

An Evaluation of Women's Authority in Public Teaching in the Context of 1 Timothy 2:11-12 And the Church in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The stricture in 1 Timothy 2:11-12, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent," has generated quite a lot of arguments especially with the rise of Pentecostalism which gives power to women to teach and exercise authority in the church in the 21st century. To this end, this work, "An Evaluation of Women's Authority in Public Teaching in the Context of 1 Timothy 2: 11-12 and the Church in the 21st Century" seeks to abridge the contextual socio-cultural situation of the writer's time and the trending involvement of women in leadership roles and public teaching in many Christian denominations nowadays. Using the historical, hermeneutical and qualitative descriptive methods, it is evident that scholars are divided on whether the restriction on women in public teaching in the church was socio-cultural or universal. The Traditional interpreters argue that the restriction is universal, whereas the Egalitarian interpreters argue that the injunction is peculiar to the cultural situation in Ephesus at that time hence, not universal, while the Feminist interpreters advocate for women inclusiveness in leadership roles, positions and public teaching in contemporary Christian churches. In the light of the historical heritage of the church, where women were greatly used in the Old Testament, New Testament and extra-biblical periods, it is the opinion of this paper that the writer's statement in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 should be a general guideline, while allowance is made for whoever, men or women, God may choose to endow his gifts and talents.

Introduction

There are two attitudes we can adopt with regards to the teaching in 1 Timothy on the role of women in the church. We can say that Paul was a crusty old bachelor with a bias against women and then

ignore all he says on the subject or we say this is part of the inspired word of God and gladly accept it. The first viewpoint completely destroys any doctrine of the inspiration and authority of scripture, and there are few things more serious than that but also it is untrue that Paul had bias against women. On the contrary, in Romans 16, he mentions with obvious joy and great esteem, Phoebe, Priscilla, Mary, Persis and Junia. In Galatians 3:28, he emphasizes that in Christ there is neither male nor female but, as the context there makes clear, he is talking about salvation, not ministry.

We are then left with the truth that the teaching here on women in the church is part of God's will for his people and therefore we must seek to understand and obey it. In this paper, attention shall be focused on the exegesis of the place of women in public worship and what happens in the church in the 21st century. This is a hotly debated discussion within the Christendom. There have been quite a lot of arguments on this passage especially with the rise of Pentecostalism which gives power to women to teach and exercise authority in the church. Even amongst famous New Testament scholars, there exists difference of opinion.

The concern of this paper, is about the part women should play in church meetings. The rule was thus stated "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent" (1 Timothy 2:11-12 RVS). Therefore, we will consider the historical background of the text, the authorship of the text, evaluation of the text, the interpretive approaches of the text and then draw a conclusion on women's participation in the Christian churches in the 21st century.

Historical Background of 1 Timothy 2:11-15

The Text

- **Greek (1 Timothy 2:11-15.)**

11. γυνη εν ησυχια μανθανετω εν παση υποταγη
12. γυναικι δε διδασκειν ουκ επιτρεπω ουδε αυθεντειν ανδρος αλλ ειnai εν ησυχια
13. αδαμ γαρ πρωτος επλασθη ειτα ευα
14. και αδαμ ουκ ηπατηθη η δε γυνη απατηθεισα εν παραβασει γεγονεν
15. σωθησεται δε δια της τεκνογονιας εαν μεινωσιν εν πιστει και αγαπη και αγιασμω

μετα σωφροσύνης

(Source: Allan New Testament Greek)

- **English (1 Timothy 2:11-15.)**

- 11 Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness.
- 12 I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent.
- 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve;
- 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.
- 15 Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

(Source: Revised Standard Version)

The letter, written at the end of the first century or beginning of the second century is best understood when one seeks to understand its historical context. The letter does not describe the community. Its instructions and exhortations should not be confused with descriptions of the community (Fiorenza 1983:310). It presents instructions to Timothy that reflect the author's convictions, but that are also certainly motivated by particular circumstances. The author had four primary concerns regarding the behavior of the Ephesians community (1:3; 3:14-15): (a) The powerful presence of some wealthy people, especially female benefactors (2:9-10; 6:7-10, 17-19); (b) The disturbing participation of women in public worship (2:9-15; 5:3-16); (c) Teachings that differ from the regular or accepted tradition (1:3-4; 4:1-10; 6:3-5; 6:20-21) and, (d) The opinions that the Greco-Roman society might have about the Christian group (2:2; 3:4,7,12; 5:14; 6:1). These four concerns are related to the power struggle between the female benefactors and the officially elected leaders – a struggle with implications for the relation of the Christian community with the Greco-Roman society (Tamez, 2005:141 -156).

