order for the Corinthian community to cope with their Christian faith in a environment where the community worshiped many gods. Within this socio-cultural and historical setting women were marginalised by the prevailing social values. For instance, with rare exceptions women were not allowed to talk in public, as it was regarded as a disgrace both to her husband and the family, as this was a matter of a social culture that operated through honour and shame (Malina, 2001:29-32; Moxnes, 1996:20-22). And so women were usually confined to the home while men occupied public places in this society.

Paul also deals with struggles and problems arising from worship within the church. Paul's argument is based on how the church managed itself for the benefit of others who were insiders and outsiders. His argument in 1 Corinthian 14, which is given in a rhetorical form, must be understood from the perspective of seeking peace and order. Therefore the context of the first-century Greco-Roman world should become the lens through which we should view the text of first Corinthians. Hence, whenever we are engaged with a biblical text, care must be taken to ensure that the socio-cultural historical aspects of this period are properly analysed.

Having covered the probable contextual aspects of 1 Corinthians 14 in this chapter, Chapter 5 explores two further facets of the multidimensional nature of this text, namely its literary and rhetorical aspects. This will be an in-depth analysis focusing on the implied literary and rhetorical aspects of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, as indicated in 1.6.3.

CHAPTER 5

A MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO 1 CORINTHIANS 14, FOCUSING ON ITS LITERARY-RHETORICAL ASPECTS

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4 I dealt with one aspect of a multidimensional approach to 1 Corinthians 14, focusing on socio-cultural aspects as they relate to first Corinthians in general. I explored the kind of social world that surrounded people of the first-century CE Mediterranean world. Of special importance for this project was how the status of women was understood and how they were typically treated in the patriarchal context of this world. The culture of the time was publicly dominated by men, while women belonged to the private space of the household, with their public lives restricted in many ways. The hierarchy and values of the church often reflected the same hierarchical structures and core values of the context.

In this chapter, I wish to further explore a multidimensional approach to first Corinthians 14 by focusing on literary and rhetorical aspects of the text. An analysis of the literary dimension of a biblical text aims at analysing the discourse of the text according to its genre and specific content. A literary approach thus explores the syntactic context and perspective of the text. This will be undertaken by means of various exegetical tools. The aim will be to critically analyse the text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 in order to find out what its focus and implied function within its particular context could have been (Long, 1989:78-92).

After these analyses, I hope to be able to make a proposal regarding the implied meaning of the text as a response to its first-century context. Louw (1982:48), with reference to Witting, states that “Different readings ... by different readers yield different meanings ... One can only analyse the text at hand and try to establish what the text says – and then hope that the text is a fair representation of the author’s intent.”

With regard to literary aspects of 1 Corinthians 14, I will start by establishing its *genre* or text type. I will proceed to explore what communicative purpose(s) the material serves. A question that is crucial here is how this specific text was supposed to function in the specific Corinthian community. For instance, is it an instruction? While socio-cultural aspects of the text refer to the environment from which the text

comes, as we have seen in the previous chapter, rhetorical-theological aspects refer to the pragmatic dimension or (implied) relevance of the text in the first-century world to which it was addressed, and how it was supposed to be received. Once that has been established, the long journey may be undertaken from the ancient canonised text to understanding its appropriation in new contexts today. The context of present-day recipients of the text then becomes important, begging for answers to questions such as: What kind of a world are we living in? What issues affect us? And, what are the challenges posed by this text facing us?

Having dealt with socio-cultural and historical aspects of this text in the previous chapter, I could make a provisional construct of the world from which the text probably emerged. Before undertaking the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, I will look at the structure of 1 Corinthians as a whole and motivate my demarcation of the abovementioned text.

5.2 Genre of first Corinthians

First Corinthians is a letter written by the apostle Paul to the church at Corinth (Martin, 1995:56-58; Fitzmyer, 2008:50-53). The type of literature is that of an epistle. It may have served as an answer to the many questions the Corinthians asked Paul regarding certain issues that affected their church. In the letter itself it becomes apparent that Paul is giving direct answers to the questions that the Corinthian assembly raised through Chloe's people and responding to the reports that he received about the division within the church which were dividing the body of Christ.

5.3 Structure of first Corinthians

Various scholars have suggested different structures for first Corinthians. Each structure follows a certain pattern of how a particular scholar understands the trajectory of Paul's discussions with the Corinthians. Below is a tentative structure of first Corinthians that I regard as appropriate to the broad understanding of the letter.

5.3.1 Macro structure of first Corinthians

The structure of the letter has been generally described by scholars (Collins and Harrington, 1999; Horsley, 1998; Stam, 1988:5-8) as indicated below. I have taken the structure proposed by Lategan (1985:74), Johnson (1986:272-275) and Punt (2012: 3) for 1 Corinthians 1:1 to 16:25, because it is structurally coherent.

Chapters 1- 4: Divisions in the body of Christ

Chapter 1:1-3 Letter-opening: sender, recipients and salutation

Chapter 1:4-9 Thanksgiving

Chapters 1:10-4:21 Warning against cliques in the congregation

Chapters 5-10: The church in the world

This is further divided into the following 3 sub-divisions:

5:1 to 6:20 on the holiness of the church

7:1- 40 on marriage and celibacy as God's gifts

8:1- 11:1 on conscience and freedom, dealing with issues of idols and food

Chapters 11-14 The world in the church, with the following subdivisions:

11:2-16 The prayer and prophecy of women

11:17-34 Abuse at the Lord's Supper

12:1-14:40 The exercise of spiritual gifts, into which 14:26-40 rightly fits

Chapter 15 The resurrection as the foundation of faith and of the Christian hope

Chapter 16:1-18 Body closing: final remarks and arrangements

Chapter 16:19-25 Closing: greetings, the holy kiss and valediction

5.3.2 *Micro structure of 1 Corinthians 11-14*

Having analysed the macro structure of the book of first Corinthians, I go on to analyse the micro context of chapters 11 to 14. I include chapter 11, even though it is an argument about hairstyles, because it mentions one particular type of woman who was allowed to pray and prophesy in contrast with chapter 14 where women are called to maintain their silence in church. Mainly chapters 12-14 focus on spiritual gifts which the church received from God.

Chapter 11:2-16 Prayer and prophecy by the women

Chapter 11:17-34 The Lord's Supper

Chapter 12:1-11 Different spiritual gifts

Chapter 12:12-31 Different members but one body

Chapter 13:1-13 Love as the greatest gift of all

Chapter 14:1-25 Intelligibility in the use of the gifts of prophecy and tongues in worship

Chapter 14:26-40 Order and peace in the congregations as members meet for worship (Horsley, 1998:152-155).

First Corinthians 12-14 serves as immediate rhetorical context for 14:26-40. In these chapters Paul focuses on various spiritual gifts that God had poured out on the church. In chapter 12 Paul describes these gifts of the Spirit in general, which should work in harmony and not in isolation, as all members belong to one body. This theme of spiritual gifts continues in chapter 13, which describes love as the most excellent of all the gifts. From here the author moves on to chapter 14, where he calls his hearers to follow the path of love and to desire the gifts of the Spirit, in this case specifically prophecy and speaking in tongues (cf. chapter 12).

In 1 Corinthians 14:1-25, Paul explains how these two gifts are supposed to work. Prophecy has an edifying function, while speaking in tongues can only build the congregation up where an interpreter is present. Paul thus stipulates the basis from which the spiritual gifts are to be exercised to maintain order and peace in the church.

Having outlined the micro structure of 1 Corinthians 11 to 14, my next point of focus is on chapters 12 to 14, where Paul discusses spiritual gifts. How should we understand this discussion?

5.4 Purpose of the letter

First Corinthians serves as an answer to the questions raised by the Corinthians themselves on issues that divided the church. Quarrels occurred amongst members of the congregation; while some followed Paul, others followed Apollos and still others, Cephas (1 Cor 1:10-12). Paul also had to attend to questions that revolved around issues of marriage and divorce (chapter 7). In addition to this, there was an issue that concerned food sacrificed to idols (chapter 8). Furthermore, those concerned with worship (chapter 11) and gifts of the Spirit (chapter 12-14) were addressed. The question of the resurrection was dealt with in chapter 15, and concluding remarks appear in chapter 16 (Preato, 2005:1-14). I will now briefly attend to the structure of the letter, which shows the flow of Paul's argument, with the aim of seeing how 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 fits into this structure.

5.5 Understanding 1 Corinthians 12-14 in its literary context

The question addressed in 1 Corinthians 12-14 is how the spiritual gifts that the church had received from God were used for the benefit of other members within the body of Christ. Associated with this is the issue of whether the church was

experiencing any growth as a result of these gifts (cf. 1 Cor 12:15, 23, 13:1-13, 14:1-2). Paul was struggling (cf. 1 Cor 12:15-17) to explain these issues that affected the church at Corinth, as it was in its infancy (Beale and Carson, 2007).

Paul's intention seems to have been to remind the church in Corinth that what they mostly needed was love (τὴν ἀγάπην) in the form of fellowship and caring for one another. They were to keep pursuing this at all costs, as he is quoting their slogan, "strive for the spiritual gifts" (ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά) as the most important aspect in the life of the church (1 Cor 14:1). By emphasising love as the most excellent gift (1 Cor 12:31; 13:1-13), however, Paul does not eliminate prophecy and speaking in tongues as great gifts from God. He clearly affirms that they may be desirable in particular circumstances and, at the same time, he adds "but especially that you may prophesy" (1 Cor 14:1).

First Corinthians 14 is about prophecy and speaking in tongues, which must be performed in an orderly way in the worship within the church (Witherington, 1995:274). Both gifts had a place in the lives of members of the church just as Paul affirmed this to them. However, Paul notes that in the church prophecy is more desirable than tongues simply because prophecy edifies everyone present (Perkins, 2012:156-158).

Speaking in tongues in Corinth had its own place, which could have been utilised within public worship and as long as these tongues are interpreted by someone with a gift of interpretation. Paul urges worshipers nonetheless to take care with this, because it may have a negative effect on both the believers and the unbelievers. Although it remains a sign to the speaker of God's presence and power, others might think that those speaking are confused and mad; this is the reason interpretation was so important.

The effect of prophecy on the Christian community was to bring conviction and conversion. It is nevertheless evident that Paul expects the service of worship within the Corinthian community to be free and open to the inspiration of the Spirit. With this in mind there is no excuse for the Christian church to be disorderly in its worship, because God's Spirit inspires order and not confusion (1 Cor 14:33).

In 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 Paul briefly makes comments on women present in the worship service and who, according to him, were creating disorder in the way in which they were speaking, claiming authority for themselves in the Lord's name. To

these women Paul reacts in a similar manner as to those who spoke in tongues without an interpreter (Baker, 1974:233).

Analysing the text of first Corinthians, Mitchell (1991:171) sees the unity of the church to have been at stake. Paul is trying to deal with divisive elements of the Spirit within the assembly of worship in Corinth and to urge the congregation to cultivate spiritual expressions that would bring forth unity within the body of Christ. Accordingly, Paul calls on those who may have had the “zeal” (ζηλοῦτε) to seek for higher and better spiritual gifts that aim to edify the gathered assembly and not those that promote individual egoism.

Paul exhorts the Corinthian congregation to aim at building and edifying the assembly, as indicated in 1 Corinthians 14:4-5, 12 and 26 and more importantly through love, which was to abound for all members. This is the key theme throughout 1 Corinthians 12-14. These themes were noted by the RCZ participants in the Bible studies when analysing question 2. Thiselton (2000:1077) gives the building of a congregation a twofold significance: (a) on the one hand, it prevents individualist attitudes, (b) and on the other hand, it helps others to experience growth in the process.

It is evident that the assembly is not living in unity, as the text does state in 1 Corinthians 14:26: “What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up”. It looks like each and every one (ἕκαστος) came to the meeting with his or her own kind of speech and gift whereby all were speaking at the same time without listening to one another (exercising the gifts without waiting for one another), which is a clear sign of confusion and division in the assembly. The requirement was a more orderly, peaceful and decent exercise of the gifts that were given to the church (Mitchell, 1991:172).

In a nutshell, chapters 12-14 are about spiritual gifts that the church in Corinth received from God. Chapter 14 focuses on two gifts – prophecy and speaking in tongues. They are set out in a dialectic tension with each other, for example, creating what is known as an antithetical parallelism, where one of the items in tension is constructed as beneficial, while the other is shown to be destructive. Antithetical parallelism is a rhetorical device used in Hebrew biblical texts to show contrast. It is used in Proverbs, for instance, and it is likely that Paul and his readers would have been familiar with this technique (Thiselton, 2000:1077).

Having outlined Paul's discussion on spiritual gifts (chapters 12-14) manifesting in a variety of ways but for the common good of the body of Christ, I now turn to look at 1 Corinthians 14:1-25 and how this text may be understood.

5.5.1 Understanding 1 Corinthians 14:1-25

1 Corinthians 14:1-25 addresses two important issues: prophecy and speaking in tongues (Greenbury, 2008:725). The RCZ Bible study groups also recognised that the passage deals with tongues and prophecy (cf. 3.6.1). The issues of prophecy and tongues seem to have been the main cause of confusion in the church at Corinth when they met in the assembly for worship.

My main focus in this study is on the second part of the pericope (vv 26-40), to which I shall return later. At this stage, though, it is important to consider the first part of chapter 14 (verses 1-25) in order to understand the flow of Paul's thought from verse 1. It is important because this is where the argument about the silencing of women begins. Eventually it develops into a strong argument which reaches its climax in verses 33b-35, where women are commanded to be silent as a result of their (disorderly?) speaking in worship services

In the first place I need to establish what the main thrust of 1 Corinthians 14:1-25 is. And then I need to move on to how Paul develops his methodology in answering the questions that were posed to him by Chloe's people (1 Cor 1:10-12). MacGorman (1983:396), in studying 1 Corinthians 14:1-25, says Paul stands ready to challenge the straying Corinthian assembly, especially those speaking in tongues, by addressing them directly; this continues on to 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

The whole of chapter 14 can be summed up in the words of verse 26 where Paul says, "Let all things be done for the building up (*πρὸς οἰκοδομήν*) of the assembly". This is repeated in verse 33a, where order and peace are encouraged as the marks of all God's people everywhere. In verses 39-40, order is once again emphasised: "All things must be done decently (*εὐσχημόνως*) and in an orderly (*τάξιτι*) manner." Paul calls on the Corinthian church to consider churches elsewhere as examples of orderly worship, and to put that into practice. The emphasis is centred on "all" (*πάντα*) (1 Cor 14:33b; cf. MacGorman, 1983: 396).

