

21.2 PETITION OF PROTEST: GK KRUGERSDORP CONCERNING THE DECISION OF SYNOD 2009 ABOUT “ISSUES CONCERNING WOMAN” (Artt 33, 35, 245)

- A. Dr WC Vergeer tables the Petition of Protest.
- B. **Decision:** Further handling of the matter awaits decision iro Report Deputies Unity in Diversity (21.1).
- C. **Decision:** Refer to Special Synod (See 21.1 Report Deputies Unity in Diversity art 245 : All the relevant Petitions of Protest deal with women in the particular service. In light of the Synod’s decision that the matter of women in the particular service is a significant issue, it is recommended that the Petitions of Protest be referred to the Special Synod.

D. PETITION OF PROTEST

1. Introduction

The Reformed Church Krugersdorp, in pursuance of its decision taken on 24 June 2014, herewith submits the under mentioned Petition, for your consideration. It is our hope and prayer that you will perceive the merits of the objections and uphold the petition.

2. Decision against which objection is made

“The meeting decides according to the approved recommendation, pt 4.2, that women may not act in the particular office of minister and elder” (Acta 2009:667).

3. Background

- 3.1 The GK Krugersdorp also in 2012 put a Petition before the Synod, concerning the same (above mentioned) decision. The grounds of objection were: (a) Binding of conscience, (b) Insufficient reckoning with the evidence of Scripture, (c) Insufficient reckoning with the evidence of the Early Christian Church and (d) Contradicting ecclesiastical practice and exegesis.
- 3.2 The Synod however did not address our petition in 2012, but referred is to a Deputation to report on it in 2015 (Acta 2012:353).
- 3.3 Further reflection since then on the (above mentioned) decision of Synod 2009 revealed new grounds for objection. These new objections are against the exegesis (*Women not in instructing and ruling ministries*) in the Report before Synod 2009 (Acta 2009:611-664, Right hand column). After consideration we came to the conviction that this exegesis on key issues cannot pass the test of Reformed scientific exegesis, and that it thus amounts to (according to the report’s own definition) “inadmissible” and “intolerable” exegesis (Acta 2009:604).
- 3.4 Because Synod 2009 took its decision (that women should not serve in the office of minister and elder) “in the light of the Report” (Acta 2009:669) the decision (if the exegesis contained in the Report on key issues indeed is to be found “inadmissible” or “intolerable”) cannot be maintained.
- 3.5 Therefore we now put these new objections before the Synod for due consideration.

4. First ground of objection: The exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:12 and the resulting inferences (which occupy a central place in the whole Report and its final application) is in conflict with what is allowed according to Greek grammar and the witness of the text

- 4.1 The Report before the Synod (on the basis of an identified chiasm in 1 Timothy 2:12) finds: “*It therefore seems that Paul describes what women will do if they would give instruction in the congregation, namely that they will exercise authority over men, with the words οὐδέ ἀυθεντεῖν ἀνδρός.*”

It is therefore clear that Paul in 1 Timothy 2 does not place a complete prohibition on the exercise of authority by women in the special ministries. In this part women are specifically prohibited from exercising authority by ministering the Word” (Acta 2009:641). This finding is repeated in the final conclusion (Acta 2009:650) and application (Acta 2009:651) of the exegesis (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*) in the Report.