From the above, Tamez deduces that, if these exhortations ended in the middle of 2:9, the women's social status could pass unnoticed. It could be normal in the pious tradition for women to dress modestly (*adiōs*), simply and decently (*sōphrosynē*). However, the author does not stop here; he emphasizes that it is not proper in the Christian community to see women with braided hair (*phlegma*) and adorned with gold, pearls and expensive clothes. The author contrasts simplicity and modesty (2.9a) with wealthy women's ostentation (2.9b).

Furthermore, when one reads 1 Timothy 2:12, one should note that this prohibition against women teaching or having authority over men is found in the passage about the rich women benefactors.

Although the Greek word *andrōs* could be translated “husband”, in the context of the congregation, it probably referred to a male leader. Even though the text is directed to all women in the community, its emphasis is on the leadership role of rich women (2.9b). This prohibition shows that women were teaching in the church, a common occurrence among early Christian communities. For some reason, the author insists that this practice should stop. Perhaps the author views their teaching as foreign to the gospel, or he thinks that these teachers have created tensions within the community by sharing their great power and influence with other women.

Another alternative Tamez asserts, is that only one or a few rich women, through the Greco-Roman patron-client system, exercised too much power over the male leadership. Therefore 1 Timothy reflects a power struggle between male leaders and rich women who taught without official authorization and perhaps aspired to the position of Bishop (3:1). In response, the author sends instructions to take power and authority away from these women.

Authorship of 1Timothy 2:11-15

Since the passage, 1Timothy 2:11-15, is in the books called the Pastoral Epistles, the authorship will certainly focus on the entire Pastoral Epistles. The issue concerning the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles has been for long. Some scholars as Williams Hendrickson, Donald Guthrie and Handley Moule are for defense of Apostle Paul’s authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, while scholars like F. Schleiermacher, F. C. Buar and P. N. Harrison are against the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals. Scholars on both divides use external and internal evidences to support their positions.

Scholars in support of Pauline authorship make allusions to the external evidence of the Corinthian letter of Clement of Rome as early as c. AD 95, probably in the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp during the first decades of the second century, and certainly in the works of Irenaeus towards the end of the century (Stott, 1973:13). This external witness to the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles continued as an unbroken tradition until in 1807 when F. Schleiermacher repudiated 1Timothy, and in 1835 F. C. Buar rejected 2 Timothy and Titus as well. P. N. Harrison in his work: *The Problem of the Pastorals* (1921) posits as pseudonymous the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles. However, it was Marcion who rejected the Pastoral Epistles (and other New Testament letters) in his Canon.

For scholars in support of the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals, the internal evidence is plain. All three letters begin with the announcement of Paul's name as author and go on to identify him as "an Apostle of Jesus Christ". Both letters to Timothy add that his apostleship is by God's 'command' or 'will'. The letters then purport to be addressed to Timothy and Titus, whom Paul has stationed in Ephesus and Crete respectively, in order to silence false teachers (1 Timothy 1:3ff) and appoint true teachers in their place (Tit. 1:5ff). Paul also indicates his affectionate relationship with his delegates by calling each either his 'dear son' or his 'true son' (Stott, 1997:22).

After arguing against fragmentary theory, pseudonymity, vocabulary and style, Marcion's omission, ecclesiastical structure, orthodoxy, conflicting data and two imprisonments of Paul, Gundry (1994:409-413) concludes that Paul wrote 1 Timothy and Titus during the second imprisonment just before his martyrdom. On the fragmentary theory, Gundry asserts that disagreement exists concerning what sections of the Pastorals contain the supposed fragments written by Paul. The fragments most commonly claimed are 2 Timothy 1:16-18; 3:10-11; 4:1-2a, 5b-22; Titus 3:12-15.

However, the arguments put forward against the authorship of the Pastorals may be summed up as *historical, linguistic (literary), theological, ecclesiological* and *ethical* (Stott, 1973:14-16). The first ground on which the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals is questioned is *historical*. It is argued that since they mention visits by Paul to Ephesus and Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:33), Crete and Nicopolis (Titus 1:5; 3:12), Troas, Miletus and Rome (2 Timothy 1:17; 4:13, 20) which cannot be reconciled with Luke's record in Acts of the Apostles journeys, therefore these must be the authors fabrication or at best genuine visits which he has ingeniously misplaced.

