

A CRITIQUE OF THE “DRAFT DOCTRINAL STATEMENT”

“A THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN AND MEN”

by

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I would like first of all to thank CTICR for their work in producing their revised Draft Doctrinal Statement (henceforth DDS), “A Theological Basis for the Ordination of Women and Men,” together with its Background Document. Like the earlier draft, to its credit the revised DDS focuses on biblical texts and thus rightly acknowledges that *what the biblical texts say* is—in principle—decisive for the Lutheran Church in this matter of doctrine and practice (*sola Scriptura*). Unfortunately this is more a matter of appearances than the reality, however. In practice the DDS second-guesses the Apostle’s intentions on the basis of what is finally guesswork and assertion. Exegetically, it fails to be led by the plain sense of the text. Moreover, it persists with speculations and assertions that the text itself shows to be highly implausible in some cases and demonstrably false in others.

I like many others had submitted a critique of the original Draft Doctrinal Statement (henceforth DDS 1) that CTICR produced, leaving it to others to point out many of DDS 1’s weaknesses and focusing mainly on the exegetical deficiencies in its treatment of 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2. Although the revised DDS is more nuanced in ways that seem aware of some of my earlier criticisms—retreating from some of DDS 1’s earlier assertions that were unsustainable, it persists in the earlier document’s misjudgments and seems confused at one point in its argument (see below).

As with its earlier version, there are many places where one might take issue with the revised DDS and its Background Document, but I shall confine myself to addressing paragraph 4, engaging the Background Document along the way.

Paragraph 4 reads as follows:

4. 1 Timothy 2:11–15 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b–37

Regarding 1 Timothy 2:11–15, Paul did not permit women to teach the faith at Ephesus. This restriction was consistent with the practice of the synagogue, and was necessary for the time being to avoid offence, especially to Jewish Christians. In other settings, such as Rome, Philippi, Cenchreae, and Caesarea by the Sea, the same ruling was not in force (Acts 18:26; 21:9; Rom. 16:1–3,6,7,12; Phil. 4:3; compare 1 Tim. 3:12 with Rom. 16:1; and 1 Tim. 2:12 3 with Acts 18:26). Regarding 1 Corinthians 14:33b–37, the women who served as prophets in Corinth (1 Cor. 11:5; see also 12:28; Eph. 4:11; Acts 21:9) are to be distinguished from the wives referred to at 1 Corinthians 14:34,35. Their questions to their husbands, asking them to explain what was being said, prompted the apostle to warn them not to disrupt worship. He commanded them to ‘keep silent in the churches’ (1 Cor. 14:34,35). This is a specific application of Jesus’ overarching command to love one

another (1 Cor. 14:37; see also 8:1; 13:1–13; 14:1; John 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 3:23; 4:21), for the sake of good order in worship (1 Cor. 14:33,40), so that the church may be built up in faith, hope and love (1 Cor. 13:13; 14:3–5,12,17). Paul prohibited women from teaching the faith at Ephesus, and he regulated the conduct of certain wives during worship at Corinth and across the church, motivated by his overriding missionary concern, to ‘become all things to all people, so that [he] might by all means save some’ (1 Cor. 9:22). Since 1 Timothy 2:11–14 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b–37 do not specifically address the issue of ordination, they cannot be used to support the exclusion of women from the pastoral office.

1. The “same ruling not in force”?

It should be obvious that the following claim is an *argument from silence*: “in other settings, such as Rome, Philippi, Cenchreae, and Caesarea by the Sea, the same ruling was not in force.” This is special pleading: the most that can be claimed is that it wasn’t specifically mentioned in epistles addressed to these places, but that is not the same thing as “the same ruling was not in force.” On the contrary, Paul falsifies the claim when he appeals to ecumenical practice in 1 Cor 14:33, “as in all the churches of the saints.”¹

2. 1 Timothy 2:11–14 just about “avoiding offence”?