According to Witherington (1994:275-276), the events unfolding in the Corinthian church concerned shouting by those coming to the assembly, outbursts that were characteristic of unreasonable people, displays of aggressive temperaments, and

quarrelling with one another. It seems that the whole assembly was speaking simultaneously without listening or giving one another a chance to speak. According to Witherington, only a few were polite enough to listen to others. To create order out of the chaos and for there to be peace instead of discord, Paul requested respect, submission and silence of all listeners (cf. 1 Cor 14:27-28) when a prophet was speaking.

Paul's concluding exhortation "be eager to prophesy" (1 Cor 14:39) is reminiscent of the opening statement in chapter 14:1, where he sets the stage for prophecy and tongues: "Earnestly desire the spiritual gifts especially that you may prophesy". This foundational verse renders the act of prophesying dependent upon possession of the gift of prophecy (Greenbury, 2008:725).

1 Corinthians 14:1-25 give some background as to what Paul is concerned about – peace, growth and unity within the Corinthian church. This is intensified as he moves to the rest of chapter 14 (vv. 26-40).

5.5.2 Understanding 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

I will now proceed with a literary-rhetorical analysis of verses 26-40, the primary text for discussion, attending to word analysis, sentence structure, semantic order and syntax, while bearing the socio-cultural context in mind.

It seems that a problem occurred during the time of speaking in tongues and prophesying in the Corinthian worship service as Paul starts this section with a rhetorical question, "What then shall we say brothers and sisters?" (14:26). He outlines certain gifts that seem to have been prominent among the Corinthian assembly. He refers to a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue and an interpretation as prominent gifts. I would, therefore, argue that within the group that gathered for worship, other than the women whose problem is identified in verses 34-35, there were speakers in tongues and those who prophesied who had a problem of discernment, according to verses 29-32. All three of these groups, the speakers in tongues, those who made prophecies and the women posed a problem in the church. Paul reacted to them in the same way without showing any partiality (Thomas, 1999:85-117).

Very noticeable is that these groups evoked a sharp reaction from Paul, who commands them to keep silent when their speaking does not meet certain criteria. He used a very hard term to call them to silence (σιγάω). The meaning of σιγάω (to keep

silent) may be varied. The word may refer, when speaking of tongues, to keeping silent, not to talk, to keeping one's peace, to keep still or even to hold one's mouth (Perkins, 2012:164-165), when speaking of prophecy, two or three prophesying and others discerning, and, when speaking of women, silence to be observed in the worship by not asking questions.

For the sake of edification and growth (πρὸς οἰκοδομήν) of members and also order (τάξις), which are part of the themes running throughout the chapter, Paul gives instructions to each of the three groups (prophets, those who speak in tongues, and the women) – a command to be quiet or to keep silent (Miller, 2009:67). In each case Paul uses a present active third-person imperative form of σιγάω (to be quiet, not to speak) (1 Cor 14:28). In addition to speaking, one at a time, those who speak in tongues are to be quiet if there is no one present to interpret.

As such the many gifts the Corinthian church had received from God were in some way to serve the needs of those gathered as an assembly. Paul's intention or purpose was for these gifts to serve the needs of all members in the church; thus growth and exhortation meant to take place in peace. They were to follow a certain order of worship and adhere to a certain standard of decency. Therefore, any contrary view was to be rejected by the congregation, as it would disrupt a peaceful and orderly transition in a worship service (Ruef, 1977:153-156).

MacGorman (1983:399) ascertains that Paul provided very clear guidelines regarding the exercising of the gifts of speaking in tongues and prophecy (1 Cor 14:29-32). For prophecies and speaking in tongues the requirement had been set: they were to speak in an order one after another, two or at the most three, and the others were to wait their turn. This was so that those present could learn (especially when they were newcomers, attending either for the first time or there to observe) and receive instruction, otherwise the one who was speaking in tongues spoke only to him/herself and God, and was not edifying others who were present.

This is done in the sense that only two or at most three speakers in tongues should exercise their gift in any one service. They are supposed to do so in succession or following one after another, rather than all at the same time, and only one was to interpret (1 Cor 14:27). In the absence of an interpreter, all those speaking in tongues who came to the meeting were supposed to remain silent (σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ) in the church (1 Cor 14:28). The same should apply to the prophets, only two or three prophets ought to speak in a service, while those gathered in the congregation are to

listen and discern what was being said (1 Cor 14:29). If a revelation is given to another, the first prophet must stay silent and give a chance for revelation (1 Cor 14:30); this is so that all may be instructed and encouraged (1 Cor 14:31).

Wire (1986) further points out that the Corinthian community had put more emphasis on participation and expression of individual believers as their main focus rather than on the rest of the believers who gathered for worship. In her description of 1 Corinthians 14:26-31, she notes:

The focus is on participation: “each one has a song, a teaching, a revelation, an ecstatic voice, an interpretation”. Probably the major roles in worship are prophecy and prayer or song. Both women and men pray and prophesy, and the women ... covering their heads (11:4, 5). Sometimes people pray or prophesy at once, and sometimes ... interpreted in a rational way (14:27-31). The focus throughout is on expression rather than reception, on mediating the relation ... on mediating a content. God's presence is the central reality and this is experienced ... as a kind of communication, circulation or aeration of the common new identity of God's people in Christ (Wire, 1986:13-14).

Meanwhile, 1 Corinthians 14:32 talks about the spirit of the prophets which is subject to the prophet him/herself, implying that the prophet who is possessed by God's Spirit is also in control of that spirit and does not act contrary to God's purpose for those who are gathered for worship. For God is not the author of confusion, but Godself is the God of peace as is manifested in all the congregations of the saints.

The appeal to God's nature in 1 Corinthians 14:33 occurs as the motivation for the section on the gifts of prophecy and tongues (1 Cor 12-14:1-33a). “God is not a God of disorder (i.e. anarchy, instability, confusion, factionalism) but of peace (i.e. a unified, reconciled, whole community)” (Mouton, 2011:282; cf. 14:33b-40). This is also motivated by a concluding remark on orderly behaviour in verse 40: “Everything should be done decently and in order” – NRSV). Mouton (2011:282) continues: “1 Cor 14:33 (echoed by the appeal to order in 14:40) thus contains an implicit appeal to the audience to turn from faction and instability towards peace and unity, *in imitation of the God of peace*”.

Analysing the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Ann Jervis (1995:51-56) says Paul wrote these words next to the prophecy (1 Cor 14:29-32) because the behaviour

he found reprehensible took place during the exercise of that charisma. According to her, Paul's chief concern was the peaceful exercise of prophecy and not the subordination of women, and she observes that the censuring of women speaking in 14:34-35 should be interpreted in that way.

Jervis (1995:55-56) rejects outright the idea that Paul forbade women to speak in church because of the lower position they held in society. She asks readers to understand that Paul had already in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 given women the authority to pray and prophesy. How could the same Paul call the women to silence within the same letter?

Jervis (1995:72) further explains that Paul responded to the women alone because their speaking, rather than that of the men, was disrupting the communal expression of prophecy. In the process of convincing his converts to change their behaviour, Paul was willing to resort to imposing the patriarchal values of his society. Paul's foremost consideration is the peaceful expression of prophecy. Looking at verse 35, Fee (1997:522) agrees that Paul's exhortation expresses patriarchal authority within the household, in line with Mediterranean culture of the time, where honour and shame were among the most important social values, and were stipulated in pre-Christian marriage contracts.

Hays (1996:52-56), a New Testament scholar from North America, discusses 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and explains the pericope as follows: "We know from 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 that Paul already expected women to pray and prophesy in the community's worship. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 may be seen as a contradiction where it mandates silence of women in the assembly".

Crüsemann (2000:19-36) adds that it cannot be determined from Paul's short discussion towards the end of chapter 14 whether Paul's remark in dealing with the subject of women speaking was prompted by the questions regarding the matter raised by the Corinthians themselves or whether there were women who attempted to speak in worship services. Paul writes, "αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν, ἀλλὰ ὑποτασθήσονται, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει" (NASB) (Let the women keep being silent in the churches for they are not permitted to speak, but subject themselves, just as the law says).

The rendering of αὐταῖς as the article "your" is used as a possessive pronoun in Greek and is permissible inasmuch as the article is frequently used as a possessive pronoun in Greek literature. In the context of this verse αὐταῖς may signify the

happenings only in the Corinthian assembly. Thus, a note of contrast is introduced which is not found anywhere else but within the Corinthian church. The thinking should be: as is the case of the worshipping assemblies of all the other churches (1 Cor 14:33b), so let the women keep silent in your (Corinthian) congregation's worshipping assembly.

The form in which *αἱ γυναῖκες* appears indicates that women were the ones involved in the speaking and these may have been of different age groups, though most likely they were adult females (unmarried, married or widowed cannot be ascertained). However, *γυνή* can be translated as "wife" in some other contexts, but Paul here is likely making a general reference to "all" women (without reservation).

Establishing what this command could have meant within its context, we can only work with possibilities and assumptions. Crüsemann (2000:19-36) observes that Paul's directive that women should keep silent in the worship service is in accord with the immediate and decisive context for those women who were speaking in the form of making noise. They were to refrain from a particular kind of speaking within the worship service, whether it was speaking in tongues or carrying out prophetic ministry; more especially, they were to remain quiet when speaking was not edifying to anyone of those who gathered for worship.

Fee (1997:512) affirms that Paul's chief concern in this pericope is for "order in the assembly". There must therefore be specific guidelines for those who gathered for worship and exercised gifts of speech in the assembly and whose aim was that everything done in the assembly should be done to build up the body of Christ. The principle is set out that not more than three people should speak.

In her commentary, Elna Mouton (2011: 281) notes:

Whatever the circumstances implied by verses 34-35, their inclusion in this text is particularly unfortunate, since the strong wording has subsequently detrimentally affected the way the rest of Paul's comments on women are being read ... They have inadvertently reinforced the more conservative and restrictive tendencies of 1 Cor 11 ... and obscured the more liberating aspects of Paul's statements about women (cf. Gal 3:28). Consequently, women were silenced and marginalised in numerous explicit and subtle ways. In the process, the spiritual gifts of baptised members of the body of Christ ... were tragically inhibited. Church leadership was ... absolutised and distorted...

Paige (2002: 221-225) notes four possible alternatives that Paul offered in 1 Corinthians 14:34 that concerned the women and their speaking. (a) The alternative imposed for the women is to subject themselves to the leadership of men. (b) He gives the reason or an excuse for their speech: to ask questions. Is this what led to the offense that the women were asking questions in the worship service? (c) In the case of women having questions without answers, Paul provides an alternative, for them to ask “their own husbands” at home who would give answers, that is “if anything was to be learned”. (d) The act that was prohibited was labelled “shameful” (αἰσχρὸν), which in terms of Greek culture was a powerful mark of dishonour or disgrace for the women. But according to Fee’s (1997:521) view, Paul’s command to silence not only required the women to be silent but so too should those who have the gift of tongues but no interpreter, and prophets who should remain quiet while someone who has a revelation speaks (1 Cor 14:28-30).

Within the same framework, Rowe (1990:56-71) provides an exegesis that is worth noting, as he provides the probable context of 1 Corinthians 14, in that Paul makes a comparison of speaking in tongues with prophecy in the public worship of the church. In keeping with chapter 13 based on love, prophecy which is to benefit others is to be regarded as more useful and beneficial than the gift which is a matter between the individual and God alone (1 Cor 14:4), unless of course the speaker manages to put the message into words that will be understood by all present in the worship service (1 Cor 14:5). Therefore, in the spirit of this rebuke Paul addresses women who were disturbing the same worship service, turning it into a question-and-answer session. He commands them to silence, and whenever there is anything to be learnt, their husbands should provide answers in the home environment.

From 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 Paul deals with positive instructions for the regulation of worship in the church. Ellis (1981:212-230) understands the activities of 1 Corinthians 14:26 to relate to prophecy and speaking in tongues. Thus, there is need to understand 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 as a unit clustered together which forms an integral part of the whole of 1 Corinthians 14.

Mouton’s analysis of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 (2011:282-283) concludes with a proposal that I agree with, which refers to the implied recipients who are encouraged to live in harmony of unconditional love (ἀγάπη) with one another, for two major purposes:

(a) “That the presence of the *God of peace* (in and through the crucified, resurrected, ascended Christ and the Spirit) may be acknowledged by all, and that God may be honoured and worshipped (1 Cor 1-2; 12:12-30; 14:3-5, 12, 17, 25, 26, 29-40). In the context of 1 Corinthians 14 the following expressions are major orienting statements: 14:25 ... even the unbelieving visitor will bow down before God and worship God, declaring, ‘God is really among you.’ 14:33a ... for God is not of disorder but of peace;

(b) “that the church may be unified in love, restored, built up, strengthened, encouraged” (1 Cor 12-13; 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26). The recurrence of this motive is particularly striking in 1 Cor 14: 14:5 ... so that the church may be built up; 14:26 ... Let all things be done for building up ... Later audiences are ... challenged ... to be reoriented and transformed by its radical images of God and the church” .

Meanwhile, for the purposes of understanding the injunction to the women in the passage and the use of certain words and phrases within the text, some keywords and phrases such as “to speak” (*λαλεῖν*) and remaining silent (*σιγάτωσαν*), which are used to curb those speaking in tongues, the prophets and the women, have to be explained. The theme of tongues and prophecy continues in 1 Corinthians 14:37-38 and 1 Corinthians 14:39-40, which acts as a summary to the whole discussion on prophecy and tongues that started in 1 Corinthians 14:1, with the command to maintain decency and order in any given worship assembly.