The second argument is *literary (linguistic)*. Critics reject the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals on the ground that much of their vocabulary is absent from the other ten letters attributed to Paul, while many characteristics of Pauline expressions in those ten letters are absent from the Pastorals. P. N. Harrison in his book: *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (1921) and *Pauline and Pastorals* (1964) advances four main arguments against Pauline authorship linguistically and literary speaking. First, of 848 words which occur in the Pastorals as many as 306 are not to be found in the other ten letters attributed to Paul. Further, there is in the Pastorals a higher number (175) of hapaxes (*hapex legomena*, words occurring only once) than in any other Pauline letter. These linguistic peculiarities of the Pastorals create 'very serious doubts indeed' about common

authorship'. Secondly, only 542 words occur in both the Pastorals and the other ten Pauline letters. This extraordinarily small common usage strongly suggests that the Pastorals were written by another hand.

Thirdly, the number of genuinely Pauline words which are absent from the Pastorals is 1, 635, of which 580 are peculiar to Paul. This omission of so much distinctively Pauline terminology 'contributes a very serious objection indeed' to an acceptance of the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals (Harrison, 1964:33-34).

Fourthly, of the 175 hapaxes in the Pastorals, as many as 94 recur in the early church fathers writings. Thus, 'the author of the Pastorals does speak the language of the apostolic fathers and the apologists, while diverging from that of the other New Testament writers (Harrison, 1964:70).

The third and *theological* argument takes various forms. Some claim that the God of the earlier Pauline letters (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and the grace-faith-salvation-works syndrome have become subtly changed and no longer ring true. A. T. Hanson, for example, declares that 'there is a complete absence of unifying theme' in the Pastorals, even 'an impression of relative incoherence'. And the reason for this, he continues, is that the author of the Pastorals 'had no theology of his own. He is a purveyor of other men's theology' (Hanson, 1968:110)

The fourth argument is *ecclesiastical* namely that the church structures envisaged in the Pastorals are those of the second century, including the monarchical episcopate to which Bishop Ignatius of Antioch referred in his letters. Some critics go further and find the whole atmosphere of the Pastorals too 'churchy' for Paul. Ernest Käsemann (1969:88) quotes Martin Dibelius as having once said that the Pastoral Epistles 'mark the beginning of the bourgeois outlook in the church'. He adds that he cannot himself regard as Pauline letters in which the church has become 'the central theme of theology', 'heavily daubed by church piety' (Käsemann, 1969:89-97).

The fifth and last argument is *ethical*. It was Martin Dibelius who first applied the epithet 'bourgeois' to the Christian lifestyle envisaged in the Pastorals. And 'of course if bourgeois', J. H. Houlden (1970:64-65), concludes that, 'then certainly petit bourgeois'. Robert Karris has also written about the 'middle-class ethic' of the Pastorals (1979:64). What these scholars are referring to is the atmosphere of respectability, of conformity to prevailing social values, which they feel permeates the ethical instruction of the Pastorals.

An Evaluation of 1 Timothy 2:11-12

Learning in Quietness or Silence

According to Schreiner (2016:186), learning was not generally encouraged for women by Jewish men in the first century yet, in spite of that patriarchal norm, the writer tells the believers in Ephesus that he desires women to “learn” (i.e. to be instructed in the faith). This command for women to “learn” is the only imperative in this entire text. However, the accent is not on the command itself (the writer seems to assume that women will be learning) but on the manner in which women are to do so: literally, they are to learn “quietly” and “with all submissiveness”.

“Quietly” does not mean that women are never to utter a word when the church gathers for worship. This would completely contradict what Paul says about women in 1 Corinthians 11, where he tells the women how to pray and prophesy in church. His assumption is that they will pray and prophesy, which means his assumption is that they will speak during church service. We may note that the term for ‘quietly’ in verse 11 is similar to the term for ‘quiet’ in verse 2. When Christians are commanded to pray for ‘a peaceful and quiet life’, that phrase does not describe a life in which no one talks. It aims rather at a life ‘without turmoil’. Likewise here, “quietly” does not mean complete silence. It means instead that women are to learn “without turmoil”. The term requires woman to have a “quiet demeanor and spirit that is peaceable instead of argumentative” (Schreiner, 2016:186). Adeyemo (2006:1472) is of the opinion that the requirement for silence in association with teaching may also indicate that the women were talkative during times of worship.