- 4.2 According to this exegesis therefore, a subordinate, explanatory (adverbial) function is (in 1 Timothy 2:12) allocated to διδάσκειν (to teach) in respect of αὐθεντεῖν (to exercise authority) (“*The instructions in 1 Timothy 2 regarding women in the ministry has specific relevance for ministering authority by ministering the Word and not for exercising authority in general.*”)(Acta 2009:651).
- 4.3 Extensive research on the use of the οὐκ - οὐδέ (“not” - “and [also] not”) construction in the Greek language (as used in Verse 12), in the whole *Corpus Graeca* (all the known Greek texts [in Scripture and all the available sources from the time of the NT]) in which all of the occurrences of this construction was studied, revealed no instance where one of the two concepts in this construct was subordinate to the other. Οὐδέ (“and [also] not”) consequently and without exception always functions as a coordinate conjunction in the Greek language (Köstenberger, 1995:81-103). Verse 12 (literally translated with: “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man...”) can therefore not legally be translated as that women by teaching are busy exercising authority over men. According to the grammatically correct understanding of this part of Scripture both activities (teaching as well as exercising authority) are independently and separately totally prohibited by Paul, and not just exercising authority by means of preaching as is alleged (Acta 2009:641-643).
- 4.4 The exegesis on 1 Timothy 2:12 before the Synod also (wrongly) allocates different values to the infinitives αὐθεντεῖν (“to exercise authority”) and διδάσκειν (“to teach”) when it alleges that “***It is therefore clear***” that 1 Timothy 2 does not contain a complete prohibition on the exercising of authority by women, but only a prohibition on the exercising of authority by preaching the word of God (Acta 2009:641-643). According to this, διδάσκειν (teaching/preaching by women) is interpreted as not allowed, while the infinitive αὐθεντεῖν (the exercise of authority by women) is interpreted as allowable (except when it happens through preaching). According to the above mentioned study (by Köstenberger) it however is impossible for two concepts/actions in an οὐκ - οὐδέ (“not” - “and [also] not”) construction to respectively have an inherent negative and positive value. Either the two concepts/activities have (according to the intention of the author) an inherent negative value, or the two concepts/activities have (according to the intention of the author) a positive value (Köstenberger, 2005:53-84).

5. Second ground of objection: The exhortations to women in 1 Timothy 2:9-15 are wrongly seen as exhortations that focus on: “at every ministry”

- 5.1 The exegesis before the Synod (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*) maintains that the exhortations in 1 Timothy 2:9-15 apply to “*behaviour during congregational gathering*” and states: “*In 1 Timothy 2:8-15 Paul gives a clear indication of how the congregation’s behaviour should be orderly organised “in every place”. This is qualified in verse 8 as every place where there is prayer. This would therefore indicate all occasions when the congregation comes together to pray and to worship (Douma). In current-day terminology: at every ministry (Afrikaans: “by elke erediens” = “at every worship service”)* (Acta 2009:640). This finding unquestionably takes a central place in the conclusions and recommendations of the Report (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*):

- “It is clear that the instructions in 1 Timothy 2 regarding the women in the ministry has relevance for the ministering of authority through ministering the Word, and not for the ministering of authority in general...” (Acta 2009:662.671). If these findings (that the exhortations apply to worship service) are invalid, then the conclusions and applications of the Report (Acta 2009:650-651) are also illicit.
- 5.2 The words “samekoms” and “in die erediens” (as in the 1983-Afrikaanse Translation of 1 Timothy 2:8 and 11) however do not occur in the Greek text, but are insertions based on the interpretation of the translators. The 1933/53-Afrikaans translation, which is a literal translation, omits these words.
 - 5.3 The extended pericope (1 Tim 2:1-3:16) is embraced by an *inclusio* in which the focus is on the salvation of all people in society (1 Tim 2:1 [“prayers be made “for all men”]; 1 Tim 3:15-16 [“preached unto the Gentiles” en “believed in the world”]). Society (and not the worship service) therefore is the focus of this thought unit.
 - 5.4 The οὖν (therefore) in 2:8 with which the exhortation to men and women are introduced, suggest a deductive relation with the preceding part in which a call is made for prayer for all men and those in authority that we may lead “a quiet and peaceable life” (in society) (1 Tim 2:1-2). Here life in general society, and not the worship service, is directly in focus.
 - 5.5 The original Greek text in its exhortations to men (1 Tim 2:8) merely refers to “every place” (ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ) and not to “at every ministry/worship service”.
 - 5.5.1 Paul uses the expression ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ (“in every place”) only at three other occasions in the New Testament. Each time it has a general and non-cultic (worship service) meaning: “in every place” (1 Cor 1:2), “in every place” (2 Cor 2:14) en “in every place” (1 Thess 1:8).
 - 5.5.2 The mere reference to “prayer” in the exhortations to men cannot on its own lead to the inference that worship services are at issue. The New Testament gives account of prayer at many different places: Amongst others street corners (Matt 6:5), mountains (Luc 6:12), a garden (Marc 14:32), under a fig tree (Marc 11:24), in a home (Acts 9:11), upon a housetop (Acts 10:9), in a closet (Matt 6:6), in prison (Acts 16:25). The same Paul that speaks here, also calls on believers to “pray without ceasing” (thus always and everywhere) (προσεύχομαι) (1 Thess 5:17).
 - 5.5.3 Further the exhortation in 1 Timothy 2:8 that men should pray “without wrath and doubting” also is an indication that conduct in general society (where wrath and doubting occur) and not especially the worship service – is here in focus.
 - 5.6 None of the exhortations to women in 2:9-13 have on their own a specific cultic (worship service) aim or focus.
 - 5.6.1 Concerning the exhortations about women’s clothing and “adornment” (1 Tim 2:9) – it is highly improbable that these rules were only intended for the congregational gatherings and that women outside of the worship service could dress and adorn as they wish.
 - 5.6.2 The exhortation to do “good works” (1 Tim 2:10) is obviously directed at life outside (before and after) worship service, as women are not only called to do good deeds during congregational gatherings.
 - 5.6.3 Although the exhortations to women not to teach (διδάσκειν) (1 Tim 2:11) or to educate (μανθανέτω) (1 Tim 2:12), indeed (in The New Testament) indicate authoritative instruction in matters of faith/religion, this instruction does not take place only in worship services. Louw & Nida (1989:I:413) define these concepts as: “to provide instruction in a formal or informal setting”. Paul, for instance, in Rome “teaches” (διδάσκων) people from home (Acts 28:31), while a widow’s children, according to 1 Timothy 5:4 are instructed to “learn” (at home) (μανθανέτω) to be godly towards their own home.