The very opposite of this was happening in the religious life of the Greco-Roman world. In these other religious institutions women played very active roles and also ascended to very high positions (cf. 4.5), even to that of the priestess, because of their involvement and contribution in that particular religion. This includes women such as Phoebe and Priscilla (as mentioned in Rom 16:1-2) in Rome, women of whom Paul speaks very highly, as they even they risked their lives for the sake of the ministry. How then could such women receive praise from Paul if they were not allowed to speak in public places? This is where we need to be specific about which women are being discussed – Paul here in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 was talking about women whose behaviour was worrisome in the church and was not addressing all women for centuries to come.

To sum up, we have considered 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 with its discussion on tongues, prophecy and women speaking in the church, as well as how each group should maintain order in the worship service. I wish to return to verses 34-35 to

analyse the significance of the women in the text and how Paul talks about them in his call to silence.

5.6 The women in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

In 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 Paul is discussing the issue of women whom he has called to silence indicating that they are not allowed to speak in the church. He also called them to be submissive to their men, as stated in his quotation from the law. Their talking should be done at home and to their husbands, he asserts, calling their speaking in public an act of shame or disgrace in 1 Corinthians 14:35b. I will now discuss some of the critical issues regarding these women.

5.6.1 Who are these women?

Understanding the women in the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is challenging since Paul has not given a clear picture of who these women are. And Paul's other letters do not give any clues on this matter, so all we can do is to speculate on who they were. And Polaski is of the view that we should understand the women in the text as a group of women whose identity cannot be known or identified. She describes the women in the text, citing what they were doing in the worship service:

There was a particular group of women in the congregation who were disrupting the worship services. We cannot know the exact scenario, but it is easy to imagine. They might, for example, be women who are new to the community, perhaps newly married to believing spouses, who are asking questions at every turn, so that the progress of the service is constantly interrupted ... Other possibilities exist for the presence of this passage. It may be that Paul is quoting the Corinthians' position in vv. 33b-35, as we saw earlier in 7:1. Or, it may be that Paul distinguished between married women, who should keep silent in the presence of other men, and single women who were free to speak; but claiming this view from the text is an argument from silence (Polaski, 2010:397).

Allison (1988:39) views the women spoken about in the text as "those who should be identified as married women", he says this in account of the phrase, "Let them ask their husbands at home". To him this was an indication that the women in the text were those coming as families to worship (as a husband, wife and children).

However, the phrase αἱ γυναῖκες should be understood in two ways: (a) it could denote “female” as distinct from “male”, and “wife” as distinct from “husband”; or (b) it could also mean women in general terms, or wives or a particular group of women, or else as a particular group of wives.

According to Crüsemann’s (2000:19-36) understanding, the women here could comprise any age group regardless of their status, whether married or not, but they could have been adult females, thus unmarried, married or widowed. We may also refer to them as “wives” in certain situations, especially when contrasted to “wives” as found in Ephesians 5:22, where the text says, “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord”. She maintains that the Ephesian reference here should be understood as referring to women in general terms, and not to wives only. This is because these services were meant for all people and not to a particular group of people. The same argument can be noted for 1 Timothy 2:11-12, where Paul commands women to silence in a similar way.

We should also note that Paul speaks of women in a context where he makes other very general statements, for example, “as in all the churches, it is shameful for a woman to speak in church” (1 Cor 14:33b-34). The difficulty is to find reasons why any particular group of women, such as wives, could be singled out for silence (Harley, 1981:187). As it stands here, the implication is that women were to maintain their silence in all the churches that existed at that time when the injunction was imposed.

However, Wayne Grudem (1982) ponders over the text and suggests that if the text is restricted to wives only, then a problem arises because it would allow young girls to speak in the worship service. It is unlikely that this was the case, as age determined wisdom at that time. The phrase in point (τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας) “let them ask their husbands” in 1 Corinthians 14:35b does point to wives being the group referred to.

Bruce Chilton (1977:32-35) argues through examining the definite article αἱ and says that it indicates or refers to “a distinct group of females who are commonly and socially known to Paul and his readers”. Paul could have taken them to be a group of noisy women in Corinth who “took control” of the assembly of worship through their unbecoming behaviour, without adequately observing the Word of God. But it may not be easy to accept this kind of explanation with the apparently universally accepted ruling suggested in 1 Corinthians 14:33b.

Schüssler Fiorenza (1978:161) draws attention to the wives who were not allowed to speak unlike the unmarried virgins to whom “Paul ascribes special holiness” (1 Cor 7:34) and whose participation he accepted on those grounds. It could be true that 1 Corinthians 7:34 describes the unmarried and virgins as *παρθένος*. The question of interest in this situation could be: how could they ask their husbands at home if they are not married?

It soon becomes clear that identifying the women in the text is no simple task, and we can only assume that they are the wives of the Christian husbands who are present in the service, and that they are talking in the form of asking questions to which Paul has already responded in 1 Corinthians 7:2-9. This point can be strengthened further with an exhortation that they are to continue to be subordinate to the authority of men (1 Cor 14:34c), which is the present imperative mood.

Ellis (1981:212-230), having done a close reading of these verses, identifies these women as the wives of Christian husbands who attended the assembly and who witnessed the kind of speaking in which those women participated. His further argument is that this interpretation accords well with Paul's teaching that Christian service is qualified by marriage obligations proposed in 1 Corinthians 7.

Nonetheless, 1 Corinthians 14:35 may give clues as to the identification of the women, and this could explain the meaning of *λαλεῖν*. Stendahl (1966:30) proposes that “The context of 1 Corinthians 14:35 makes it clear that the silence meant here stands in contrast to ‘asking questions’, and not to preaching, teaching or prophesying”. However, Bruce (1971:135-136) challenges this interpretation because he says such a phenomenon seems hardly weighty enough for the heavy phrases that the apostle Paul uses in the injunction that restricts women from speaking.

It is most certain that the women who were speaking in the church at Corinth can be identified as the wives of Christian husbands, and therefore, *λαλεῖν* (to speak) could be understood as any kind of speaking, which is connoted as insubordination on the part of a wife in relation to her husband, who could have been involved in prophesying.

This could include asking questions while the service is in progress, or judging prophecies or even critiquing the judgment of the prophecies of others within the assembly and atmosphere of worship. The husbands are nowhere in sight, but only the women's (wives') behaviour is viewed as unacceptable in the congregation.

Paul at the same time expresses the prohibition of women speaking in more general terms because it includes other churches, though he has not mentioned them by name. Paul's overall explanation fits the generalised nature of the instruction and accords well with the fact that λαλεῖν is opposed to ὑποτασσέσθωσαν. This would also make sense when taken or understood as a general rule in all the churches (Bruce, 1971:135-136).

Whatever explanation may be attributed to this injunction to the women, I understand that pinpointing the identity of these women is complicated; however, we can be certain that these women were present in the worshiping assemblies in Corinth, and their questions were related to what was happening in the worship service. Such questions may be the ones Paul was alluding to in 1 Corinthians 7:5-39.

Considering the response of some of the RCZ participants who stated that women should desist from leadership roles in all the ministries of the church based on what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, we can now see that the present-day challenges are mostly similar to those faced by the original recipients of the text. The women in the text had their own shortcomings in their newfound faith, while being surrounded by a culture that did not allow for expression other than in their own home. The best approach is to understand these biblical texts within the socio-cultural and historical contexts in which they were created in order to appreciate and find the appropriate meaning for today's context. In the next section I discuss what Paul required from the women.

5.6.2 What did Paul require from these women?

To determine what was required from the women in Corinth, I take note of the following important keywords found within the sentence in which the command to silence appears: "Not allowed to speak in the church" (αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ) as an act forbidden to the women in the church. The verb used here means a lot more than one might think. This verb σιγάτωσαν means to "keep still or not to talk", as is used mainly in the sense of (a) "to say nothing", or "keep silent"; (b) "to stop speaking or become silent"; or (c) "to hold one's tongue or keep something secret" (Gingrich et al., 1979).

The silence required by the women is not measured as to how long they are to be silent; the phrase only entails that they have to be silent. Grudem (1982) has looked at the usage of the word σιγάν and says that it did not call for total silence, and

was used in a particular context. In other words, the context had to define the silence required at that particular time; after that there was freedom to continue talking. The silence in the case of 1 Corinthians 14:34 could have been a temporary restriction. For if a person was speaking, the others were to remain silent and refrain from interrupting until the speaker had finished. 1 Corinthians 14:30 could have been used to set an example for this situation.

In that sense, the participants in Bible studies responding to question 6 could have been right to state that the silence does not apply to today's context but rather to that of the Corinthians living in the first century CE. According to the participants, this was their cultural norm or their cultural value, as women at that time covered their heads and sometimes their faces as well, in order for them to have authority in the church (1 Cor 11:2-16).

Gingrich et al. (1979:463; Stan, 1988:187-188) analysed the verb "to speak," distinguishing between the two verbs "to speak" (*λαλεῖν*) and "to say" (*λέγειν*). While *λέγειν* could express a form of articulated speech, to speak (*λαλεῖν*) implies to chatter, to say something, or "to speak inappropriately", without necessarily having any logical meaning. From this distinction, I suggest, along with Abbott-Smith (1973:263; Fitzmyer, 2008:530-531) that by using "to speak" (*λαλεῖν*) instead of "to say" (*λέγειν*) Paul depicts the Corinthian women as making a disruptive noise. Because we do not have another perspective on how these women were conducting themselves, we do not know what exactly they were doing. We only know that Paul describes it as disruptive.

Therefore, for the purpose of analysing the text in 1 Corinthians 14:34 about women speaking in the form of making a noise, we may conclude that Paul's idea was possibly to mitigate "unseemly hysterical outbursts. Most certainly this could have occurred either during a form of excitement within the Corinthian church" or while the worship service progressed (Robbins, 1935:187; Fee, 1987:705-708; O'Connor, 2009:265-267).

Whatever the situation concerning Paul's injunction for women not to speak in church assemblies, the verb *λαλεῖν* has more meanings as indicated above. It depends on the interpreter's understanding of this verb and its functioning in the sentence or paragraph. It also depends on the context in which the talking occurs. If it is being described as chatter, one needs to consider the context of the writer. A person writing

in a patriarchal society may consider women's talk as less important than men's and may accordingly describe it as "chatter".

Another probability is one that Bassler (2012:564-565) has outlined as I discussed in 2.2.7.5. This leads me to a brief exploration of the place(s) where the church met for prayers.

5.6.3 *Place of meeting – house or church?*

Another question I would like to consider is the place of meeting where the church met to conduct worship services. To review this is important, because women were commanded to silence and asked to direct their questions to their husbands at home. Though it may be obvious that believers met regularly at the church, there is evidence that these church structures existed as house churches, as there were no formal buildings erected as worship centres during that time (Button and Van Rensburg, 2003:3-11). This could be more the reason why silence was required in the church (ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις), which could imply a gathered assembly (1 Cor 14:34a). Alternatively, ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ could also mean a church as a building (1 Cor 14:35c), or a place of worship that could be a house or home (ἐν οἴκῳ) (1 Cor 14:35b).

Barton and Horsley (1981) have contrasted a number of similarities and parallels between the church and the house where worship services were held. And one such use is οἶκος (house), making reference to the place of the meeting or house and to those who met there. Perhaps it is these kinds of Christian meetings that gathered for worship services suggesting ἐν οἴκῳ (in a house). 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 reflects a conflict between Paul and the women over the marked boundary between ἐν οἴκῳ as in houses belonging to members of the congregation gathered for worship, and ἐκκλησίᾳ marked as a building set apart for worship as a church.

History indicates that in church meetings and Christian gatherings married women could not sit together with their husbands, nor were they allowed to sit together as families. Men occupied their own space separated from the women; this could have been the style adopted from either the synagogue or early church gatherings (Brown, 1978:1058; Harley, 1973:217-218). Nonetheless, this trend has continued even to this day; most churches in Africa have seating arrangements where men sit on the one side and women on the other. Leslie (1976:182-183) comments that this arrangement cannot necessarily be dated back to the time of the synagogue or to the first century, but this is a question that cannot be discussed here as the interest

at this point is where the church met for their services and not how the church was organised.

However, Harley, (1973:217-218) notes that the seating arrangements could have separated the men from the women, and thus husbands from their wives and families. This perhaps indicates the environment that evoked the shouting or outbursts from the one side to the other while worshipping in the same room. This could have been the reason why the women shouted, calling out to those who sat on the opposite side in order for their concerns to be heard, which Paul in turn directed should be addressed by their husbands at home.

The ἐκκλησία, which is described as the gathering of the Christian community specifically for the worship of God, made use of such a setting where members did not sit as a family while the Scriptures were read and interpreted. Banks (1980:35-42) noted that ἐκκλησία, in the Pauline letters applies to “a regular local gathering of God’s people before God”. It is within these gatherings that the faithful community came into being as a Christian community. Banks (1980:35-42) comments on such meetings of Christians in ordinary homes: “Paul goes to show that he does not wish to mark off his gatherings from the ordinary meetings in which others, including church members, were engaged”.

If we are to analyse Banks’s (1980:35-42) view of ἐν οἴκῳ and ἐκκλησία, it will be noticed that the difference between the two is that it mostly depends on what the purpose for the gathering was. When the meeting was for worship, the church of God (ἐκκλησία) was present, and there was supposed to be order and peace. However, beyond that there was little practical difference between the space marked as a house (οἶκος) and that marked as a church (ἐκκλησία).

An outsider could so easily find himself/herself present in a gathering that may have begun as an ordinary secular affair and seeing women taking leading roles could have made him or her question the church’s position. Thus, Paul warns women present in a gathering not to shame the men in the given public space, though it was an assembly of God. This is because if seen to be dominated by women, the men’s honour as husbands (as alluded to in 4.4.4.) would be questioned by the public (Barrett, 1968:331); furthermore, the women’s attitude or behaviour would be regarded as shameful or a disgrace (αἰσχρὸν) in the eyes of the public.

The discussion on whether the people met in houses or separate churches is one that will continue to be debated. However, what is important is to understand that

the church met for prayer on a particular day or days and that such meetings were duly constituted as a worshipping assembly of the body of Christ.