Women are to learn “with all submissiveness”

This expression is related to the expression Paul uses in Ephesus 5 in instructing wives to submit to their husbands. But here in 1 Timothy, the author is not narrowly talking about submission to a husband but is addressing submission to the proper teaching authorities in the church – the elders. He is instructing the women not to be contentious and usurp the role of the elders but to submit to their authority. In this sense, the Christian women’s obligation is no different from that of a Christian man. Both men and women are called to submit to the authorities God has placed in the church (e.g. Heb. 13:17). Submitting to the authority of the elders is not unique to women. What is unique about a woman’s role is appreciated in verse 12 (Burk, 2019:n.p.).

Douglas Moo (1991:18) surmises that considering the nature of the fake teaching at Ephesus, women at Ephesus were expressing their “liberation” from husbands, and from other men in the church, by criticizing and speaking out against male leaders. This tendency (Paul?) the author encourages Timothy to counter by enforcing the principle of submission of the women to the appropriate male leadership.

I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men

It is argued that (Paul?) the author did not forbid women to teach. He instructed the older women to teach the younger (Titus 2:3-4). Elsewhere in the New Testament we find Priscilla and Aquila teaching Apollos (Acts 18:26). Eudia and Syntyche “contended at (Paul’s) side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers” (Phil. 4:3, NIV). Apparently, also, he is not forbidding praying or prophesying.

Some suggest that what (Paul?) the author is forbidding in this specific situations is the official teaching of a woman before the church, an authorized proclamation of the word with ecclesiastical authority (Blum, 1964:157). E.F. Scott (1936:25) says that the word “teach” must be taken in the technical sense of making a set public address”. J.M. Ford (1973:683) carries this thought a step further by interpreting *authentain* as exercising “supreme authority” and *didaskein* in the sense of “formulating doctrine”. She feels that the prohibition is directed “not against teaching in general, but having the final decision about such teaching”, that is, “teaching in the capacity of a bishop”. Pfeiffer and Harrison (1983:1373) posit that women are not to assume either leadership or the teaching office in the church.

Spencer (1985:74-80), is of the view that women were to learn so that they can teach even in position of authority in the church. However, countering the view of Spencer, Douglas Moo (1991:184) argues that the encouragement to women to learn gives no reason to think that they were to be engaged in expositing and applying Biblical truth to men. Burk (2019:n.p.) argues that, nor is the writer (Paul?) saying that women are incapable of being gifted Bible teachers. There are many women who are very gifted teachers. He is simply saying that the exercise of their teaching gifts must be kept within certain parameters. They are not to teach men. Nor are they allowed to “exercise authority”, which means that women are not to be pastors. According to Burk, as the following Chapter on 1Timothy makes clear, the pastorate is reserved only for qualified men – not

all men, but only those who meet certain qualifications, with the result that they are recognized as elders by the rest of the church.

N.J. Homes (1969:5-22), on the other hand, takes the opposite position in regard to teaching, which he affirms is not connected to an office. What is in view in this passage, he feels, is a rather informal type of service with many participants, and that the women addressed here are *married* women who are being admonished not “to be bossy over their husband.” The author (Paul?) is concerned with upholding the ideal of the Christian housewife. From this, Hommes concludes that this passage in no way forbids the ordination of women as ministers; it is not even dealing with this matter but with the matter of the conduct of a Christian wife who should not upstage her husband in the Christian service as carried on in Paul’s day.

Furthermore, Hargraves (2020:n.p.) is of the opinion that in the time and culture in which (Paul?), the author was writing, women were not being taught or trained theologically. They were not allowed to sit at the feet of the Rabbi to learn from them, right alongside men. To teach a woman theology was frowned upon, and yet the first thing we see in this passage from 1Timothy is that Paul WANTS the women to learn. Hargraves further argues that the issue at hand here is not whether or not (Paul?) the author believes that it is appropriate for women to teach men. The issue at hand here is that because these particular women had never before been taught proper, orthodox doctrine, they were currently unfit to teach others. By becoming the teachers, these uneducated women would have led a lot of people astray. That is what you have (Paul?), the author prohibiting here. For Hargraves, the Greek word used in 1Timothy 2:12, is not saying that women cannot ever be in position of any kind of authority over a man at anytime, but that she must be careful so as to not ‘Lord it over someone’.