Paragraph 4 claims that the “restriction...was necessary for the time being to avoid offence, especially to Jewish Christians.” First, this is a very peculiar explanation given that Paul starts out his instructions on public worship in 1 Tim 2:8–15 by highlighting his apostleship to the *gentiles*—i.e., *non-Jews* (1 Tim 2:7). If “avoiding offence” were his deal here, would he not rather be more concerned with putting unnecessary causes of offence before *them*? Second, this assertion is finally no more than special pleading—lacking textual basis—and creates more problems than it solves. For if Paul’s command were temporally and contextually limited in this way, what are we to make of Paul’s appeals to creation and fall (1 Tim 2:13–14) from Torah (Gen 2–3)? Was Paul humouring the Jews whom the DDS claims would have been offended when he gives these instructions and bases them in Torah and God’s creative ordinances? Was he being disingenuous—since there is no qualification in the text whatsoever that could lead Paul’s hearers (whether Jew or Gentile) to understand Paul’s appeal to Torah in vv. 13–14 as anything other than an appeal to God’s creative ordering and Eve’s transgression of it?

The DDS does not adequately account for these verses or the way Paul appeals to them. This is a direct consequence of its desire to avoid the conclusion that Paul was in fact teaching that men have a particular created, divinely intended responsibility when it comes to teaching in public worship. What does DDS claim about vv. 13–14? Here the DDS has changed tack since the first draft. The revised DDS back-peddles from the earlier document’s claim that “insufficient instruction in the faith made people—at Ephesus, especially the women—highly susceptible to the enticements of false teachers” (DDS 1 §15, p. 27). That is, the earlier document had identified “insufficient instruction” as Paul’s intended point of comparison between Ephesian women and Eve, in order to explain the significance of vv. 13–14 such that Paul’s command not to teach was

¹ The debate about whether 14:33b refers to what precedes or follows is moot in view of the rhetorical continuity of Paul’s argument throughout these verses. On this point and most of those raised in this critique, see my more extensive treatment in and most of what I have argued more extensively in Adam D. Hensley, “σιγάω, λαλέω, and ὑποτάσσω in 1 Corinthians 14:34 in their Literary and Rhetorical Context,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 55/2 (2012): 343–64. This is accessible through the OWL website.

not grounded in created sexual differentiation after all (i.e., against the natural sense of the text) Now this notion has been demoted to a less likely “possibility,” with the new DDS now claiming that “*it is more likely that Paul was...simply appealing to a community with its origins in Judaism that took an extremely cautious position regarding women’s place in society*” (DDS Background Document, p. 4). Indeed, it is a telling admission that the following from the earlier version has been deleted in the new document: “[d]rawing on the creation and fall accounts, [Paul] stressed the priority of Adam in creation and Eve’s susceptibility to deception.” And well should it be deleted, for Genesis 3 powerfully underscores Adam’s responsibility for the command in the garden sanctuary, showing the woman to have usurped the man’s proper responsibility, on the one hand, and the man’s abdication of the same, on the other.²

In the new DDS, the main argument now seems to be,

“Women boisterously bullying their menfolk was what Paul ruled out. Rather, they were to learn quietly (not, in silence) at the feet of a teacher with the possibility of becoming a teacher and leader in their own right when they were ready and the times allowed...[and] he bent over backwards to prevent the church at Ephesus from the damage caused by breaking too quickly with traditional views and behaviours that had been formed over the years” (DDS Background Document, p. 4).

Again, this is special pleading, as there is nothing *in the text* to command it. The argument that “quietly” (vv. 11, 12) implies they had been “boisterous”—and that *that* was what Paul was “ruling out”—is quite arbitrary (and is hardly a plausible point of comparison with the example of Eve, and unable to explain Paul’s appeal to *her*). “Quietly” rather describes their proper demeanour as *disciples or learners* rather than *teachers* in the worship assembly—a point the DDS itself admits, though it goes on to add the (equally arbitrary) qualification, “*with the possibility of becoming a teacher and leader in their own right when they were ready and the times allowed*” (DDS Background Document, p.4).