5.6.4 “Not allowed to speak” - οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται

Paul ordered the women to silence when he saw that their speaking would bring confusion in the worship. It should be noted that these women were not the only group commanded to keep silent in the text (as discussed earlier). Possibly Paul believed that his own teaching (1 Cor 4:17; 7:17) and what other Christians elsewhere were doing (1 Cor 11:16) had authority which was binding for all believers (Rowe, 1990:64-65).

Some RCZ participants in the Bible study responded in the affirmative by stating that Paul did not impose this as a permanent injunction on all women for generations to come, but was meant for a specific time to address a specific problem, after which women were free to pray and prophesy as in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. Others pointed to cultural values that prevailed in Corinth as contributing to the silencing of women. These cultural values are no longer applicable, and therefore women can preach and this poses no challenge to their leadership, both in the church and community.

Sverre Aalen (1964:513-25) points to the source of not being allowed to speak (οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται) as a term that had its origin in Jewish culture and so Paul used it to explain the ban.

Ross Kraemer (1983:129), however, looks at this text as being non-Pauline, as an interpolation from Paul’s opponents who were non-Christian. This is because elsewhere in Paul’s letters we read of women working and doing ministry alongside men, which we cannot ignore, i.e. such as those in Romans 16. In this case, therefore, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 should be challenged because it stands in opposition to what was already the practice in the church. In the next section I deal with the verb “to submit” and what it could have meant.

5.6.5 But “must submit” - ἀλλὰ ὑποτασσέσθωσαν

The verb “to submit” in 1 Corinthians 14:34c implies to give in, or to bring under control of another, or to be under the authority of someone with no further arguments. Abbott-Smith (1973:463), having studied the Greek verb ὑποτασσῶ (to submit), says that it implies “to be subjected”, or “to be subordinate”, or it points to a person who is under the authority of another without question.

According to Leslie (1976:140), this is an action or attitude a person can adopt voluntarily with “no hint of inferiority” and in a way is not inconsistent with equality. Evans (1983:70) argues that the verb (submit) in the form it appears does not entail obedience, although that might be the end result.

Charles Cranfield (1979:660-2) argues that this verb “to submit” ὑποτασσέσθω ought to recognise the “other persons” who carry a different gender status and who are the very opposite of oneself, contrary to one's own interests, and should nonetheless be treated as fully human. In this case, therefore, 1 Corinthians 14:30-32 carries a message that to submit to, or to be subordinate, had more to do with self-emptying and giving of one's self to one another. Delling (1964:76-85) also holds similar ideas.

When subordination is understood in the context as explained by Cranfield or Delling above, then we would be able to relate to one another in ways that are not oppressive or suppressive; instead we would respect one another as we practice leadership or servanthood, with Jesus Christ as an example. So, therefore, submission ought to be understood as we engage in service for one another in the same way that Jesus demonstrated when he came into this world.

The question that needs to be asked here is: To whom should these women subordinate themselves? In one theory proposed by Schüssler Fiorenza (1978:161), she suggests that women are to submit to the regulations of the community as a requirement in addition to subordination to their husbands, who might have been present in the church. This may be in line with the idea that Paul demonstrated in 1 Corinthians 16:15-16, a text that also talks about submission to those who are in higher authority in the church.

Nonetheless, in 1 Corinthians 14:34, submission should be taken and understood in the sense that the husbands mentioned here could be those authorities generally to whom the wives are to subordinate themselves. This could be in accordance with God's plan as Paul outlined in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16. That is if the “but” (ἀλλὰ) which has introduced “submission” (ὑποτασσέσθω) is understood in its full adversative power. Based on the above, I argue that subordination, which was basically the law's requirement, was the author's proposal to solve the situation. Now I move on to address women in their socio-cultural milieu.

5.7 Women in their socio-cultural milieu

According to Paul, the Corinthian women were to live in obedience to the norms of the church and society where the church operated in the first century CE. These norms defined what the place was for men and women (cf. 4.4.2). Men occupied the public spaces, while women occupied the private sphere in accordance with the existing law of that time. Below, I discuss different views on what could have been Paul's stand on women's obedience to the law.

5.7.1 "Just as the law says" - *καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει*

In order to understand what law is I refer to the *New Dictionary of Theology* (1988:566) where law is defined as an "action on how to act". It continues to say that "law is an ordinance of reason for common good made by the one who has care of the community. Hence law is a rule and measure of acts".

If this is what law is, what then is its use? In order to understand the usage of the law I refer to the *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics* (2011:474), which states the various uses of the law. Gerald Downing (2013:201-203), an American New Testament scholar, deems that the use of the law is to "affirm and also to maintain order within a particular community in which it is created and enforced".

In the Old Testament God's law refers to the covenant relationship between Godself and the people. It sets the people of God apart and provides guidance for their relationship with Godself as well as for one another. In the New Testament the law is treated in different ways. It is recorded in Matthew that Jesus Christ came into this world not to abolish the law but instead to fulfil it (5:17-20), while in Mark the opposite is seen, where Jesus Christ preached freedom from the regular observance of the legal regulations (7:1-23).

In Paul's views the law is good but as a result of sin it brings judgement and death rather than life and joy. In his view the authority of the law is superseded by Christ, who brings justification by faith, life in the Spirit and adoption as children of God. Through grace therefore, a true Christian is set free from the burden of the law to love God and his or her neighbour.

In view of all of this, the law and gospel are in a relationship which is dialectical in nature, where one complements the other. According to Paul, God speaks law to all people of the world through the use of codes such as the Ten Commandments and also to a particular people called Israel by means of specific

commands meant for only them, in their place and time. The concept of ‘gospel’ focuses on God’s promise to everyone entered in Jesus Christ to liberate and redeem the world from sin, death and evil. This comes in the promise of Jesus when he said “So if the Son of man makes you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36) (notwithstanding the social-cultural context).

Let me now address the law in Paul according to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, which is the crucial issue here. The mentioning of the law in this passage seems hard to understand even though elsewhere in Corinthians the style of Paul’s references to the law is very clear. For instance, his reference to the law in 1 Corinthian 14:21 is very explicit as reference is made to Isaiah 38. But when it comes to the law in this reference, many questions are raised as to which law the apostle is referring (Preato, 2005:1-14). Hence there are different speculations about this law. For instance, Fitzmyer (2008:532-533) suggests that the law is pointing to Eve’s subordination, which in Genesis reads as follows “To the women he said, I will make your pains in child bearing severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you” (Genesis 3:17).

The “law”, as Paul wrote and phrased it here, has become one of the controversial terms that we also meet in all the Pauline texts. The expression “just as the law says” (καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει) is not clear about which law is referred to. Elsewhere when Paul refers to the law it is made in very clear which law is the case in point. Here, however, we are kept wondering which law this could be. Could it be: (a) referring to the Old Testament law, or (b) the Jewish law, or (c) the Roman law, or (d) could Paul have been referring to a secular law which existed at the time of the Greco-Roman period during the time first Corinthians was written?

Furthermore, when analysing Paul’s appeal to the law, we find some difficulties in pinpointing which Old or New Testament text could suit Paul’s reference to the law. Robinson (1958:148-49) argues that we may assume that these difficulties in discerning which Old or New Testament text Paul might be referring to in this text are beside the point. This is because Paul could have been employing typical rabbinic exegesis of the creation stories that existed at that time. Robinson further suggests that Paul appealed to rabbinic methods of interpreting the Old Testament and that the rabbinic law here may be what he was referring to. We also cannot cast aside the idea here that the Jewish tradition could have been used for the

subordination of women, as the subordination of women does not appear anywhere in the creation narratives of the Bible as a law.

Nonetheless, it is important at this stage that we analyse, albeit briefly, what could have been the source of Paul's appeal to the law in this text. This is for the purpose of determining its authority.

5.7.2 *What kind of a law?*

When we talk about the appeal to the law by Paul in this text many factors come into play. These are factors such as whether it was the Jewish oral law, Roman law or perhaps the Torah to which the appeal was made. Evans (1983:30) observes that women did not play very active roles in the synagogue services, and if they did it was on a very small scale, while among the Greeks and the Romans women were very active and took up leading roles in religious affairs. This point was discussed under 4.5 as I discussed religion in Greco-Roman times.

It is probable, as Leslie (1976:451-452) contends, that Paul might have been motivated by concerns for the church's reputation with the secular authorities and therefore addressed the issue of the law to gain authority over women, as he was troubled about the behaviour that was going on in the church. He states that during this time of the first century period the church stood as a witness to the community where it existed and so for women to behave in the manner that they did would bring disgrace to its reputation.

Another argument can be made at this point, namely that Paul appealed to Roman law in this text. The reason is that he wanted to regulate Christian behaviour as it had become inappropriate; hence he refers as he does to the law in 1 Corinthians 14:34. The most probable reason for his appeal to the law could be that being under Greco-Roman authority Paul used the law as a regulatory device to stop what could have placed the church in conflict with society. The church was in its infancy and it needed to gain more members from the community, as he has already indicated when he was talking about speaking tongues and prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:22-25 (Fee, 1987).

When analysing this phrase of Paul's appeal to the law in the Bible, we do not find such an appeal to the law in the way it appears here, and when Paul does appeal to the law, he takes a specific stance such as 1 Corinthians 9:8-9, where he writes: "Does not the law also say the same"? Again, he says: "You shall not muzzle an ox

while it is treading out the grain”, for it is written in the Law of Moses. When such references are made to the law there is a qualification that follows, as in Deuteronomy 25:4 and 1 Corinthians 14:21, where Paul writes, “It is written in the law”, which is qualified there and then as being from Isaiah 28:11-13 (Preato, 2005).

In certain cases, where Paul refers to Scripture, he indicates that it is written thus, for example, 1 Corinthians 1:19, 1:31, 2:9, 3:19, 10:7, 15:45. However, the case of 1 Corinthians 14:34 is different because there is no cross-reference to substantiate the quotation in the way it appears “just as the law says”. The question that remains unanswered is why there are such inconsistencies by Paul.

The next section deals with how Paul referred the women to ask their husbands at home.

5.7.3 “Asking husbands at home” - *ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν*

Once more the text of 1 Corinthians 14:35 is complicated further by Paul’s phrase, “should ask your husbands at home”. Many questions arise from this phrase such as: Did each woman present in the worship assembly in Corinth have a husband? And if the answer was no, then what about widows if they were present at the time of the service – to whom could they direct their questions? The same for the young and unmarried – to whom would they direct their questions? The lack of adequate answers to these questions explains why some like Antoinette Wire (1990:149-158) state that in this text Paul was trying to confine women to a place called home. Others viewed Paul as talking only to women who were married (Perkins, 2012).

For Wire (1990:149-158) her concern was how the activities that were taking place in the church, as a group or on an individual basis, would be viewed by the world at large. Paul’s phrase (*ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν*) “they should ask their husbands at home”, might have implied that people who attended the Corinthian worship assemblies were coming to these assemblies in family units, which would have been made up of a father, mother and their children, and perhaps even their slaves. It could have been that after the service had ended these family units continued to discuss matters or events that had taken place in the church. After the service was concluded the father could have taken up another role, which was continued at home as a family instructor – hence the reference “they should ask their husbands at home” (Preato, 2005:1-14). At this point I would also like to take a look

at what could have been the Christian practice in the Corinthian church from which order unity and peace should have been the aim.

5.7.4 *Christian practice*

If the Corinthians were to use their gifts in the church and for the benefit of all members who came for worship, how were they supposed to put these in practice? Witherington (1988:90-104) observes that the Corinthians were involved in dubious practices, as it is assumed that they were making up their own rules in worship. They thought that their words and actions were enough, necessary and binding on all, and that no other person was to influence or make any changes in their lives. In other words, the ecumenical concept of belonging together was utterly absent. Because of this they may not have considered other church groupings elsewhere as having the authority to command worship services conducted in an orderly and decent way. So therefore it should be important as a church to re-examine or reappraise procedure where we look carefully at what is happening within ourselves and perhaps also learn from our neighbours what is good and beneficial. This is in view of the church's stand on the issues of human dignity.

At this point I wish to consider the crucial issue of how the church could be an oasis of peace and order in the world.

5.8 The church as an oasis of order and peace

Gerald Downing (2013:16-17) says the concept of order and peace in the Greco-Roman cities was one aspect that was highly treasured. The city was owned by the citizens and it was essential that every citizen avoid factionalism at all costs. The prevailing order demanded hierarchy and subordination at the same time. Roman rule demanded peace and it was assumed that the Roman god Jupiter provided it. This order within the cities was enforced by law and justice.

At the family level, Downing (2013:18) adds, unity was to be shown between husband and wife together with those who live within the confines of this home. A wife had to obey the husband and the husband had an obligation to love his wife. Voluntary association followed this same pattern, which was laid down by the government. Public meetings and ceremonies, whether sad or of joyful occasions, had to follow and maintain order.

Cults and associations were allowed to operate freely; however, they had to ensure that they maintained order. Therefore Wire's (1986:14) comments are correct

when she says that, as a good minister, Paul's response to the Corinthian community is, "Let everything be done decently and in order" (14:40).

Paul sought for order and unity in the Corinthian church; this he did by using the metaphor of the body having many parts, each having a different function but together they act for the good of the whole body. He pushed for oneness in the Corinthian church by using order and peace as understood from the Greco-Roman perspective. From the Greco-Roman point of view order and peace began with the individual, then the family, and finally to the entire community exercising self-control and integrity (Downing, 2013:81-82). Order, decency and peace were the catalyst in any Christian church to enable growth and the strengthening of all the members of the body of Christ.

Mouton (2011:282-283) is of the view that first Corinthians encourages readers to live in harmony with one another so that the presence of the God of peace could be acknowledged by all, that God might be worshipped and the church unified in love, restored, built up, strengthened and encouraged in its life of faith in the world (1 Cor 12-13; 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26).

In this regard, God desires order and peace among those whom God called through Jesus Christ, those who call upon God's name. The text should be understood from this perspective and not otherwise. The rhetorical styles in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 may be used to help the church to grasp the essence of what Paul's argument meant to the church in Corinth and how the same principle may be appropriated in our time, informed by our own challenges and problems.