Belleville (2005:212) asserts that according to lexicographers, *authentein* is synonymous with “to dominate someone”, hence the author (Paul?) is most likely prohibiting women from teaching men in a manner that is domineering. Watters (2020:1), argues that the author (Paul?) does not forbid women from any and all teaching activities, even within the church. Rather, he forbids women from the public preaching and teaching of the word of God when the church is assembled in public worships. According to Watters, women are not permitted to hold the office or to exercise the functions of an elder in the Church. More recently, John Dickson (2014:67-88) has questioned the meaning of the word *didaskō* (teach). Dickson argues that it refers to preserving and laying down

the traditions handed on by the apostles. Dickson goes on to argue that since that does not happen in most sermons today, women are not prohibited from giving sermons.

Interpretive Approaches of the Text

The question in the passage is not just one of exegesis (what did it mean?), but also one of hermeneutics (what does it mean for us?). We want to understand what the author (Paul?) wrote but we also want to understand whether and how we should apply it in churches today. That is the question of hermeneutics, the art of interpreting the text for modern application. The author said that younger widows should get married (5:14), but does this advice apply to all younger widows today? In many cultures, they probably do, and in some, perhaps not (<https://learn.gcs.edu/mo>).

When Paul told slaves to submit to their masters, was he endorsing slavery? Christian slave-owners often said he was, but when other Christians perceived the injustice involved in owning a human being, they began to ask more questions of the texts. It is generally only when people see problems in the way that a text is applied, that they begin to ask more probing questions, but when questions arise, we all need to look at the text more critically and carefully. Sometimes the objections are valid, sometimes they are not.

- **The Traditional/Complimentarian View**

James Hurley argues that 1Timothy was designed to give instructions that would apply in all Churches, in all ages:

It is universally accepted that 1Timothy was intended to provide a clear statement concerning certain issues which its author, whom I take to be Paul felt needed attention... Paul wrote... “How it is necessary (*dei*) to conduct oneself” (3:15). *Dei* is an important verb meaning “One must” or “one ought”... Paul’s use of *dei* here is presumptive evidence that he considered what he said normative beyond the immediate situation (Hurley 1981:196).

Thomas Schreiner (2005:87), another traditional scholar, is more cautious, “The letters should not necessarily be understood as timeless marching orders for the church but must be interpreted in light of specific circumstances that occasioned them. Although parts of the letters deal with deviant teachings found in specific situation, Schreiner says that the letters as a whole “reflect the pattern of governance that he expected to exist in his churches” (2005:89). David Gordon writes, “The

Pastoral Epistles are written with the purpose of providing instruction of ordering churches at the close of the apostolic era (1995:59).

Let us now focus on the crux of the matter. Women should learn quietly and submissively, and women should not teach or exercise authority over men. Douglas Moo observes, “That Paul wants Christian women to learn is an important point, for such a practice was not generally encouraged by Jews (1991:1991). Hurley argues that Paul is not just stating a personal preference, rather he gives v.11 as a command. The Greek word *didaskō* “Does not mean silence but carries with it connotations of peacefulness and restfulness... Paul is not... calling for “buttoned lips” but for a quiet receptivity and a submission to authority” (1981:201). “Not absolute silence but rather a gentle and quiet demeanor is intended (Schreiner, 2005:98)

On, why the author (Paul?) feels it necessary to write verses (11-12), Moo and Schreiner say it is because some women were not learning in quietness and some women were teaching men (Moo, 1991:187; Schreiner, 2005:89). On, why silence only the women, and whether was it because the average woman was not as educated as the average man, Baugh says, No, because Greco – Roman society had some educated women and many illiterate men (2005:34). If education was the problem, then it would be inconsistent for Paul to silence women but say nothing about uneducated men (Grudem, 2004:293). Some inscriptions in Asia Minor show that women functioned as high priests in some temples – therefore there was no cultural scandal involved in women being in authority, which leads Wyane Grudem to conclude that Paul’s directive must have been based on God’s law, not cultural sentiments (2004:324).