So, what does the *text* indicate about why Paul cites Gen 2-3 and what he was saying? Paul puts the emphasis on “teaching.”³ The Greek word order is important (and not preserved in English translations), which reads: “but to teach—a woman—I do not permit—or have authority—over a man,” putting the emphasis on “teach” and “woman” (Gk: διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἔπιτρέπω οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός).⁴ By this emphasis on “teaching” and “woman” Paul differentiates female from male when it comes to teaching in public worship.

Accordingly, Paul then cites the creational priority of Adam as the reason for the command: “*For* (Gk: γὰρ) Adam was formed first, then Eve.” This of course recalls Gen 2, where God created Adam first and gave him the command he was to guard (before Eve was even created in Gen 2:17). Adam evidently had taught it to the woman as her correction of the serpent shows—albeit with “embellishments” to the command (“neither shall you touch it” in Gen 3:3). If Paul were only

² See Adam D. Hensley, “Redressing the Serpent’s Cunning: A Closer Look at Genesis 3:1” (*LOGIA* [forthcoming], of which a draft is available on the OWL website).

³ Discussion sometimes gets side-tracked by alleged uncertainties about the meaning of the once-occurring verb, “to have authority” (Gk: αὐθεντεῖν). It is at least good to see the DDS does not waste time and effort on this matter.

⁴ Lest this word order sound to English readers like Paul might be prohibiting women from *being* taught, the Greek language makes it clear that Paul forbids “a woman” (Gk: dative) from *doing* the teaching. Incidentally “[I do] not permit” is the same verb found in 1 Cor 14:34 as a “divine passive”—that is, “it is not permitted” means “God does not permit” (Gk: οὐ γὰρ ἔπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν).

concerned about certain Ephesian women's susceptibility to false teachers as the first draft of the DDS had claimed, then a briefer reference just to Eve's deception would surely be sufficient. Why cite Adam's creational priority over Eve if that were the point? Unless of course Paul *was* teaching that suitably qualified men (3:1ff), not women, exercise the public role of teaching in worship.

Furthermore, a closer look at *how* Paul cites Eve's deception shows that it is not about how well she was instructed (cf. DDS 1), but that she transgressed Adam's proper duty to guard the command.⁵

First, Paul does not expand on *why* the woman was deceived, let alone say anything pointing to inadequate instruction or susceptibility to temptation as the reason he refers to Gen 3. He simply cites the fact of her deception as it recalls Eve's own confession in Gen 3:13, "the serpent **deceived me**" (Gk: Ο ὄφις ἤπατησέν με; cf. καὶ Ἀδὰμ οὐκ ἤπατήθη, ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἐξαπατηθεῖσα in 1 Tim 2:14).

Second, Paul's choice of words and sentence construction show that Eve's deception was at heart a transgression of what Adam was supposed to do, not about how well or poorly she pulled off something that in theory she was permitted to do (whether "boisterously" or otherwise). Verse 14 reads: she "became in (a state of) transgression" (Gk: ἐν παραβάσει γέγονεν). In the Greek, the main verb here is "became" (Gk: perfect tense). It describes her deception in terms of what she *became*; her resultant state of being. Not what she *did* or *why* she did it: she became in a state of transgression. Notably, the choice of "in transgression" (Gk: ἐν παραβάσει) is itself missing from the Gen 3 account, and Paul's application of this term to this incident demonstrates that he understood it as an overstepping of boundaries.⁶

Neither draft of the DDS can account for any of this properly. The first claims "insufficient instruction" as the point of comparison between the Ephesian women and Eve; the second retreats from this only to assert the vague and unsupported notion that Paul's appeal to Scripture, created order, and its breach in the fall was a matter of human tradition that Paul was temporarily accommodating until "the times allowed." In the final analysis, the only reason for this conclusion is the DDS's dogged commitment to a Paul-who-permits-women-to-exercise-doctrinal-oversight-in-public-worship; a commitment that forces a reading that goes flatly against the grain of Paul's instruction and their basis in Scripture, creation, and fall.