5.9 Internal (literary) context of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

In this section my aim is to provide a reading of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 to further support what I have stated in this chapter. I will start with a translation of the passage from Greek to English and provide comments on each verse. In the end I will add a few notes on how we could understand this passage in our own time and place. This is against the background of Paul having been understood by the Corinthians within their own context.

5.9.1 Greek – English translation with comments

Below I provide the Greek biblical text¹⁹ with an English translation, from the Greek reading class at Stellenbosch University, New Testament seminar.

Verse 26 Τί οὖν ἐστίν, ἀδελφοί; ὅταν συνέρχησθε, ἕκαστος ψαλμὸν ἔχει, διδαχὴν ἔχει, ἀποκάλυψιν ἔχει, γλῶσσαν ἔχει, ἐρμηνείαν ἔχει· πάντα πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν γινέσθω

Verse 26 What then my brothers and sisters when you come together each one has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation a tongue or an interpretation all things must be done for edification of the church.

The emphasis here is placed on edification (οἰκοδομέω). For all the aspects that are mentioned which should take place in the environment of building or strengthening the church, as the body of Christ and these are the psalm, teaching, revelation, a tongue, and interpretation.

Here Paul shows that he is continuing the discussion of the spiritual gifts. The verse also shows the various gifts that existed in Corinth which were in practice, but were also meant for building and strengthening the church (Ciampa and Rosner, 2010:709-710).

Verse 27 εἴτε γλώσση τις λαλεῖ, κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς καὶ ἀνὰ μέρος, καὶ εἰς διερμηνεύτω·

Verse 27 If anyone with a tongue speaks let it be two or to the most three and another give interpretation.

Διερμηνεύτω comes from the root ἐρμηνεύω which means to translate from one language to another or to interpret.

The Corinthian church seemed to have had many gifts and the chief among them was the gift of speaking in tongues. From the way Paul speaks here, members of the Corinthian assembly may have been boasting about this gift but it was being used in the most confusing manner.

Paul does not forbid any to speak or practise this gift, but only puts a condition on its practice, that is, it should be used in the presence of an interpreter.

¹⁹ The Greek used in this text is taken from the UBS (United Bible Society) Translator's Handbook on 1 Corinthians, while some comments come from discussions in the Greek reading class (Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University) and some selected commentaries as indicated within the text.

Verse 28 ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἦ διερμηνευτής, σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἑαυτῷ δὲ λαλείτω καὶ τῷ θεῷ.

Verse 28 If there be no interpreter let each person be silent in the church and speak to himself and to God.

The important word to note here is σιγάω, which means keeping quiet about or not saying anything at all in the church. In this verse we find the first group, which is called to silence for the sake of order and peace in the church.

The tongues, therefore, should be understood to be a conversation between the individual and God, which only the individual benefits from and not the group (Fitzmyer, 2008:525-526).

Verse 29 προφηται δὲ δύο ἢ τρεῖς λαλείτωσαν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν

Verse 29 Let two or three prophets speak and the others discern what is being said.

Of importance in this verse are the words προφηται implying prophets who speak the inspired words and διακρινέτωσαν, whose root is ἀνακρίνω or διακρίνω, which implies to discern on the basis of very careful and detailed information, or to evaluate or scrutinise very carefully what is being said.

Prophecy used the language understood by all and the only condition set here is that, while prophesying is going on, only two or three are supposed to speak, while others judge what has been said. In other words, listeners needed to appraise whether the message spoken was truly from God. The principle in general is to have all things done for edification and for building the church of God.

This aspect of building runs through from verses 1 to 40 as the main theme in Paul's discussion. He urges the church to have a building motif in everything they do. Nothing should be done in a boastful manner in the church, as this will only destroy their unity and that those who discern should do so with a mind to strengthen all (Thiselton, 2000:1187-1165).

Verse 30 ἐὰν δὲ ἄλλω ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένω, ὁ πρῶτος σιγάτω.

Verse 30 But if it is revealed by God then the first person must keep quiet.

This was another kind of gift that existed in the church but was attached to prophecy. It also required that order must be followed by allowing one person to speak after another, while others listen in quietness or silence.

Here Paul is asking for silence in the change of one gift to another, while judgment follows the speaking to ensure that the message was from God and meant to strengthen and build members of the church (Sampley, 2000:1138:1141).

Verse 31 δύνασθε γὰρ καθ' ἓνα πάντες προφητεύειν, ἵνα πάντες μανθάνωσιν καὶ πάντες παρακαλῶνται.

Verse 31 For all of you can prophesy one by one so that everybody may learn, receive instruction and be encouraged.

καθ' ἓνα πάντες seeks to emphasise the aspect of all who may declare the divine speech (προφητεύω). Here Paul seeks to emphasise order and not confusion while the process of building is in progress, so that all may learn and be instructed. The verse seeks to emphasise the aspect of “all” avoiding an activity that may result in disorder.

Verse 32 καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται,

Verse 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets themselves...

Πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις in this verse may not be so clear, but the sense is that the prophets as a group should censor themselves as they give their prophecies. Each prophet has the ability to control his/her spirit in order to restrain themselves from prolonged speaking, which would hinder others from conveying their messages. This will also give a fair share in the speaking as each one is allocated time to speak.

Paul wants prophets to possess the ability of self-control and not to abuse speaking to gain advantage over others. Overall, many will be given the opportunity to speak to the growth of the church (Ciampa and Rosner, 2010:715-717).

Verse 33 οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀκαταστασίας ὁ θεὸς ἀλλὰ εἰρήνης. Ὡς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῶν ἁγίων

Verse 33 For God is not of confusion/rebellion but of peace. As in all the churches of (holy people) the saints...

What is of interest is the usage of the word ἀκαταστασίας (confusion). This word best describes the kind of confusion that was taking place in Corinth. Other words which describe the same are the following: ἀνίσταμαι, ἐπανίσταμαι; στάσις, ἐπίστασις, ἀποστασία, all which point to rising up in open defiance of the authority, with presumed intention being to overthrow it or to act completely in opposition to its demands, something like to rebel against, to revolt, to engage in insurrection or

rebellion or unruliness. A question of interest is how verse 33 could be divided to form 33a and 33b. Here there is a difference of opinion, where some support 33b to be part of 33a and others say that 33b is part of and actually the beginning of verses 34 to 35, which form a unit. This is so if we follow the punctuation in the verse and it fits well with verses 26-33a and 33b-36, the view that I support.

However, the wording of the verse seeks to stress the aspect of order and peace, which is a prerequisite for every church; these are also attributes of God whom we worship. Verses 33b – 35 have a clear connection and make more sense than if the whole of verse 33a is attached. The verse entails that worship must convey the character of God for it to make sense (Ciampa and Rosner, 2010:717-718).

Verse 34 αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν· οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν, ἀλλὰ ὑποτασθήσονται, καθὼς καὶ ὁ νόμος λέγει.

Verse 34 The women should be silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must subordinate themselves as the law says.

A note should be given here on words such as σιγάω, which signifies to keep quiet, or to say nothing. Ὑποτασθήσονται is plural of the word whose root is ὑποτάσσω, which implies bringing something under the control of someone or to subject to bring under control.

This is the third group to be called to silence in the circumstances of wanting to maintain order in the Corinthian church. The other point to note here is the use of verbs in verse 34 λαλεῖν (to speak) and λέγειν (to say): the former is used here to imply speaking in an inappropriate or noisy manner, which causes disruption. The latter points to speaking in an authoritative way.

Today these verbs can be used interchangeably with little difference in meaning. It is of interest to note that the ban on women speaking seems to have been applied in all the congregations of the holy people of God everywhere and not just in one particular house church in Corinth. The law that was in place at that time supported/ enforced this kind of scenario. But verse 34 ought to be understood within its context of where Paul is stating it. Outside of this context it is difficult for meaning to be applicable (Ciampa and Rosner, 2010:718-729).

Verse 35 εἰ δέ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν, ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάωσαν· αἰσχρὸν γάρ ἐστιν γυναικὶ λαλεῖν ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ.

Verse 35 If they want to find out (learn) anything they should ask their husband at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

A few words need to be attended to in verse 35: words such as μαθεῖν derived from μανθάνω, meaning to come to understand as a result of a process of learning – to understand. ἐπερωτάω coming from ἐρωτάω or ἐπερωτάω, which point to ask for information, to ask, to ask a question. Αἰσχρός, ἄ, ὄν meaning acting in a shameful manner, or disgraceful or shameful behaviour.

In verse 35 we have an indication that the women were acting contrary to the norms of worship in the assembly and the culture of perhaps the Greco-Roman world or during the first century CE. Instead of learning in silence they got involved in matters that should not have been discussed during worship. This was a concern for Paul, hence, the command to discuss such matters at home with their husbands allowing order and peace to prevail in the church.

There are many theories about what this verse has stated but the essential point is to understand what Paul says here within the Corinthian context, as women were being addressed in specific situations (Ciampa and Rosner, 2010:723-729).

Verse 36 ἢ ἀφ' ὑμῶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐξηγήθη, ἢ εἰς ὑμᾶς μόνους κατήνησεν;

Verse 36 Did the message of God originate from/with you? Or did it come upon you only?

The catchword in verse 36 which may need some attention is κατήνησεν derived from καταντάω meaning to happen to, with the implication of something definitive and final to come upon. The meaning could be that the Corinthian church is not the only one to have received the message of God and that many more are in possession of it in other Christian communities.

This verse points to the fact that the Corinthian worshippers were in no way the only people whom the Word of God had reached; thus, their actions should be moderated to suit God's character. All they needed was to comply with the standard practice as in the other worshipping assemblies elsewhere; therefore, self-control was necessary here (Sampley, 2000:1160-1161).

Verse 37 Εἴ τις δοκεῖ προφήτης εἶναι ἢ πνευματικός, ἐπιγινωσκέτω ἃ γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι κυρίου ἐστὶν ἐντολή·

Verse 37 If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, that person should acknowledge that what I write to you is the Lord's command...

It is important to know the application of πνευματικός, which derives from πνευμα as one who has received God's Spirit and whose behaviour is not contrary to that of the Lord for he lives as a spiritual person. Paul takes on the Lord's command and his words are an authority from the Lord.

Furthermore, Paul warns of any of those who would not listen to him to check their faith in their Lord as he speaks on behalf of Godself. Those who are spiritual should be able to understand this scenario, and putting forward other arguments wouldn't be necessary; the following verse describes what is to follow.

Verse 38 εἰ δέ τις ἀγνοεῖ, ἀγνοεῖται

Verse 38 But if somebody does not recognise this, then he/she is not to be paid any attention (ignore him/her).

The word ἀγνοεῖ is the second person plural of ἀγνοέω, which implies to refuse to think about or pay any attention to, or to pay no attention to, in other words, to ignore the person. In the event that someone chooses to ignore what Paul has said, then such person should be ignored. In other words, such a person is not supposed to be recognised as a true speaker in tongues or a prophet who speaks on God's behalf. Thus they should not be listened to. This warning must be taken seriously by the Corinthians or else they risk being ignored by some members within but also outside the congregation (Thiselton, 2000:1162-1166).

Verse 39 Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί [μου], ζηλοῦτε τὸ προφητεύειν καὶ τὸ λαλεῖν μὴ κωλύετε γλώσσαις

Verse 39 So then my brothers and sisters desire to prophesy but do not forbid speaking in tongues...

The keyword is ζηλοῦτε whose root word is ζηλόω meaning to have a deep concern for or devotion to someone or something. To develop a deep concern for, or to show earnest concern about something. Paul's appeal is to ask the Corinthians to devote themselves to both prophecy and speaking in tongues for the same purpose – to edify, encourage and strengthen the church of God.

Verse 40 πάντα δὲ εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω.

Verse 40 But all things should be done in decency and in order.

The important words are εὐσχημόνως which means being proper or that which is pleasing, and τάξις, which goes to show the proper and correct order, good order, right order or in an orderly manner. Paul's conclusion is for the church everywhere including the Corinthians to have order and decency in doing or conducting themselves within the assembly of worship.

If they do this they will be recognised as true worshippers and God's presence will always be among them. Furthermore, the church will be encouraged, strengthened, edified and experience growth in its membership. In any of the assemblies of God, order, decency and peace are very necessary and will show the kind of worshippers who are gathered there, in this case the kind of people who are gathered on behalf of God and how their character reveals or shapes their identity (Fitzmyer, 2008:536-538).

Having presented the Greek and an English translation I will proceed to discuss what I consider to be the function of 1 Corinthians 14.

5.9.2 *The rhetorical function of 1 Corinthians 14*

Research question 5 was "How can 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 be used today by readers and interpreters within diverse context, and RCZ in particular?" In other words, how should it be read in the RCZ in the context of gender imbalances, and how could one account for women ministries in relation to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35? Regarding this question I hypothesised that 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 could be used today by readers and interpreters within diverse contexts by accounting for the socio-cultural world behind this text.

And so therefore, firstly, "What did it mean for women in Paul's time?" This text could have made more sense to them as members of the first-century Corinthian church, for Paul was addressing the concerns within their specific context. This meant that the church, being a faith community, was supposed to be fortifying faith community. It also meant the church was to worship one God of love, of unity, of respect for all people. This God is a God of order and of peace in its fullness as opposed to divisions. The order should not be understood to mean a hierarchical structure as was known in that society, where men were regarded as superior beings and women as inferior. Rather it meant that believers were to live in unity in love,

unity for the sake of service for one another, unity to extend the mission of God to all people of the world with various gifts of the spirit. I now discuss the text of first Corinthians as it relates to the RCZ.

5.9.3 *The context of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 in relation to the RCZ*

To understand this text in our own time and space we should begin by analysing how Paul framed the whole passage of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 with the usage of words and phrases found there in which he discussed with the church at Corinth. Three issues stand out clearly in the text: first, the usage of tongues in the worship service; second, the usage and function of prophecy within the worship; and lastly, the problem of women speaking in the form of asking questions and interrupting the worship service.