According to Hurley (1981:201), women were certainly free to speak in Pauline Churches (1 Cor.11). Paul is speaking only of teaching situation here in, 1Timothy 2. In support of this interpretation, he noted that v.12 is a conceptual repetition of v.11. Learning corresponds to not teaching, and submission corresponds to not having authority. Just as Paul wants women to learn in a submissive manner, he does not want them to teach in an *authoritative manner* (Hurley, 1981:201; Blomberg, 2001:364). Hurley concludes that the verse means “that women should not be authoritative teachers in the church”, and he associates that with the office of elder. Paul did not forbid *all* teaching by women, Hurley claims. “What Paul disallowed therefore was simply the exercise of authority over men. Werner Neuer writes, “Paul excludes women from the office of teaching because teaching the assembled congregation would necessarily place them over men

(1991:119). Moo acknowledges that the present - tense form of the verb “permit” *could* allow for a temporary situation but a present- tense - verb can also be used for permanent command (e.g. Rom 12:1). Moo notes, “Paul’s advice to Timothy is the word of an Apostle, accredited by God, and included in the inspired Scriptures” (1991:185). Even an indicative verb – a statement – can be used to imply a command, as Paul does in verses 1 and 8 (Schreiner, 2005:99-100).

On, what sort of “teaching” is not allowed, the traditionalists argue that the Greek word *didaskō* for “teach” can refer to a ministry that any believer might do (Col. 3:16), but it more often refers to a special gift associated with church leadership (Eph. 4:11). In the Pastoral Epistles, teaching always has this restricted sense of authoritative doctrinal instruction (Moo, 1991:185; Schreiner, 2005:101) (e.g. 1Timothy 2:2). Teaching was an important part of the function of an elder (1 Timothy 3:2) and that exclusively for men.

- **The Egalitarian View**

Christian egalitarians believe that the passage does not carry the same *meaning* for the modern church. When interpreted in light of the *socio-cultural* situation of Paul’s time, which a key word in the passage should be reinterpreted to mean something other than “exercising authority”. Some recent scholarship is believed to show that Paul never intended his first letter to Timothy to apply to the Church at all times and places. Instead, it was intended to remediate a state of acute crisis being created by a “massive influx of false teaching and cultic intrusions” (Bilezikian, 2006:20).

Clinton Arnold and Robert Saucy (2001:287) suggest that in Ephesus, “Women were converting to Christianity and desiring to attain leadership roles in the Churches similar to what they held in society. Aware of this situation, Paul, according to them, addressed this issue because he did not want these churches to cave in to the cultural pressures of the day and violate a deep-set theological conviction about order between men and women”. Similarly, Grudem (2004:323) notes that some women had prominent roles in pagan religions in Ephesus...The idea that women could not hold church office because it would have been unacceptable in that society does not square with the evidence.

Egalitarians argue that the text was intended for a specific socio-cultural environment which no longer exists and that the text is therefore not relevant to modern churches. The egalitarian socio-cultural position has been represented prominently by classicist Catherine Kroeger and Theologian Richard Kroeger. They believe the author of 1 Timothy was refuting false teaching, rather than establishing a narrow restriction on women's role (Kroeger and Kroeger, 1992:20). Catherine Kroeger point out that *authentein* is rare Greek verb found only here in the entire Bible. She writes that in extra-biblical literature - the only other places it can be found, the word is ordinarily translated "to bear rule" or "to usurp authority".

Again, egalitarians argue *lexically* that the meaning of the key word in the text, *authenteō*, does not support the exclusion of women from authoritative teaching positions in the congregation (Lutheran Church..., 2005:3-4). Catherine Kroeger has been one of the major proponents of egalitarian lexical argument that the key word in the text, *authenteō*, does not support the exclusion of women from authoritative teaching positions in the congregation (Lutheran Church..., 2005:3-4). Kroeger and Kroeger have done significant research into the nature and background of ancient Ephesus and have suggested an alternative interpretation to 1 Timothy 2:11-15 (wikipeddia).

Finally, *hermeneutically*, some egalitarians argue that the text was intended only to limit women for a specific temporary duration, or that it was intended only to limit uneducated women who were unfit to speak in the congregation. Aida Spencer (1985) and Gilbert Bilezikian (2006) are major proponents here. Bilezikian points out that the word translated "authority" in that passage is a *hapax*, a word that appears only once within the structure of the Bible and never cross-referenced again. He says one should "never build a doctrine on or draw a teaching from and unclear or debated *hapax*" (Bilezikian 1993:101). Therefore, since there is no 'control text' to determine its meaning, Bilezikian asserts that no one knows for sure what the word means and what exactly Paul is forbidding. He adds that there is "so much clear non-hapaxic material available in the Bible that we do not need to press into service difficult texts that are better left aside when not understood... we are accountable only for that which we can understand (Bilezikian, 1993:101).