3. Paul was silencing noisy wives, not prophets?

The DDS's argument regarding 1 Corinthians 14 depends on the following assertion: "*It is important to distinguish between prophets, among whom women were included, and the disruptive wives who were to be silent at worship and raise their questions with their husbands in the privacy of the home*" (DDS Background Document, p. 6). By claiming this the DDS seems to be suggesting that Paul's reprimand had to do with improper exercise of an authority that women could otherwise exercise *in principle*. But not only does this differentiation between prophets and wives lack basis in the text, it is demonstrably false. We will examine this directly in a moment, but first some observations about the revised DDS.

⁵ For which Adam is also culpable by abdicating his proper God-given role!

⁶ Nor does 1 Tim 2:14 say, as the NIV translates, "she became a sinner," but that Eve was in a state of transgression when being deceived.

First, the DDS is, it seems, confused on this point, for a little later it seems to recognize that they were speaking as *prophets* after all, who should subordinate themselves to other prophets:

Rather, at Corinth the fact that those with prophetic messages are called to be subordinate to those who interpreted prophecies (1 Cor. 14:32) would suggest that the disruptive wives in the following verses are being asked to submit to the rulings of the worship leaders, in an attitude of due deference. (DDS Background Document, p. 7)

On the one hand “prophets, among whom women were included” are to be distinguished from “the disruptive wives.” On the other “the disruptive wives in the following verses are being asked to submit to the rulings of the worship leaders.” The latter being so (and this is nearer the truth), it becomes obvious that these wives/women are reprimanded and silenced for their *prophetic* contributions in the assembly. More on this below.

Second, this newest draft has abandoned the old DDS’s claims that 1 Cor 14:34–35 was about “husband shaming.”⁷ I—and perhaps others—had criticized DDS 1 for making this assertion without evidence, and it would seem that the baselessness of this claim has now been admitted by its deletion.

Yet the DDS persists with this distinction between “disruptive wives” and “the women who served as prophets” in its attempt to minimize the applicability of Paul’s commands. The DDS Background Document claims on p. 5:

The expression ‘their own husbands’ (1 Cor. 14:35) is reserved for the husband-wife relationship (1 Cor. 7:2; Eph. 5:22; Tit. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1), and, secondly, the wives were admonished to take up their questions with their husbands at home (1 Cor 14:35). Therefore, Paul cannot have been writing to women in general.

The premise is correct, but the conclusion (“Therefore, Paul *cannot have been* ...etc.”) simply doesn’t follow. On the contrary Paul *could* be (and *was*, as becomes obvious) addressing the same women in two different capacities in vv. 34–35: first as prophets “in church” (v. 34; cf. ἐν ἔκκλησίᾳ in v. 35b), then as household women (v. 35a; cf. ἐν οἴκῳ). We will address this point further momentarily, but for now observe the *non sequitur* of this “cannot” in the DDS argument. What is more, the summary verdict of 35b is hardly limitable to just these specific “disruptive” women, but is stated as a generality: “For shameful (αἰσχρὸν γάρ) it is for a woman to speak in church (ἐν ἔκκλησίᾳ),” and prompts the question, what kind of “speaking”?

To find the *textual* answer to this question and do justice to the matter, we must regard the whole text of 1 Cor 14:26–40.