Bearing in mind Paul's approach to these three potentially disruptive groups, 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 should be considered as a text where Paul's views on order and peace are expressed when the church gathers to worship God. During this process, several challenges were faced by those who spoke in tongues, prophets who proclaimed the word of God and the women who conducted themselves in ways that created confusion in the church. Paul's response to them is to follow a certain pattern of worship, which is ordered and peaceful as a mark of God's attributes. The text must be understood to mean that Paul was addressing the Corinthian context.

He silenced women who were disrupting the worship by asking questions that were inappropriate in the worship service. In reading this text through our own cultural values, we should acknowledge the background of the gospel of Jesus Christ engaging the culture, and not culture dictating to the gospel.

For the church of today and its policy-making bodies, this text may mean that the gospel of Jesus Christ has to transform our culture to the extent that men and women live in unity with each other. First Corinthians may also permit all people to serve in all the ministries of the church without any restrictions. This entails that women should serve as deaconesses and elders; moreover, women reverends and evangelists should serve in the ministry of Word and sacrament together as partners with men. This will unite us as a people living in dignity within the church and social-cultural environment, as we serve the gospel of Christ. This unity is so profound, as Bosch (2011:28) says:

What amazes one again and again is the *inclusiveness* of Jesus' mission. It embraces both the poor and the rich, both the oppressed and the oppressor,

both the sinner and the devout. This mission is one of dissolving alienation and breaking down walls of hostility, of crossing boundaries between individuals and groups. As God forgives us gratuitously.

I now provide a preliminary conclusion to this chapter.

5.10 Preliminary conclusions

Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 has discussed the concerns and the events of the community in Corinth with reference to the spiritual gifts as the church gathered for worship services. He pinpoints two spiritual gifts, speaking in tongues and prophecy, and how they are supposed to be used in worship. He further outlines how each group (speakers in tongues, prophets) should exercise patience and understanding as they come together for worship. Then he turns to the women who seemed to have had another kind of problem within the assembly of worship where they were asking questions or giving comments on prophecies that were given in the church. He commanded them to silence, probably not as a permanent injunction but to serve as a deterrent to creating confusion in the church.

Paul starts to discuss 1 Corinthians 14 by stressing the need to have zeal or the desire (ζηλοῦτε) to prophesy, while at the same time there is the need not hinder others who may be speaking in tongues. This, however, ought to go hand in hand with discernment, following order and decency (εὐσχημόνως and τάξις) such that the congregation can experience growth, both spiritually and numerically (1 Cor 14:26, 31). Paul ends the chapter in a similar way by urging the church to desire (ζηλοῦτε) prophecy and not to forbid those who speak in tongues, as this also is a gift given for the same purpose, that of growth. He also echoes the need for decency and order as a mark of the Christian practice and faith, particularly for those who gather to worship God.

In the whole of 1 Corinthians 14 Paul explains to the Corinthian church the nature of prophecy in their worship. (1) Prophecy is an intelligible phenomenon that does not require the sort of interpretation that speaking in tongues requires. What is required is to wait for one another and to follow the order of practice within the worship. (2) The function of prophecy is building up, exhortation and consolation when the church meets for worship, hence edification must always be the aim (1 Cor 14:3-25). (3) Prophecy was a spontaneous utterance quickened by the Spirit and this is controlled by the speaker. Here, both mind and spirit are edified (1 Cor 14:29-31).

(4) Prophecy has a teaching function (1 Cor 14:19) and it should be exercised by both men and women, as already indicated (1 Cor 11:3-16).

Paul then turns to the need for order in worship. Those who speak in tongues are limited to two or three and then followed by an interpreter without which no one should be allowed to speak in the church (1 Cor 14:26-28). Prophecies were to be given one at a time so that order and peace are maintained, and the aim is not to promote competition, as seemed to be the case.

Then Paul addresses the women. These women were probably a group of prophetesses who also might have been entitled to evaluate prophecies within the worship service. These women could have been married women and were probably asking questions that may have been inappropriate during worship, and as such the worship could have been disrupted in the process.

The questions and concerns should be reserved for home discussion between a husband and wife. Paul's aim might have been to prohibit the worship from turning into a question-and-answer session. It is suggested that perhaps that could have been the way pagan worship was conducted (1 Cor 14:33-35) as the Corinthian congregation was now a young congregation established early in 52 to 53 CE (Witherington, 1994:73). Paul's command to these women is to remain silent, as they were not allowed to speak, in accordance with the law. Their questions were deemed to be an act of disgrace and instead they were to discuss these matters at home. There are many interpretations, but this text should be understood in its Corinthian context. As we in the twenty-first century use this text coming from the first century CE, we ought to understand that Christ has transformed cultures and so men and women should live in new relationships without subordinating one another to any low position, both in public and private spaces. For this reason I can only propose what implication the same text may have in the Zambian context today, which is characterised by a different set of circumstances.

Having argued that 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 has to be understood in terms of Paul's own time, addressing his own circumstances, I now move to the next chapter where I offer my summary findings and conclusions, and suggest a way forward including some avenues for further research, while also considering the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of findings

This research project entitled “Church and culture? Exploring the reception of women’s ministries in the RCZ in the light of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40” was conducted with the purpose of finding out to what extent the RCZ, which excluded women from all its ministries for more than a hundred years, has subsequently transformed itself and allowed women to perform these roles. This prohibition against women in ministry was the consequence of the way that the Bible was understood, especially with respect to crucial texts such as first Corinthians 14:34-35. This text was often quoted in a one-sided (literal) manner, which did not account for other angles of the text, and in the process functioned to justify the exclusion of women presiding over men.

Yet years later, owing to the outcomes of the Synods of 1989, 1998 and 2000, women were finally allowed to participate in all its ministries. To date, women are serving in different ministries of the RCZ as deaconesses, elders and reverends/ministers. But have they been fully accepted and integrated into all the ministries of the church, or not? The answer to this question was developed through an empirical survey. The findings indicated that in some respects women were accepted in the ministry and in other respects not. Some participants affirmed women as leaders in the church. However, other participants stated that women should not continue in these leadership positions. These were the responses outlined in 3.8 after members participated in Bible study meetings on 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. These views appear irreconcilable.

The crucial part of this study was to ascertain how the exegetical practice is being carried out by preachers in the RCZ. While the church has already allowed women in ministry in all its ranks, others still read and interpret the Bible (including the text of 1 Cor 14:34-35) as carrying only one meaning. This can be seen in the response of the participants in the Bible study who pointed out that allowing women in the ministry of the Word and sacrament was done in bad faith to appease donors who gave the church money (cf. 3.8.4).

The overwhelming response from the participants was that the church should ensure and expeditiously promote women's leadership, while the clergy should teach members of the church that Paul did not implement this injunction to last forever, but instead that he was speaking to the specific Corinthian context. This context is different from ours and so therefore women leaders should be encouraged to take up office in the church. Those congregations who still resent the idea of women leadership ought to be educated more on the matter of sociocultural and historical context.

The research illuminated the following points, which could add to a more complete understanding of the text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 for the RCZ: (1) that this text was written in the first-century Greco-Roman period when women had a restricted public life and men dominated the public space; (2) that women of the Greco-Roman period were largely confined to a private space (i.e. their home environment), which imposed a restriction on their movements and curtailed any form of public speaking, as I discussed in Chapter 2; and (3) thus when Paul wrote this letter he was influenced by his immediate environment.

By means of rhetorical arguments (discussed in Chapter 4), Paul wrote this letter to ask the Corinthian assembly to live in unity for the sake of advancing the kingdom of God, and to do this they were to live in the unity of the Spirit as believers, so that whatever they did would be aimed at edifying and strengthening the body of Christ.

Therefore, the church must live in order and be peaceful, something which was sorely lacking in the Corinthian church. In verses 26-40 Paul writes concerning the gifts they received, that these are to be used for the growth and edification of the members, and through this he calls some of the people (speakers in tongues, prophets and women) who were causing confusion to silence, particularly women.

Speakers in tongues who spoke without an interpreter, prophets who were supposed to prophesy while others discern what has been said, and the women who were interrupting the worship services by asking questions that could have been addressed at home, led to Paul placing an injunction on them to stop speaking, in his application of the law.

Whether tongues, prophecy and its evaluation, these are supposed to be used for the edification, growth and strengthening of the body of Christ rather than

disrupting its unity. This is because the God who is worshipped in the church is the God of order and peace, as in all the churches of the holy people of God.

The survey among different Bible study groups revealed two issues concerning how the RCZ received this text. The first view is that this text is addressing the Corinthian situation, which is different from our own, and so we cannot use this text to stop women from participating in all the ministries of the church. The challenges we are facing today are totally different from those faced by the Corinthians in the first century CE. Service in the church should be based on gifts of the Spirit and commitment, and not on gender, whether male or female. The gospel of Christ is meant to reorient and transform our culture into life-giving and life-affirming practices. Thus, culture *per se* (particularly regarding life-threatening expressions) should not dictate to the gospel when, where and who should do what.

Contrary to the above view, some RCZ members felt that the church erred by allowing women into the leadership of the church. For them the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and other texts confirm that women should not hold positions in office. They further argue that the church has done this because of external influences, such as being recipients of funding from donors. This view cannot be accepted in our modern world, with Jesus Christ having given his life to transform our cultures (Gal 3:28).

Finally, in formulating some conclusions for this study, I refer to Chapter 2, where I first discussed the history of interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14 and how this shaped cultural, political, scholarly and spiritual communities, and where we also saw how the Bible has been interpreted differently at different times because of understanding and interpreting texts literally. Individual interpreters also bring their own concerns and values into interpretation. For these reasons, a multidimensional approach to biblical interpretation is recommended where various ways of looking at a biblical text can be applied to meet the aspirations of many in our acts of interpretations, both in the church and our communities.

Another important aspect that I looked at was the socio-cultural and historical issues related to a text when engaged in biblical interpretation as discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. This enabled understanding of the intent (origin) of the text in its socio-cultural world and appreciating the social-cultural values the text had before the same text can be made applicable to today's audience (context) faced with different problems and challenges as human beings, both male and female. This is the

case when dealing with 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 as a crucial text that has been interpreted in multiple ways throughout the centuries.

The survey in Chapter 3 revealed several blind spots when reading 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, for instance, regarding the position of women in the RCZ in the light of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. However, the text should be read in ways that affirm women in their God-given position of power as became evident in Chapter 5. The text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 should be understood as Paul addressing the Corinthian context. It should also be read as the good news of Jesus Christ who came to transform our cultures (discussed in Chapter 1). Therefore, our cultures and wherever we find ourselves ought to be liberative and not oppressive as they seem to be, and these cultures and traditions should find their identity in Christ and serve the glory of God. Thus, both men and women who are gifted by the Spirit can prophesy, speak in tongues and in edifying ways, as well as build and strengthen the body of Christ as both are filled with the Spirit of God.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the church and society to rise to the occasion and challenge any patriarchal and cultural system or tradition in the faith communities where women are culturally subordinate to men, and undertake the process of re-visioning our humanity through the lens and power of God's love, as already demonstrated what Godself has done in his Son Jesus Christ. And in unity they should seek ways where both the private and public space can embody the reign of God, which becomes true liberation meant for all human beings considering the baptismal formula of Galatians 3:28.

Considering this scenario, the RCZ first needs to respect the nature and purpose of 1 Corinthians 14: 26-40 – the rich yet complex multifaceted nature of the text, as I discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Secondly, we need to take stock of the way we read texts, of our socio-cultural historical biases, and the presuppositions or assumptions that we have when we read texts. The church of Jesus Christ has to ensure that its cultural traditions that are unfair to its members are dismantled, so that all members may find their identity in Christ. This will ensure that our culture serves to glorify God and stops oppressing women, who have always been victims of oppression and suppression, both within the church and in the wider culture.

Gospel and culture become good news when they are liberative and not oppressive elements (as discussed in 1.2). Gospel and culture influence each other, though we may not be aware of their relationship. Both gospel and culture as

situational variables are supposed to be liberative, as a gospel that does not liberate translates into no gospel at all. This applies to culture as well; if culture does not lead to the liberation of people in each community then it is not fit to be called a culture and should not be tolerated by its members.

Worth noting is also Njoroge's (2001:213) quote from Kanyoro that "if African women are to be liberated from the multifaceted oppressive practices that confront us daily for cultural hermeneutics alongside biblical hermeneutics ... [then] I contend that the culture of the readers has more influence on how the biblical text is understood and used in African communities than historical facts about the text". With this view in mind, Njoroge stresses how readers should interpret a biblical text to the community as this matters more than just bringing historical matters or facts of biblical texts to the people, which will yield to nothing but be a fruitless exercise and not relieve the pain in the lives of other people, such as women.

This calls for the reverends and evangelists in the RCZ today to interpret biblical texts within their socio-cultural and historical context by taking various aspects into consideration, i.e. the socio-cultural, historical, literary and rhetorical contexts (multidimensional approach). The text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 should be understood and interpreted within the context in which it was created, where Paul was encouraging unity among the believers, and encouraging the gifts of the Spirit as they had been given to the church for edification, strengthening and the spiritual growth of all members of the church. Hence, both men and women need to reread this text and reaffirm their identity in Christ, as both are gifted by the Spirit to build the body of Christ into unity. The challenge posed to the RCZ is go back to 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 and reread this text by being truthful to its multidimensional nature through their love, unity, values and building up in Christ, and not primarily through its original cultural values. This will entail whether or not we adhere to the calling of the church in its core mission. This is what we are and whose we are – an issue which probably did not receive adequate attention during the history of interpretation of this text. This is the radical calling of the church as we represent the God of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 for whom there is no favouritism, but who is a God of love, order, peace and unity.

6.2 A way forward: Some avenues for further research

To determine a way forward a few things should be highlighted. The weakness of using a one-sided approach to interpreting Scripture is that it does not consider the

richness of the biblical text as it should be viewed from its socio-cultural historical perspective. Thus, some people are not affirmed as equal human beings in the process of interpretation. Women, for instance, are marginalised, especially when dealing with crucial texts as seen in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. A multidimensional exegetical approach, however, raises several considerations in the process of interpreting Scripture and takes into account the needs of the faith communities for whom a biblical text is intended, where it affirms their faith within their particular context. Hence, a multidimensional exegetical practice should be favoured in any act of biblical interpretation for its all-encompassing ways of viewing the Scriptures as the Word of God. This is true with regard to the text of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 as well.