- 5.6.4 Also Paul's prohibition on the exercise of authority (αὐθεντεῖν) by women (1 Tim 2:12) cannot be directly applied to worship services. The concept αὐθεντεῖν is a *hapax legomenon* (only occurrence) in the New Testament and is used in sources outside the Bible for the exercise of authority in a wide variety of contexts (Baldwin, 2005:39-52).
- 5.7 The motivations Paul provides for these exhortations (1 Tim 2:13-15) and on which the exhortations to women are based, relate to the whole life of women and not specifically to their role in congregational gatherings.
- 5.7.1 The first motivation is the order of creation (1 Tim 2:13). However when the order of creation is deemed to be normative and defining for the conduct of woman towards men, the exhortations based on them cannot be valid only for cultic activities (worship services). They then should apply to the total life of women on earth, because women were not only for the sake of worship services created after Adam.
- 5.7.2 The second motivation is the fact that Eve was misguided and has transgressed (1 Tim 2:14). Again this conduct of Eve does not only affect cultic activities (worship services). If the misguidance of Eve and her transgression has defining implications for the position of women and their conduct towards men, the exhortations based on this are valid for woman's total life on earth.
- 5.7.3 The third motivation ("childbirth" [τεκνογονία] and the continuance in faith, love and holiness (1 Tim 2:15) also don't indicate issues that apply only to worship services.
- 5.8 None of the further requirements for elders and deacons in the extended pericope (1 Tim 2:1–3:16) has a specific cultic (worship service) focus. These requirements are not at all about what an elder or deacon should be able to do in a worship service, but are clearly about the type of person they should be (in general society). Also in this instance society is the focus of the exhortations Paul gives.
- 6. Third ground of objection: The thought structure analysis of 1 Corinthians 14:29-38 does not comply with the demands of valid Reformed exegesis and it is wrongly awarded a heuristic function in the exegesis**
- 6.1 According to the self defined hermeneutic principles for valid Reformed exegesis, the guidelines of Coetzee (1988) for the analysis of thought structures is endorsed by the Report (Acta 2009:608) and it is stated that it is necessary "to make a clear distinction between what is actually written in the text and the reader's interpretation of it" (Acta 2009:603). The same heuristic (= "exploratory" or "explanatory") value as to Scripture itself cannot be allocated to an inference from an analysis of a thought structure (which as explanation already is the product of interpretation); especially not when it is presented as the only proof for a specific finding (as is the case in the Report before the Synod).
- 6.2 A heuristic function however is indeed awarded to the thought structure analysis of 1 Corinthians 14:29-38 by the exegesis before the Synod (*Woman not in instructing and ruling ministries*) in that the thought structure analysis is the only proof provided in the Report for the inference that the exhortation to be silent in 1 Corinthians 14:24 means that women "**should keep quiet during the evaluation of prophecies**" (Acta 2009:635). This finding is the basis for the exegesis, conclusion and application of the whole report concerning 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 (Acta 2009:637-638).
- 6.3 On the following grounds the tenability of the identified thought structure analysis is doubtful:
- 6.3.1 The given thought structure analysis ignores clear markers and grammatical pointers in the text (Coetzee, 1988:27-29) that suggest a different arrangement and indicate that this pericope is not all about prophecy:

- 6.3.1.1 The exhortation to be silent occurs three times in this pericope, each time addressing different issues/situations (σιγάτω ["be silent"] [14:28]; σιγάτω ["be silent"] [14:30]; σιγάτωσαν ["be silent"] [14:34].
- 6.3.1.2 Three conditional clauses in each case typify the three different situations that are addressed (ἐὰν δὲ ["but if"] [14:28]; ἐὰν δὲ ["if"] [14:30]; εἰ δέ ["and if"] [14:35]).
- 6.3.1.3 The introduction in the text of the necessity of order in 14:33a (and the repetition thereof in 14:40) may indicate that a specific line of thought has been completed and that a new theme (question during gatherings) is now addressed.
- 6.3.2 The *inclusio* (embracement) which the exegesis before the Synod indicates (Acta 2009:635), does not correspond with the text because the concept "order" is not repeated in 14:26. Verse 26 does contain a call to "up building" which rather is a connection to the previous pericope. (Compare the extensive use of the concept "up building" in 14:1,3,4,5,12,17 and 26, but not again after 14:26.)
- 6.3.3 The interpretation that 14:36 is part of 14:33b-35 (and thus is part of the exhortation to women to be silent when prophecies are evaluated) is not supported by any of the (consulted) commentaries and is doubtful on grammatical grounds. The concept "only" in the expression "only to you" (εἰς ὑμᾶς μόνους) in 14:36 is masculine plural which indicates that the audience that Paul addresses rather is male or of mixed gender, and that his admonishment concerns all his exhortations so far and not only the prohibition of women to ask questions during gatherings.
- 6.4 The thought structure analysis therefore wrongly interprets the pericope (14:29-38) as that it only concerns prophecies and the adjudication thereof. Even from the content it is clear that 14:27-28 is about the use of languages/tongues (γλώσση τις λαλεῖ). Verse 29-33a deals with the conduct of prophets and is introduced by προφηῆται δὲ, ("but the prophets") while 14:33b-35 is about the asking of questions if someone wants to get to know something (εἰ δέ τι μαθεῖν θέλουσιν). These three issues should (in contrast to the Report before the Synod) be distinguished on the grounds of the identified structural markers (6.3.1) in the pericope, as well as for the following reasons:
- 6.4.1 Prophecy and speaking in tongues were earlier in the chapter clearly differentiated by Paul and were specified as different gifts of the Spirit which each have their own place and order (1 Cor 14:3-4). However, unscientifically, 14:27-28 (which deals with the speaking in tongues) is omitted in the thought structure analysis of the Report.
- 6.4.2 The introductory comment (14:26) that during the gatherings of the congregation "every one" usually has a contribution, introduces a variety of contributions (and not only prophecy) and clearly creates a context in which the question is: When can you make your contribution and when should you rather remain silent. Consequently Paul addresses three such situations (speaking in tongues [14:27-28], prophecy [14:29-33a] and the opportunity to ask questions [33b-35]).
- 6.4.3 The asking of questions (to prophets) during worship services or the discussion of prophecies (in distinction of the prophecies themselves) was a known practice in Jewish and Hellenistic culture of the first century (Boring, 1992:496) and the above proposed separation between the two is therefore also cultural-historically justifiable.
- 6.5 The fact that the exhortations to be silent in 14:28 (to people speaking in tongues) and in 14:30 (to prophets who should speak in turn) in the context of this pericope cannot be seen as absolute (as if these persons may never speak), implies that it is exegetical inconsequent to find (as in the exegesis before the Synod) that the exhortation to women to be silent in the gatherings of the congregation (14:34) is intended to be absolute (Acta 2009:633, 637-638). It is all the more credible that as specific type of silence under specific circumstances (the asking of questions at a meeting) here is at issue.