In broad terms, yes, women spoke as prophets. Think of Pentecost (Acts 2:17) and the promised fulfilment of Joel 2:28 that “your sons and daughters will prophesy,” for example. Or even the baptism liturgy: “The Lord made the deaf hear and the dumb speak, therefore in his name I say, ‘Be opened, that you may hear and speak the word of God.’” So of course it should not surprise us that Jesus called women as disciples (he also said, “Let the little children come to me”), or that many places in Scripture can be cited where women tell the good news, as Women’s Ordination advocates continually remind us. This is precisely what *all* Christians are called to do in our

⁷ DDS 1, B. 9 read, “The loveless exercise of spiritual gifts and the husband-shaming speaking of wives prevented worship from being conducted decently and in good order and therefore from building up the church in love (14:1–36; see esp. 8:1).”

vocations. But each in his or her proper vocation! And the bible teaches about vocations too. That is the real issue here: whether women may be called to the office of pastor—that is, whether the vocation of the pastoral office properly extends to women, having God's blessing and mandate.

So yes, in broad terms women spoke as prophets then, and speak and share the word of God now. But there are many kinds of speaking and speaking contexts, and not even 1 Corinthians 14 talks about *one* kind of prophetic speaking, as though “prophecy” were something monolithic and no further distinctions applied. On the contrary, observe how Paul starts out his instructions in v. 26, as he describes directly what the Corinthians were doing at their gatherings:

“What then, brothers and sisters? When you congregate each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation...etc.”

Notice the startling omission in v. 26 given all the talk about prophecy in the subsequent verses: *it doesn't mention “prophecy”* (Gk: προφητεία), even though tongues and their interpretation—which he also specifically addresses—make the list! For Paul’s rhetorical purposes, offering “a psalm,” “a teaching,” “an interpreted tongue,” “a “revelation,” etc. (v. 26) *all* in some way count as speaking “prophecy” as the sharing of God’s word.

This varied list—and Paul’s addressing two of them, “tongues” and their “interpretation,” in vv. 27–28—raises an obvious question: from *what kind* of “prophetic” speaking does Paul silence the women? Suggestions of absolute silence from any kind of speaking are absurd in view of 1 Corinthians 11:2ff, where Paul qualifies *how* these wives ought to prophesy. Note that *there* in chapter 11 the women are clearly *both* “wives” and “prophesying!” So whence this idea—so unnatural to 1 Corinthians 11–14—that the women Paul silenced were just “disruptive wives” guilty of some other kind of disruptive speech, not *prophets* (DDS Background Document, p. 6)? Already, then, chapter 11 shows that this assertion in the DDS is implausible. Moreover, the way Paul makes his argument in chapter 14 also demonstrates that it is false and, rather, that Paul was addressing these women’s “weighing/judging” of the prophetic speech of *others*—the functional equivalent of “judging doctrine” or what we simply call, “doctrinal oversight” (cf. Augsburg Confession XXVIII).

Unlike the “disruptive wives” assertion, this has real textual basis. Going back to v. 29, Paul mandates *both* that no more than “two or three” prophets speak *and* that prophetic evaluation/judgment take place when he says, “and let the others weigh/sift/judge what is said” (Gk: καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι διακρινέτωσαν). In functional terms, the second of these commands entails the greater authority and is every bit as much commanded as the first command in v. 29 limiting the number of speakers to two or three. In the following verse, v. 30, the “first” speaker of a prophetic word must give the floor to another sitting down who “has a revelation about it” or, more literally, to whom “it is **revealed**” (Gk: ἐὰν δὲ ἄλλῳ ἀποκαλυφθῇ καθημένῳ). Following v. 29 as it does, “revealed” here refers to a judgement about what was said by the first “prophet,” so that this second prophet takes the floor in order to weigh the preceding speaker’s words.

The point is that *both* the “two or three” prophets *and* those who “weigh/sift/judge” (v. 29) and then speaking up (v. 30) are *prophets* in 1 Cor 14. This is made clear a couple verses later in 14:32: “the **spirits of prophets** subordinate themselves to **prophets**” (Gk: καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται). Prophets are on *both* sides of this “subordination equation.” At Corinth people of both sexes contribute to the sharing of God’s word, but some prophets also weigh/sift/judge what is said in the public assembly, e.g., whether the word is rightly applied or understood, etc. They are all speaking—or claiming to speak—*prophetically*, but not all speak in the same way.