Eggebrotten (2010:4), in her discussion of the Lord's Prayer, reaffirms the commitment that all human beings are equal in status and that we need to promote human dignity for all. She further notes the challenge for the church and other faith communities in the words of the Lord's Prayer that we recite: "Hallowed be thy name", but nonetheless, "injustice is carried out in the name of God, supposedly on the basis of the Bible, turning others away from this God". For this is also in the affirmations of the words of Paul when he addressed them to the Galatians where we read: "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free"; "Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Galatians, 5:1).

The struggle for justice, peace, freedom and a better world for all humanity has been of long duration. Women and other people of goodwill have been fighting for these issues and concerns throughout the centuries. North-American feminist theologian Letty Russell (1987:20) reaffirms these struggles when she says: "This time women join hands with the oppressed from many different societies as they participate in their own movements toward liberation, making the claim that women and their concerns must be partners in every struggle for freedom if the future is to be open for all people".

Her words are a wakeup call for the RCZ to come on board and help form such a movement as there are very few in the church who speak about gender issues, either in the church councils, on their boards or within their committees. This would enable the church to have an informed opinion about matters that concern women and men, and how to relate to one another in relationships that offer equal opportunities for all and with dignity.

In view of what has been said above, it is now the work of Bible scholars and theologians together with readers everywhere to carefully engage with the Bible in biblical interpretation and apply a hermeneutics that will offer solutions to our audiences for which Scripture is meant and which communities will appreciate, gain more inspiration and be more comforted by a life-giving ethos.

It should also remain our hope that what the Bible seeks to achieve, despite its history of interpretation, should be to make people aware of their commitment to prayer and faith together with conviction, expectation and discernment, allowing all people to be set free. This is achievable at the invitation of God's Spirit who completes the whole process of understanding what these biblical documents mean in our context and how we can interpret them well. This should manifest while we affirm the equality of all persons created by God in respect of human dignity (Mouton, 2015:3-4).

6.3 Limitations

This research is limited to the time the RCZ was established in 1899, through to the time when women allowed in all the ministries (offices) of the church that is, in 1989 when the Synod first permitted women to be deaconesses, in 1998 when women elders were allowed, followed by consent given to women to become reverends in 2000, up until 2015 when this research was first carried out. It showed how the RCZ shifted from being male-dominated in its leadership to include female leaders in all of its ministries resulting from changes in the understanding and interpretation of the Bible, affirming the multidimensional exegetical practice that promotes various ways of viewing a biblical text. This must be valued and affirmed by all interpreters of the Bible.

This topic of women in the RCZ cannot be exhausted in a single research study like this one, as there is still so much that needs to be documented and written about. What I have done in this research is only a small portion of a much bigger picture. Further research on women in the RCZ should be undertaken in view of their involvement in the church, serving at all levels of leadership. There is also an urgent need to attend to the issue of gender-based violence within the church, which includes the breakdown of many marriages, even to the point of some women losing their lives in the quest to remain faithful to their husbands.

To God be the glory.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Bible study questionnaires

The following were the Contextual Bible study questions that this research project had to address based on the text 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. The reasons were to assess the understanding of text in the RCZ context. The questions were asked both in English and Nyanja, Nyanja is the language mostly used and spoken the Eastern province of Zambia and also in the RCZ.

THE FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE HAD THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

Question 1. **Listen to 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 as it is being read. What do you think in your own words is the text talking about?** In Nyanja: *bvetselani m'mene Buku lopatukika ali kuwerenga mu 1 Akorinto 14:1-40 kodi mubvera mau awa onse akamba chiyani apa?*

Question 2. After concluding on question 1, the facilitators went on to discuss question 2, which is formulated as follows: **Now read the passages 1 Corinthians 14: 1-25 and 26-40. Is there continuity from verses 1-25 and 26-40 and if so what themes connect the two passages to form a unit?** *Tsono werengani 1 Akorinto 14:1-25 komanso 26-40. Pali kulingana molinganiza ma vesi 1-25 ndi 26-40 ndipo ngati ndi tero ndizapamutu zotani zilumikiza magawo awiri kuti pakhale kulingana?*

Question 3 reads as follows: **Read 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 the text which has been controversial in many centuries. Do you notice any differences in Paul's language when he is talking about women than when he talked about prophecy and tongues if so what are the differences?** In Nyanja: *Werenani 1 Akorinto 14:33b-35 mau amene akhala osautsa kwa zaka ambirimbiri. Kodi pali kusiyana mucilakhulidwe ca Paulo pamene alakhula za azimai ndi pamene alakhula za malilime ndi pamene alakhula za masophenya. Kodi kusiyana kwake kulipati?*

Question 4 reads: **Paul is talking to the church in 1 Corinthians 14:33b – 35. What is the difference in this text to what he has already said in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16? Do you think there is a contradiction? How can this be explained? Also, give reasons you think why Paul is saying this.** In Nyanja: *Paulo ali kulakhula kwa a mumpingo wa Akorinto mwa 1 Akorinto 14:33b-35. Kodi kusiyana kulipati*

pazimene alakhula apa ndi zimene analakhula pa 11:2-16. Kodi pali kutsusana. Mungafotokoze bwanji? Perekani zifukwa zimene muganiza Paulo ananenela tele

Question 5 reads as follows: **Do you think there were cultural values related to this text and if so what are they?** *In Nyanja: Kodi muganiza bwanji panali kukhalilana kotani pa amai ndi abambo monga mwa zopezeka mu mau awa 34-34 monga analakhula Paulo kwa Akorinto?*

Question 6 reads as follows: **explain how these values treated men and women in this first century period?** *In Nyanja: Fotokozani mwakuganiza kwanu cikhalidwe cha azimai ndi azibambo mu nthawi iyi yoyamba pamene a Roma anali muulamuliro wao?*

Question 7 reads as follows: **Do you think Paul is speaking generally to include all women to this day or he is specifically addressing the Corinthian community here in this text of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35? Give reasons for your answer.** *In Nyanja, Kodi muganiza kuti Paulo analikulakhula kwa adzimai onse kufikila masiku ano kapena alikulakhula kwa adzimai aku Akorinto cabe apa pa 1 Akotinto 14:33b-35? Perekani zifukwa pa yakho yanu*

Question 8 dealt with the context and it reads as follows: **How does this text (1 Cor 14:34-35) speak to our respective contexts?** *In Nyanja, Kodi mau awa (1 Akorinto 14:34-35) alakhula zotani m'mene tikhilirana wina ndi zace masiku ano?*

THE SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE HAD THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Question 1: Do you think that women in the RCZ were allowed in all ministries of the church based on the bible or cultural reasons? If it is on the bible what do you think of the text of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35? *In Nyanja: Kodi muganiza kuti azimai analoledwa kukhala Atsogoleri m'maofesi ake onse amumpingo mokhazikika pa mau a Mulungu kapena pa miyambo zathu cabe? Kangi ndi pa mau a Mulungu muganiza bwanji pama vesi awa 1 Akorinto 14:34-35?*

Question 2: Have the church members of RCZ welcomed women leadership in the church or not justify your answer. *In Nyanja mamembala a RCZ analandibwino za azimai kukhala Atsogoleri mumpingo apena iai fotokozelani bwino.*

Question 3: Do you think the RCZ was true or acting in opposition to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 when it allowed women in all the ministries of the church?

In Nyanja: Kodi m'maganizo anu muyesa RCZ ana cita bwino polola azimai m'maudido ake onse m'kacisi kapena anacita mosusana ndi mau apa 1 Akorinto 14:34-35?

Question 4: What to your mind is 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 all about? Can you explain its message more especially verses 34-35 about women not to speak in church? *In Nyanja: Kodi mmaganizo anu 1 Akorinto 14:26-40 alikulakhula zotani makamaka pandime izi 34-35 akuti azimai asalakhule mu kachisi*

APPENDIX B: Permission Letter from Reformed Church in Zambia (Rev. Dr. W. Zulu, RCZ General Secretary)



REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAMBIA

(ESTABLISHED IN 1899)

SYNOD HEADQUARTERS

Plot 3695 Mwaleshi Road, Olympia Park
P.O. Box 38255
LUSAKA - ZAMBIA

Telefax: +260-1-295369
E-mail: secretariat@rczsynod.net
Website: www.rczsynod.net

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

9th January 2015

The Research Committee
University of Stellenbosch
Private Bag
7600 Cape Town
South Africa

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: CARRYING RESEARCH IN THE RCZ

This letter serves to inform you that the RCZ Synod Executive Committee has allowed Rev. Jackson Phiri to carry out his Research on Women in the Reformed Church in Zambia.

We thank you for the cooperation you are going to render to him.

Yours faithfully

Rev. Dr. William Zulu
GENERAL SECRETARY

CC. RCZ Synod Moderator

Vision Statement: *The vision of the church is to reflect and embody increasingly as community to reach society with the life of the triune God and the newness of His Kingdom*
All Correspondence should be addressed to the General Secretary

APPENDIX C: Approval Notice from Stellenbosch Research Ethics Committee



UNIVERSITEIT•STELLENBOSCH•UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

Approval Notice New Application

17-Jun-2014
Phiri, Jackson J

Proposal #: DESC/Phiri/June2014/11

Title: Bible in Church and culture? Exploring the reception of women's ministries in the Reformed Church in Zambia in view of 1 Corinthians 14: 26-40.

Dear Rev Jackson Phiri,

Your **New Application** received on **05-Jun-2014**, was reviewed
Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **12-Jun-2014 -11-Jun-2015**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number** (DESC/Phiri/June2014/11) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218089183.

Sincerely,

Clarissa GRAHAM
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1. Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2. Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use. If you need to recruit more participants than was noted in your REC approval letter, you must submit an amendment requesting an increase in the number of participants.

3. Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4. Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period**. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the continuing review report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur**. If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5. Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, number of participants, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6. Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouch within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the REC's requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7. Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

8. Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9. Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions, interventions or data analysis) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10. On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

APPENDIX D: Permission Letter from Reformed Church in Zambia (Rev. S. Mwale, RCZ Chombo Congregation)



REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAMBIA

Chombo Congregation
PO Box NGU 77
Kabwe
+260 -5-221022

The chairperson
Ethical Research Committee
University Offices
Private Bag X1
Matieland, 7602

28 February, 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT DOCTORAL RESEARCH BIBLE STUDIES IN RESPECT OF REV JACKSON PHIRI

1. Addressing the subject matter Congregation Council has granted authority to Rev JACKSON PHIRI to conduct his doctoral research Bible studies in and within the boundaries of our Congregation, as per doctoral degree research requirement in his studies at Stellenbosch University, entitled "Exploring the reception of women ministries in the Reformed church in Zambia in view of 1 Corinthians 14:28 – 40".

2. The Congregation Council strongly believes that this research will greatly assist Rev PHIRI in the doctoral degree requirements and will benefit the RCZ Chombo Congregation members to a greater extent. It is our prayer during the process of this research he shall endeavor not be injurious to the doctrine of the church and the feeling of members of this congregation, but edify the Church.

3. We wish him God's guidance and blessings in his studies.

Yours faithfully

For/ **RCZ Chombo Congregation**

Rev (Lt Colonel) SHADRECK MWALE
Congregation Minister
Cell +260-977-820341

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

[Bible in Church and Culture? Exploring the Reception of Women's Ministries in the Reformed Church in Zambia in view of 1 Corinthians 14:28-40.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by:
Rev Jackson Phiri in [Five (5) of:
The Reformed Church in Zambia Congregations namely:
Reverend (Rev Crispin Chiundaponde of Railways Congregation Kabwe.
Rev Sarah Chembe of Kabwe Central Congregation
Rev Lt. Connell Shadreck Mwale of Chombo Congregation Kabwe
Rev Justin Phiri of Maken Villa RCZ MTh and
Ev. David A Phiri Kabwe Main Congregation Kabwe
Rev Lovemore Daka Mkushi Congregation

All from The Reformed Church in Zambia Congregations, (Zambian Context). You were selected as a possible participant in this study because, your Congregation is well situated accessible and the members are well informed to understand issues of women ministries in the Reformed Church in Zambia.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

[Through conducting Bible studies with women and men of the RCZ, the research will appropriate a critical exegetical practice of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 considering the Reformed Church in Zambia cultural setting, and in order to create a just society with equal opportunities for all. The results of the research is meant to contribute meaningfully to the Reformed Church in Zambia setting in the way women are viewed and treated, and to how the church and society can make headways in changing the perception and the status of women in the Church and country as a whole. The research hopes to contribute to human dignity in the Church and Zambian society

The project hopes to assess the participation of women in Church ministries in view of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Conduct Bible studies in from 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

- 1 Identify the demarcation of the text (1 Cor. 14:26-40).
Focusing on Literary aspects, Historical aspects and Rhetorical aspects.
What are the cultural issues in the text that have affected the history of interpretation,
How has the church used this text in the past?
Is there anything changed now?
What is implied meaning of the text.

You have to the most one month (1) to do this Bible study after which you have to submit the results.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

I only wish to test how the text has been understood in the past and how the same text is being used and interpreted now that women participate in Church ministries within the Church.

There shall be no physical, Psychological risks that may apply in this research as it shall concern itself to Biblical principles and ethics.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The results of the research is meant to contribute meaningfully to the Reformed Church in Zambia setting in the way women are viewed and treated, and to how the church and society can make headways in changing the perception and the status of women in the Church and country (Zambia)as a whole.

Women and men are equal partners in ministries and are equally gifted to undertake any leadership role that the Church may assign to anyone.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

The participants will need travel expenses, small token of appreciation and food during Bible study meetings. An amount of R15, 000 in total would be needed. The following will be the breakdown:

Proration:	Accommodation:	R4000
Transport:	R4300	
Food:	R1500	
Allowance:	R5200	
Total:	R15000	

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of:

Participant will not be mentioned by their names instead a coding will be put in place to disguise the names of participants

The information will be released to the University of Stellenbosch, the Church, (the Reformed Church in Zambia) with the concert of the participants for educational purposes.