Spencer (1985:74-80) notes that rather than using the imperative mood or even an aorist or future indicative to express that prohibition, Paul quite significantly utilizes a present indicative, perhaps best rendered, "But I am not presently allowing". Spencer believes this is a temporary prohibition that is based solely on the regrettable similarity between the Ephesian women and Eve – in that

the women of Ephesus had been deceived and as such, if allowed to teach, would be in danger of promoting false doctrine.

- **Feminist View**

It was in the 19th century, that the feminist, Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1898-1998), gathered a group of educated women as part of the women's Revising Committee, charged with the responsibility of doing a systematic critique of patriarchy or the belief that maleness is the norm for humanity in the Bible. This resulted in the publication of the Women's Bible in 1896-1898. From then on, women began to seek for liberation from male domination and equal opportunity in all areas of life. The Women's Bible criticized the passage (1Timothy 2:11-15) as sexist.

A contributor, in the Women's Bible, Lucinda Banister Chandler writes that in Epistles to Timothy, the prohibition of women from teaching is "tyrannical" considering that a large proportion of classroom teachers are women and that teaching is an important part of motherhood. Chandler finds the passage (v.12) strikingly inconsistent with Galatians 3:28, also attributed to Paul, which states, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male or female, but ye are one in Christ Jesus." She observes that there is no similar statement by Jesus that woman should be subject to man or refrain from teaching.

Feminists, both ancient, medieval, modern from the Western world to Third-world nations including Africa such as Mary Astel (1666-1731), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), Phyllis Tribble (1973,1984), Rosemary Radford Reuther (1979,1985), Mary Daly (1968,1973), Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1983), Cheryl Exum (1993,1996); others are Susan T. Foh (1979), Teresa Okure (1990,1993), Mercy Amba Odudoye (1988, 1995), Rosemary Edet (1988,1992), Chris E. Manus (2010), and Rose Uchem (2001,2005), see the passage as sexist, patriarchal, male chauvinistic, female abasement, female inferiority and men domination over women.

Some feminists accuse the author to be a Misogynist - women hater. They equally argue that women should not be relegated to the background as far as public teaching in the church is concerned. They assert that from the achievements and successes recorded by women who have been public Teachers, Preachers, Ministers and Church Founders, such passage, 1 Timothy 2:11-15, should not be regarded as relevant now in Christendom. Moreover, they argue that if women

have been excelling in other fields as politics, sciences, government (Queens and Prime Ministries), academics, and business enterprises, then why not in the Church?

Insights from Divergent Views of Few Scholars and Women Authority in Public Teaching in the Church in the 21st Century

Even amongst famous New Testament Scholars, there exist difference of opinion. By saying a woman should keep learning, the author is presupposing that women were part of public worship and were included in Christian instructions (Fee, 1988:72). But she should learn in quiet demeanor. In the New Testament, the teacher was “the declarer of doctrine” as Inworogu puts it (1991:39). Women were not supposed to do that. When the writer says that the woman should not usurp authority over the man, the picture is of a woman taking matters into her hands and asserting authority over men. According to Kelly, “For a woman to teach in church is tantamount to her wielding authority over a man, that is domineering, or laying down the law to him; and this is contrary to the natural order (1996:68). Inworogu (1991:39) opines that, “Paul’s view was not just due to the peculiar circumstances of the Ephesian Churches. This same instruction was given to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 11 and in 14:34-36 indicate that, that was not just a peculiar situation to the Corinth only”.

However, Guthrie for instance observed, “it may be that Paul’s present stricture is to be taken with provision, and was designed to curb the tendencies of newly emancipated Christian women to abuse their new found freedom by indecorously lording it over men. Such excess would bring disrepute on the whole community and called for firm handling (1999:85). Again he feels that “the question of women teachers cannot be divorce from the first century disparity between men and women in the matter of education” (1999:88). Is it true that this restriction was based on women’s low academic state? Accordingly, Fee observes, “By saying ‘I am not permitting’, Paul focused particularly on the situation on Ephesus. Such language as this, as well as, ‘I want’ in verse 8 leaves any sense of universal imperative for all situations” (1988:77).

With these insights we should couple (a) Christ’s call to all to be His witnesses, and (b) The Christian Churches Theology of the ministry. Christian churches in 21st century should consider all members commissioned to proclaim the gospel. But in order to facilitate the proclamation of the gospel those, whether men or women, who are specifically gifted and called for this task are

set apart and supported by the rest so that they can spend their full time in this work and share their expertise with the others. This means that, in addition to commitment to a call, ability is really the only criterion by which selection this office is determined. In a real sense sex should have nothing to do with this function. It is no more a male function than the ability to sing is a male function. It is only tradition and custom not doctrines or deliberate reflections, that have kept some churches from ordaining women to the ministry.