Yet the DDS's claims that we must "distinguish between prophets, among whom women were included, and the disruptive wives who were to be silent at worship and raise their questions with their husbands in the privacy of the home." However, the distinction is a false one for several reasons. To recap briefly, the women were to subordinate themselves to prophets *like prophets* (as DDS admits). Yet they're just disruptive *wives* to be distinguished *from women prophets*? Moreover, as noted above, Paul earlier sought to qualify the *wives'* behaviour *when prophesying* in chapter 11. No sign of any such differentiation there!

On the contrary, Paul's admonitions in 14:34–35 address the women in *both capacities*. Their problematic behaviour stems from their speaking *as prophets* in public worship (v. 34; cf. ἐν ἔκκλησίᾳ in v. 35b) where they are now to be silent, whereupon he redirects their problematic speech to the home (ἐν οἴκῳ) in their capacity as "wives" (v. 35). The DDS agrees that the wives were "to be subordinate to those who interpreted prophecies," citing 1 Cor 14:32 in parenthesis, but it ignores the other obvious implication of v. 32; namely, that it is *the spirits of prophets* who subordinate themselves "to those who interpreted prophecies." It's in their speaking—or claiming to speak—as *prophets* that Paul calls them to subordinate themselves, not "disruptive wives." To unpack this further...

Notice that vv. 34–35 constitute Paul's *solution* to the problem at Corinth; that is, these verses do not directly *describe* the problem there (as v. 26 does to some extent)—a basic observation that is nonetheless usually overlooked. Nevertheless, Paul's solution—his commands and prohibitions in those verses—show that the *problem* was the women's deportment as prophets in the public assembly, and that Paul was forbidding women from publicly scrutinizing other prophets in church, and therefore weighing/sifting/judging what they had to say (Gk: διακρινω; cf. v. 29). The reasons are twofold.

1. By the command to "ask their own men at home" in v. 35, Paul *redirects* their interrogative⁸ questioning from the *public worship* context (Gk: ἐν ἔκκλησίᾳ) to the *home* (Gk: ἐν οἴκῳ); from addressing *other men* to addressing *their own men* (Gk: τοὺς ιδίους ἄνδρας) instead. The word order in the Greek (rarely if ever preserved in English translations) goes like this: "at home—their own men—let them interrogate" (Gk: ἐν οἴκῳ τοὺς ιδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν). "At home" and "their own men" are in emphatic position, showing the particular respects in which the women are to alter their behaviour. Since his solution in v. 35 is to redirect the women's speech to *their own men at home*, the presenting problem was that they were interrogating *other men in church*. They were speaking in their capacity as prophets.
2. The commands of v. 34—commands for silence and *subordination* in the public worship context—confirm this. Through the command, "let them be subordinate" (Gk: ὑποτασσέσθωσαν), Paul calls the women to subordinate themselves and their prophetic contributions to the prophets who weigh/sift/judge (Gk: διακρίνω in v. 29) and who therefore exercise doctrinal oversight. DDS 1 appeared to interpret "let them be subordinate" as Paul's way of correcting the women's "*specific refusal to be subordinate to the principle of orderly worship*" (DDS 1, p. 10). Here also the revised DDS has back-peddled, now claiming—correctly as noted above—that the women Paul was addressing were "to be subordinate to those who interpreted prophecies" (while at the same time trying to maintain that there was no "fixed" scheme" to the subordination of which Paul

⁸ This is not the usual word for "ask" in an innocent quest to find answers (Gk: ἐρωτάω), but a pointed, "directed" kind of questioning best translated "interrogate."