Should there be need to Audio or Videotape the contents of this research the subjects will have the right to review/edit the tapes and the participants together with the Church (Reformed Church in Zambia) through the Department of Old and New Testament shall have the access to the materials.

Any publication of the results shall be done through the Reformed Church in Zambia within its Church's code of ethics and the copyright laws of the Zambia

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

[If one is not interested to participate in the Bible studies in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 through group discussions. Such a person deserves the right to withdraw, or not agreeing to be part of the group discussions.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact [Rev Jackson Phiri, Pro Elna Mouton Supervisor at emouton@sun.ac.za, Rev Jackson Phiri at Jackson.phiri70@gmail.com, or 13344277@sun.ac.za, Cell +260974644410 and +27834985277 or the Reformed Church in Zambia at infor@rczsynod.org

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché mfouche@sun.ac.za or; 021 808 4622 at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by.....in English and I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study and I hereby consent that the participant may participate in this study. He/She have been given a copy of this form.

REV (LT COL) SHADRECK MWALE
Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)


Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

April 2, 2014
Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to Lt. Col. Shadreck Mwale
and He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was
conducted in English

Rev Jackson Phiri 
Signature of Investigator

April 2, 2014
Date

APPENDIX E: Permission Letter from Reformed Church in Zambia (Ev. D. Phiri, RCZ Kabwe Main Congregation)



REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAMBIA
(KABWE MAIN CONGREGATION)

P. O. Box 80377
KABWE - , ZAMBIA

REV. :0963 763898
CONG: SEC :0963 768204
Treasurer: :0963 763691

April 11, 2014

The Research Committee
University of Stellenbosch
Faculty of Theology
171 Dorp Street
7600 Stellenbosch
South Africa

Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: Letter of Authority to conduct a Research - Rev Jackson Phiri

The above subject matter I refer

Rev Jackson Phiri is a minister in the Reformed Church in Zambia and has held various positions within the Church and currently he is the Vice Moderator of Kabwe Presbytery of the Central Province of Zambia.

Rev Jackson Phiri has asked our congregation to allow him to conduct a research for the studies he's undertaking with the University of Stellenbosch. The Elders Council of our Congregation has with all sincerity allowed him to conduct this research on 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

It is hoped that during this research process there shall be none who shall be injured by any means and that all will go well with all parties involved in the Bible studies to be conducted.

It is also hoped that this research will help uplift the life of all people concerned so that we may have human dignity for all human beings.

Sincerely yours,
Kabwe Main Congregation

Ev. David A Phiri

We are not ashamed of the gospel. Because it is the power of God for the Salvation of every one who believesRomans 1:16

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

[Bible in Church and Culture? Exploring the Reception of Women's Ministries in the Reformed Church in Zambia in view of 1 Corinthians 14:28-40.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by:
Rev Jackson Phiri in [Five (5) of:
The Reformed Church in Zambia Congregations namely:
Reverend (Rev Crispin Chiundaponde of Railways Congregation Kabwe.
Rev Sarah Chembe of Kabwe Central Congregation
Rev Lt. Connell Shadreck Mwale of Chombo Congregation Kabwe
Rev Justin Phiri of Maken Villa RCZ MTh and
Ev. David A Phiri Kabwe Main Congregation Kabwe
Rev Lovemore Daka Mkushi Congregation

All from The Reformed Church in Zambia Congregations, (Zambian Context). You were selected as a possible participant in this study because, your Congregation is well situated accessible and the members are well informed to understand issues of women ministries in the Reformed Church in Zambia.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

[Through conducting Bible studies with women and men of the RCZ, the research will appropriate a critical exegetical practice of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 considering the Reformed Church in Zambia cultural setting, and in order to create a just society with equal opportunities for all. The results of the research is meant to contribute meaningfully to the Reformed Church in Zambia setting in the way women are viewed and treated, and to how the church and society can make headways in changing the perception and the status of women in the Church and country as a whole. The research hopes to contribute to human dignity in the Church and Zambian society

The project hopes to assess the participation of women in Church ministries in view of 1 Corinthians 14: 26-40.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Conduct Bible studies in from 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

- 1 Identify the demarcation of the text (1 Cor. 14:26-40).
Focusing on Literary aspects, Historical aspects and Rhetorical aspects.
What are the cultural issues in the text that have affected the history of interpretation,
How has the church used this text in the past?
Is there anything changed now?
What is implied meaning of the text.

You have to the most one month (1) to do this Bible study after which you have to submit the results.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

I only wish to test how the text has been understood in the past and how the same text is being used and interpreted now that women participate in Church ministries within the Church.

There shall be no physical, Psychological risks that may apply in this research as it shall concern itself to Biblical principles and ethics.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The results of the research is meant to contribute meaningfully to the Reformed Church in Zambia setting in the way women are viewed and treated, and to how the church and society can make headways in changing the perception and the status of women in the Church and country (Zambia) as a whole.

Women and men are equal partners in ministries and are equally gifted to undertake any leadership role that the Church may assign to anyone.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

The participants will need travel expenses, small token of appreciation and food during Bible study meetings. An amount of R15, 000 in total would be needed.

The following will be the breakdown:

Proration:	Accommodation:	R4000
Transport:	R4300	
Food:	R1500	
Allowance:	R5200	
Total:	R15000	

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of:

Participant will not be mentioned by their names instead a coding will be put in place to disguise the names of participants

The information will be released to the University of Stellenbosch, the Church, (the Reformed Church in Zambia) with the concert of the participants for educational purposes.

DAVID A. PHIRI
Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

[Signature]
Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

April 2, 2014
Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to Evangelist David A. Phiri
and He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was
conducted in English

Rev Jackson Phiri [Signature]
Signature of Investigator

April 2, 2014
Date

APPENDIX F: Permission Letter from Reformed Church in Zambia (Rev. S. Zulu, RCZ Kabwe Central Congregation)



REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAMBIA

KABWE CENTRAL CONGREGATION

P.O. BOX 81171, KABWE

CELL: MINISTER – IN – CHARGE +260967542318

21ST FEBRUARY, 2014

**The Chairperson,
Ethical Research Committee,
University Offices,
Private Bag X1,
Matieland, 7602.**

Dear Sirs/Madams,

Re: Letter of Authority to conduct Doctoral Research Bible Studies – Rev. Jackson Phiri

The above subject matter refers

The above mentioned is a Minister of Word and Sacraments serving with the Reformed Church in Zambia and currently serving as Vice Moderator at Presbytery leadership level in Kabwe.

The Congregation Council of Elders at RCZ Kabwe Central Congregation wishes to communicate to you that permission has been granted to the above named Reverend, who is a student at Stellenbosch University now doing his Doctoral research from the Epistle of 1 Corinthians to conduct bible studies in the congregation as part of his research requirements.

We believe that his research will not only benefit the Doctoral Degree requirements but more also the congregation at large, however we urge him to be mindful of the fact that the studies should not be injurious to the feelings of the church members as well as the doctrine of the church. We further wish him the guidance of the Holy Spirit as he studies to edify the church.

Yours faithfully

RCZ-Kabwe Central Congregation

Rev. Sera C. Zulu

Minister-In-Charge

OUR VISION: TO BE A REFLECTION AND EMBODIMENT OF THE TRIUNE GOD AND A REALITY OF HIS KINGDOM IN OUR SOCIETY

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

[Bible in Church and Culture? Exploring the Reception of Women's Ministries in the Reformed Church in Zambia in view of 1 Corinthians 14:28-40.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by:
Rev Jackson Phiri in [Five (5) of:
The Reformed Church in Zambia Congregations namely:
Reverend (Rev Crispin Chiundaponde of Railways Congregation Kabwe.
Rev Sarah Chembe of Kabwe Central Congregation
Rev Lt. Connell Shadreck Mwale of Chombo Congregation Kabwe
Rev Justin Phiri of Maken Villa RCZ MTh and
Ev. David A Phiri Kabwe Main Congregation Kabwe
Rev Lovemore Daka Mkushi Congregation

All from The Reformed Church in Zambia Congregations, (Zambian Context). You were selected as a possible participant in this study because, your Congregation is well situated accessible and the members are well informed to understand issues of women ministries in the Reformed Church in Zambia.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

[Through conducting Bible studies with women and men of the RCZ, the research will appropriate a critical exegetical practice of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 considering the Reformed Church in Zambia cultural setting, and in order to create a just society with equal opportunities for all. The results of the research is meant to contribute meaningfully to the Reformed Church in Zambia setting in the way women are viewed and treated, and to how the church and society can make headways in changing the perception and the status of women in the Church and country as a whole. The research hopes to contribute to human dignity in the Church and Zambian society

The project hopes to assess the participation of women in Church ministries in view of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Conduct Bible studies in from 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

- 1 Identify the demarcation of the text (1 Cor. 14:26-40).
Focusing on Literary aspects, Historical aspects and Rhetorical aspects.
What are the cultural issues in the text that have affected the history of interpretation,
How has the church used this text in the past?
Is there anything changed now?
What is implied meaning of the text.

You have to the most one month (1) to do this Bible study after which you have to submit the results.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

I only wish to test how the text has been understood in the past and how the same text is being used and interpreted now that women participate in Church ministries within the Church.

There shall be no physical, Psychological risks that may apply in this research as it shall concern itself to Biblical principles and ethics.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The results of the research is meant to contribute meaningfully to the Reformed Church in Zambia setting in the way women are viewed and treated, and to how the church and society can make headways in changing the perception and the status of women in the Church and country (Zambia) as a whole.

Women and men are equal partners in ministries and are equally gifted to undertake any leadership role that the Church may assign to anyone.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

The participants will need travel expenses, small token of appreciation and food during Bible study meetings. An amount of R15, 000 in total would be needed. The following will be the breakdown:

Proration:	Accommodation:	R4000
Transport:	R4300	
Food:	R1500	
Allowance:	R5200	
Total:	R15000	

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of:

Participant will not be mentioned by their names instead a coding will be put in place to disguise the names of participants

The information will be released to the University of Stellenbosch, the Church, (the Reformed Church in Zambia) with the concert of the participants for educational purposes.

Should there be need to Audio or Videotape the contents of this research the subjects will have the right to review/edit the tapes and the participants together with the Church (Reformed Church in Zambia) through the Department of Old and New Testament shall have the access to the materials.

Any publication of the results shall be done through the Reformed Church in Zambia within its Church's code of ethics and the copyright laws of the Zambia

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

[If one is not interested to participate in the Bible studies in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 through group discussions. Such a person deserves the right to withdraw, or not agreeing to be part of the group discussions.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact [Rev Jackson Phiri, Pro Elna Mouton Supervisor at emouton@sun.ac.za, Rev Jackson Phiri at Jackson.phiri70@gmail.com, or 13344277@sun.ac.za, Cell +260974644410 and +27834985277 or the Reformed Church in Zambia at infor@rczsynod.org

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché mfouche@sun.ac.za or; 021 808 4622 at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by.....in English and I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study and I hereby consent that the participant may participate in this study. He/She have been given a copy of this form.

Rev. SERA C. ZULU
Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)


Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

April 2, 2014
Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to Rev. Sera C. Zulu.....
and He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was
conducted in English

Rev Jackson Phiri 
Signature of Investigator

April 2, 2014
Date

APPENDIX G: Permission Letter from Reformed Church in Zambia (Rev. C. Chiundaponde, RCZ Railways Congregation)



REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAMBIA

RAILWAYS CONGREGATION

P.O. BOX 81171, KABWE

CELL: MINISTER – IN – CHARGE +260977817399

21ST FEBRUARY, 2014

**The Chairperson,
Ethical Research Committee,
University Offices,
Private Bag X1,
Matieland, 7602.**

Dear Sirs/Madams,


Re: Letter of Authority – Rev. Jackson Phiri

The Congregation Council of Elders at RCZ Railways wish to communicate to you that the above named Reverend, who is a student at Stellenbosch University now doing his Doctoral research from the Epistle of 1 Corinthians, has been granted authority to conduct a series of Bible studies with the congregation as to broaden his research base. He is a Minister of Word and Sacraments serving with the Reformed Church in Zambia and currently serving as Vice Moderator at Presbytery leadership level in Kabwe.

We believe that his research will not only benefit the Doctoral Degree requirements but more also the congregation at large. Wishing him the guidance of the Holy Spirit as he studies to edify the church.

Yours faithfully

RCZ-Railways Congregation



Rev. Crispin Mumbi Chiundaponde

Minister-In-Charge

OUR VISION: TO BE A REFLECTION AND EMBODIMENT OF THE TRIUNE GOD AND A REALITY OF HIS KINGDOM IN OUR SOCIETY

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

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Rev Justin Phiri of Maken Villa RCZ MTh and
Ev. David A Phiri Kabwe Main Congregation Kabwe
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All from The Reformed Church in Zambia Congregations, (Zambian Context). You were selected as a possible participant in this study because, your Congregation is well situated accessible and the members are well informed to understand issues of women ministries in the Reformed Church in Zambia.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

[Through conducting Bible studies with women and men of the RCZ, the research will appropriate a critical exegetical practice of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 considering the Reformed Church in Zambia cultural setting, and in order to create a just society with equal opportunities for all. The results of the research is meant to contribute meaningfully to the Reformed Church in Zambia setting in the way women are viewed and treated, and to how the church and society can make headways in changing the perception and the status of women in the Church and country as a whole. The research hopes to contribute to human dignity in the Church and Zambian society

The project hopes to assess the participation of women in Church ministries in view of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

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You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

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8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact [Rev Jackson Phiri, Pro Elna Mouton Supervisor at emouton@sun.ac.za, Rev Jackson Phiri at Jackson.phiri70@gmail.com, or 13344277@sun.ac.za, Cell +260974644410 and +27834985277 or the Reformed Church in Zambia at infor@rczsynod.org

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché mfouche@sun.ac.za or; 021 808 4622 at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by.....in English and I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study and I hereby consent that the participant may participate in this study. He/She have been given a copy of this form.

Rev. CRISTIN CHUMPAONDE
Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

[Signature]
Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

April 2, 2014
Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to Rev. Cristin Chumponde
and He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was
conducted in English

Rev Jackson Phiri [Signature]
Signature of Investigator

April 2, 2014
Date