Traditionally, the minority churches have been much more democratic and open in the role they have given to women. It is not an accident that the Anglicans, the Orthodox, and Roman Catholic communions have been the slowest and the most conservative in giving full rights to women. On the basis of the hermeneutical principle and theological reflections given above, it seems to these writer's that the Spirit is directing the church to actualize in the work of the church the prophetic insight of Scripture that there is no longer male and female, but all are one in Christ Jesus. To this end, women should be given authority in public teaching and leadership roles in Christian Churches in 21st Century.

Conclusion

Caution must be exercised in the conclusion of this paper. While we will not be hazy in drawing our conclusion, a balanced position which shall reflect closely the biblical teaching, which should be upheld in the 21st century church, shall be made. We are told clearly what a woman's ministry is not. The public teacher of God's word does not tell others what they need to know, but in his capacity, as a teacher he stands before the congregation with authority to rule and govern it. By natural order of things, this was not to be done by the woman.

For many people, this may seem very old-fashioned at the end of the 21st century, but this is what the Bible says and therefore the real issue is not women preachers but the authority of the scripture. God made man and woman in such a manner that it is natural for him to lead and for her to follow. She was made to be made a help for him and not to be head over him. The terrible story of the fall in Genesis 3 starts with Eve in deciding to lead and Adam relinquishing his God-given responsibility to lead (Jeffery, 1994:70).

Motherhood is woman's appointed role, if she sticks to this instead of usurping masculine functions and fulfils it in the right spirit (Kelly, 1976:70). However, this paper is more attuned to

a more liberal position. In the light of the historical heritage of the church, where women were greatly used in the church, we should conclude that the author's statement in 1 Tim. 2:11-12 should be a general guideline, while allowance is made for whoever, men or women, God may choose to endow his gifts and talents.

Paul's instruction should not be seen as anti-feminine, because Christianity has done much to elevate the status of women. The man has authority over the woman. Paul urges this same relationship in 1 Cor. 11:3 where he sees the subordination of the woman to the man as analogy of Christ's subordination to God. The subordinated person is not inferior, but it is needed for the outworking of God's economy. The woman by nature was designed and given to the man as a helpmate. This should be reflected in the relationship that exists between them.

Recommendations

The researcher therefore advocate that every Female Minister should be given an equitable support and encouragement by her immediate family, the church and the society.

- She must accept the uniqueness of her divine mandate and see herself from God's perspective as this would help her to remain focused and committed to her ecclesiastical and ministerial responsibilities.
- She should make a conscious effort to equip herself with adequate trainings, exposures, counsels, mentorship and appropriate theological and secular scholarship, as this will build up her self-confidence, self-worth and self-mastery.
- She should make the Holy Spirit her confidant and source of inspiration as He will empower her for the task that has been trusted into her hands.
- She should develop an insatiable taste for God's Word and must seek to encounter God personally through His Word as this would lead to deeper revelatory knowledge of God's redemptive plan for humanity, and would expose her to newer insights and visions.
- She should create a balance for her marital engagement and her ministerial responsibilities. She should devote time for her family needs and should not neglect the work because of her domestic engagements.

- The immediate family should attest, and encourage the Female Minister based on the evidence that the child displayed from birth and early childhood. When the female minister has the basic virtual support and encouragement from her parents and siblings it can be assured that, the rest of the community would tow the same line.
- The Female Minister's spouse and children form the immediate foundational base of her ministry. When her husband and the children particularly accept and support her holistically she would be psychologically, economically, socially, and even spiritually balanced.
- The church should practically recognize women as God's unique creatures who are able to respond to God's calling; therefore, they should be allowed to fully participate in every sphere of the church leadership.
- The church as a community of believers is directly responsible for baptizing and consecrating women into the church; therefore, the Female Minister should not be restricted from exercising some ecclesiastical rituals.
- The church should embark on educative programs that would include women and men, which would strategically be geared towards instituting positive images of Female Minister in the church.

There are some societal vices that would be handled better by Female Ministers; cases like rape, premarital sex, unwanted pregnancy, lesbianism, prostitution and the likes, would be put under control or totally erased by Female Ministers. The Female Ministers will be vocal to the younger generation especially the younger ladies as to how they could conduct themselves at home, in the church and the society.

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