was speaking [DDS, p. 6], about which I'll say more below). Indeed, Paul had already made it clear what "be subordinate" means two verses earlier. The same verb appears in v. 32 discussed earlier, and for the first time in 1 Corinthians: "the spirits of prophets **subordinate themselves** to prophets" (Gk: καὶ πνεύματα προφητῶν προφήταις ὑποτάσσεται). Paul directly tells us to what—or rather *to whom*—the women are to be subordinate if they are to conduct themselves as true prophets do (and not false prophets): not some abstract principle of orderliness, but to other *prophets*. Nonetheless, the revised DDS fails to draw the obvious, textual conclusion that the women were therefore speaking as (insubordinate) *prophets* when Paul silenced them from their interrogative speech by which *they* were weighing/sifting/judging the other prophets. Positively, they were to subordinate themselves and their prophetic contributions to the prophets who weigh—as true prophets do. Negatively they were to "be quiet" (σιγάτωσαν) and it was prohibited for them "to speak" (οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται αὐταῖς λαλεῖν) but rather to direct their interrogations (ἐπερωτάτωσαν; see below) to their own men at home instead.

Accordingly there is a partial-truth in the Background document's claim on pages 6–7 that "the verb [ὑποτάσσομαι] suggests a voluntary subordination, not by compulsion and not according to a fixed scheme." On the one hand, the reflexive nature of the verb indeed indicates the women will subordinate *themselves*—that is, by their own self-denial rather than through coercion. But it does not follow that there is no "fixed scheme" in view (DDS, p. 6). On the contrary, as v. 32 shows and as explained above, the women are to subordinate themselves to the "weighing/sifting/judging" prophets—as *prophets*, not just "disruptive wives" according to some general concept of orderliness. Sexual differentiation is, rather, core to Paul's ordering of the *prophetic ministry* at Corinth. By contrast, the paper's assertion that this was a matter of "due deference" and a general sense of orderliness is simply special pleading.

All this squares exactly with the problem implied by Paul's solution in v. 35: that the women's prohibited speech has to do with *other men* in the congregation. The women's problematic behaviour is not in the first instance about their conduct toward their husbands but toward male prophets in the congregation whom the women were publicly scrutinizing, and thus exercising the kind of weighing/sifting/judging that Paul commands take place earlier in v. 29. This Paul says "is not permitted" (οὐ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπεται; a divine passive). When in v. 35 Paul does address the women in their capacity as wives, he would have them redirect their interrogations away from other prophets to the private sphere, telling them to interrogate their own men/husbands at home instead.

The problem may have manifested itself locally at Corinth, but Paul's appeal to the law, ecumenical practice, shame (v. 35; cf. Gen 2:25; 3:7, 10), and the Lord's command all demonstrate that he is not saying these things because he is worried about purely cultural norms or perceptions and possible hindrances to the Gospel in the Corinthian context, as the DDS claims despite Paul's stated reasons for the commands. Indeed, this is the will of the Spirit, who orders the body "as he wills" (καθὼς βούλεται in 1 Cor 12:11 et al.), so that anyone who claims to be a "prophet" (προφήτης) or "spiritual" (πνευματικός) cannot but recognize what Paul writes as a

command of the Lord (1 Cor 14:37). Much more could be said on this, but we'll leave it at that here since I've written on it more extensively elsewhere, as have others.⁹

4. An “overriding missionary imperative” that trumps all?

The DDS suggests that Paul's commands were “motivated by his overriding missionary imperative, to ‘become all things to all people, so that [he] might by all means save some’ (1 Cor. 9:22).” Where and how one attributes such “motivation” to the Apostle needs to be guided by context, however, and nowhere is the “be all things to all people” on the radar in the rhetorical unit of 1 Cor 12–14.

5. 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 do not address the ordination issue?