7. Fourth ground of objection: The thought structure analysis of 1 Timothy 2:11-12 does not comply with the demands of valid Reformed exegesis and it is wrongly awarded a heuristic function in the exegesis

- 7.1 According to the self defined hermeneutical principles for valid Reformed exegesis in the Report before the Synod “it is necessary to make a clear distinction between what is actually written in the text and the reader’s interpretation of it” (Acta 2009:603). The same heuristic (= “exploratory” or “explanatory”) value as to Scripture itself cannot be allocated to an inference from an analysis of a thought structure (which as explanation already is the product of interpretation); especially not when it is presented as the only proof for a specific finding (as is the case in the Report before the Synod).
- 7.2 The exegesis before the Synod, in its explanation of 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and the coherence between διδάσκειν (“to teach”) and αὐθεντεῖν (“to exercise authority”), however is indeed very strongly (almost exclusively) based on a **semi-chiastic (cross-over) pattern** which is identified in the text (Acta 2009:641) and in doing so allocates an important heuristic function to it. Solely from this identified thought structure it is concluded: “*It therefore seems that Paul describes what women will do if they would give instruction in the congregation, namely that they will exercise authority over men, with the words οὐδέ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός. It is therefore clear that Paul in 1 Timothy 2 does not place a complete prohibition on the exercise of authority by women in the special ministries. In this part women are specifically prohibited from exercising authority by ministering the Word*” (Acta 2009:641-642). This conclusion is central to the report (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*) and is maintained throughout (also in the final conclusion and application) (Acta 2009:650, 651).
- 7.3 It is common knowledge that the existence of a chiastic pattern in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is seriously questioned. Thomas Schreiner (a staunch opponent of women in office) says: “I question whether there is a chiasm here, because then the idea of exercising authority should have preceded teaching” (2005:216). Amongst those who do identify a chiastic pattern in 2:11-12, there is no consensus on the scope or arrangement of the different elements of the chiasm. (For instance compare Barnett [1989:228-229], Fung [1987:336, Footnote 186], Harris [1990:340], Moo [1980:64] and Witherington [1988:120] who all differ at this point).
- 7.4 The accepted methodological steps for the analysis of a thought structure are also not followed in the identification of the semi-chiastic (cross-over) pattern. According to Coetzee (1988:27) the first step in the analysis of a thought structure is rewriting the text in such a way that only one verbal phrase occurs in each line. Evidently this step was not followed in the exegesis before the Synod as γυνή ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ (women in silence) and ἐν πᾶσιν ὑποταγῆ (in all submission), which function as independent elements in the identified chiasm (Acta 2009:641), are not verbal phrases.
- 7.5 The interpretation given by the exegesis in the report (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*) furthermore also does not agree with the schematic portrayal of the thought structure that was identified. While the chiastic pattern that was identified in 2:11-12 schematically connects b (receive teaching) to b (not to teach) and c (submission) to c (not to take a position of authority), the accompanying explanation (inference and interpretation) of the structure takes its point of departure from a different connection between these elements, namely a connection between a first b-c pattern (receiving teaching in submission) and a second b-c pattern (not to teach and not to take a position of authority) which is not indicated schematically (Acta 2009:641-643). The schematic structure that is provided as proof does therefore in no way support the accompanying explanation. The implication is that the explanation and its conclusions (which also play a key role in the final conclusions of the Report) are in fact not proven.