Paragraph 4 cited above makes the remarkable claim that “[s]ince 1 Timothy 2:11–14 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b–37 do not specifically address the issue of ordination, they cannot be used to support the exclusion of women from the pastoral office.” But this is to sidestep the issue, which is whether women may exercise the pastoral office. On the contrary, both texts do address a core responsibility of the pastoral office: public teaching in the worship assembly, hence the public exercise of the Keys. “Ordination” denotes the rite by which this office is bestowed on an individual. It should be obvious that the presence or absence of the word “ordination” in these texts is irrelevant to their relevance in the matter.

Some Summary Remarks

The revised DDS and Background document applies a hermeneutic or interpretive approach that rejects the plain sense of these key biblical texts through what is, at base, an appeal to cultural relativism. In the process, it calls “cultural” or merely “human tradition” what the Apostle plainly sets forth as God's creative order and its transgression in the fall as revealed in God's Word. Yet the DDS explains away this and related apostolic commands, and second-guesses Paul's actual words by claiming that his “real” intention was only to avoid cultural offence rather than speak of theological realities.

It might be tempting for those wishing to hitch their theological wagon to paragraph 4 to appeal to paragraph 3 from “A Theological Basis for Why the Ordination of Women and Men Need Not be Church Divisive,” where it reads, “But the ongoing disagreement about the interpretation and application of the two texts that have been at the centre of the LCA debate (1 Cor 14:33b-36; 1 Tim 2:11-15) is a matter of *exegetical opinion*, does not affect such a key church teaching, and is therefore not church divisive” (italics added). A few remarks must be made here.

First, regarding “exegetical opinion.” I once had a student (California, not ALC!) who responded to some feedback I'd given on an analytical essay by saying, “that's my opinion, and I didn't know opinions could be wrong.” Needless to say his grade did not improve any. Opinions can be wrong, because they can be baseless or misinformed. And such is the case in DDS §4 and the Background document.

⁹ For a fuller treatment of these and other exegetical questions in 1 Cor 14 see my article, “σιγάω, λαλέω, and ὑποτάσσω in 1 Corinthians 14:34 in their Literary and Rhetorical Context.”

Second, it is jumping the gun to lump the Church's historical understanding of the strong biblical mandates and prohibitions found in 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 in the "differing exegetical opinions" basket, as though all exegeses of the text were finally arbitrary, or equally acceptable or dispensable. The Church needs to look at the "exegetical opinions" on offer and discern which position is supported by the *text* and allows these texts to speak, on the one hand, and which position goes *against the grain* of the texts and second-guesses them. The DDS's dependence on baseless assertions, qualifications to Paul's words, and non-textual historical reconstruction should make this task straightforward.

Third, despite protests to the contrary, this issue does impact core teachings of the Church because theology and worship cannot be so neatly separated. The doctrine of the Trinity is no abstract mental construction. Rather, the Holy Triune God is a Personal God who makes himself present among us liturgically (i.e., in worship) through the pastoral office *by which God blesses, absolves, speaks his authoritative word of life to his people, etc.* Indeed, in worship pastors stand "in the person of Christ" (*in persona Christi*) when they bless, absolve, preach, teach, and preside at the Lord's Supper. But God is Father, not mother (Eph 3:15). Christ is Husband to his Bride the Church, not a second bride (Eph 5:31-32). In the Lord's Supper, the foretaste of the wedding feast to come, Christ our Divine Husband hosts his Bride the Church as we eat his body and drink his blood (Rev 19:6-9; 21:2). In the absolution, the forgiveness that pastors speak is the *Father's* forgiveness (John 20:21-23). To say, then, that maleness or femaleness are matters of indifference when it comes to the pastoral office flies in the face of these central realities of the life of the Church.¹⁰ It is not a question of women not being able to "do the job," because the pastor is not a mere functionary who does a list of "jobs." On the contrary, it is an *office*, a *vocation*, filled by a living, breathing man who represents Christ as Husband to the church, and as representative of the Father in the Divine Service.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹⁰ See Adam D. Hensley, "The "Metaphor" of Marriage in the Bible" (on the OWL website) for a more extensive treatment of these issues.