8. Fifth ground of objection: The exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:13-15 wrongly identifies a revelation historical line, conflicting with an earlier approved finding of a Synod

- 8.1 The exegesis before the Synod alleges (repetitively) that the reference to the creation order and the fall in 1 Timothy 2:13-14 constitute a *revelational historical line* (Acta 2009:642).
- 8.2 According to an acknowledged definition revelation history is: “the continuation and development of the revelation of God and his actions in history” (Janse van Rensburg, 2011:203). In this regard revelation history has also been typified as: “God’s special actions towards the salvation of man in Christ and the unfolding of his plan in history that is characterized by continued growth towards a future fulfilment” (Helberg, 1985:9-12). Du Toit (1974:45) uses the striking image of a rose bud which opens to describe revelation history. The pronouncement of a certain factual order in creation and fall in Genesis and 1 Timothy 2:13-14 by the exegesis before the Synod can however (within the context of the above mentioned definitions) not be seen as a revelation historical line.
- 8.2.1 There is no progress or development in the “line” which is indicated between Genesis 2-3 and 1 Timothy 2. The rose bud has not opened. The Christological fulfilment and unfolding of God’s plan in the salvation of men in no way is addressed in the “line” which is identified by the exegesis before the Synod (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*). According to the exegesis before the Synod there was no development in this respect.
- 8.2.2 A different revelation historical line was identified by an earlier Synod and was indeed approved by that Synod. In accordance with this it was acknowledged: “In Christ a new dispensation dawns for the saved women and the Lord fulfils his original intention with man and women by restoring the image of God in man” (Acta, 1988:519).
- 8.2.3 The elevation of a certain order in creation and fall to a “revelation historical line” by the exegesis before the Synod does not give account of the “new dispensation” that has dawned for women and therefore in essence opposes the revelation historical line which was identified and approved by Synod 1988.
- 8.2.4 If the order of creation and fall are indeed elevated to a revelation historical line (as by the exegesis before the Synod) the implications thereof also cannot (selectively) be limited to worship services, but indeed affect the revelation of God for the total life and conduct of women in church and society. The serious and essential unbiblical practical implications of this is evident.

9. Sixth ground of objection: The exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:13-15 which was put before the Synod (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*) is atomistic and does not take the genre of the passage into account

- 9.1 The exegesis before the Synod does not treat the thought unit which contains the motivation for the exhortations Paul gives (1 Tim 2:13-15) as a unit, but selects in its arguments in an atomistic way only the references to the Old Testament creation (1 Tim 2:13) and fall (1 Tim 2:14) of women. The reference to the New Testament salvation (“saving”) in 2:15, which is an inherent part of the thought unit, and which represents a specific contrast (σωθήσεται δὲ) by opening up perspectives on a new dispensation (in Christ) for women, is ignored by the exegesis before the Synod (Acta, 2009:642-643).
- 9.2 This is the case because (amongst other factors) the exegesis before the Synod (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*) interprets 1 Timothy 2:13-15 *de facto* as prose, while these verses indeed contain a typology, which should be understood typological.

- 9.2.1 It should not be seen as strange that Paul (as qualified Rabbi) used typology. He does this when he refers to Adam as type of Christ (Rom 5:12-21) and also when he refers to women as a type of the church (Eph 5:21-33).
- 9.2.2 Even on face value it is evident that Paul in 1 Timothy 2:13-15 uses Adam and Eve as types for believing men and women. It can also not be excluded that a further (partial or full) typological indication of Christ (Adam) and the church (Eve) are present in these verses.
- 9.2.3 In differentiation from prose, which should be interpreted ontological, typology should be interpreted typological. This means that with an ontological interpretation essential reality is in focus, while in a typological interpretation a different (indicated or future) reality is in focus. The *futurum* σωθήσεται (“will be saved”) in 2:15 understandably does not find a place in the ontological interpretation of the exegesis before the Synod, while it indeed will have a place in a typological interpretation as an indicated future reality (in which women/the church//Eve is saved by the “childbirth” [of Jesus Christ]; a reality in which she then perseveres with faith, love and holiness).

10. Seventh ground of objection: The exegesis does not read 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 in its cultural historic context

- 10.1 According to the self defined hermeneutical principles in the report before the Synod, valid and allowable exegesis should interpret a specific part of Scripture from within its cultural historic context (Acta 2009:606) and should apply it while taking the present context into account (Acta 2009:607). The exegesis before the 2009 Synod (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*) however makes a direct transition from the “congregational gatherings” in Corinth to present day worship services, without taking the substantial differences between these two context into account¹.
- 10.2 The exegesis before the Synod states: “*The so-called “instruction of silence” of 1 Corinthians 14:34 is clearly related to behaviour during congregational gatherings*” (Acta 2009:633) and makes the following conclusion: “*This means that women may not act as ministers during congregational gatherings by amongst other things praying or preaching. This explanation that is underwritten widely in reformed circles holds that female members may not take the lead in ministries by either praying or preaching.*” (Acta 2009:633).
- 10.3 This conclusion and application can be questioned for the following reasons:
 - 10.3.1 The first century “congregational gatherings” had various elements which are not part of the present day worship services (Barnard, 1981:105-165):
 - 10.3.1.1 The congregations when coming together ate and drank wine on an informal basis (1 Cor 11:17-22).
 - 10.3.1.2 Spontaneous actions/contributions by participators in these gathering were allowed (1 Cor 14:26).
 - 10.3.1.3 Dialogical sermons/judging of prophecies (with questions and deliberation) took place during these meetings of the congregation (1 Cor 14:29).
 - 10.3.1.4 Election/assignment/sending out of office bearers took place during these meetings of the congregation (Acts 15:22).
 - 10.3.2 The prophecies which are mentioned in 1 Corinthians do also not today occur as a liturgical element in the Reformed worship services, and cannot immediately be equated with preaching today. (Prophecy is indeed defined by the report itself as reporting “a revelation made to that particular person” [Acta 2009:632]. Present day preaching has a closer connection to “teaching” which in the report is defined as: “the preaching based on the word of God” [Acta 2009:632].)

¹ The difference between congregational gatherings in those times and present day worship services are acknowledged (Acta 2009:637 but are not taken into account in the exegesis.

10.3.3 The evaluation/discussion of prophecies mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14, therefore today is in no way (as liturgical element) part of the Reformed worship service or gatherings of the congregation, and it is not valid/admissible to directly (exactly) apply these exhortations to present day preaching as is done in the report before the Synod (Acta 2009:633).

11. Eighth ground of objection: The exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 in an illicit way inserts the idea of “non-official” prophecies into the text

11.1 In its essence Reformed exegesis is “exposition” of Scripture and one should guard against illicitly inserting personal ideas into the text.

11.2 The exegesis before the Synod (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*) in its attempt to harmonize 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 14 states: “*This explanation does not exclude the possibility that women prophesied regarding revelations that they received, spontaneously and non-officially in the meetings*” (Acta 2009:633). The differentiation between “official/ non-official” prophecies is also mentioned in the rest of the report (Acta, 2009:634).

11.3 For the following reasons the description of the prophecies by women as “non-official” should be regarded as inadmissible exegesis:

11.3.1 Nowhere in 1 Corinthians 11:5,13 or 1 Corinthians 14:29-35 (or in the rest of Scripture) it is indicated that prophecies by women are seen as less “official” than prophecies by men.

11.3.2 The precedence prophecies should enjoy in the formal gatherings of the congregation and the good order thereof is clearly accentuated by Paul (1 Cor 14:1,5, 29-33). In the context of the pericope no prophecy has an “non-official” character.

11.3.3 Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:6 on the same level (equally official) deals with “knowledge” (γνώσει), “teaching” (διδασκῆ) and “revelation” (ἀποκαλύψει), while “teaching” (διδασκῆν) and “revelation” (ἀποκάλυψιν) in 1 Corinthians 14:26 in their turn are dealt with on the same level as “a psalm” (ψαλμὸν), “a tongue” (γλῶσσαν) or “an interpretation” (ἐρμηνείαν) thereof.

11.3.4 The fact that the above mentioned contributions (including revelation and teaching) according to 1 Corinthians 14:26 can come from “each one” (ἕκαστος) also speaks against the idea that teaching in any way was more official than prophesying.

12. Ninth ground of objection: The standpoint that the exhortation to be silent in 1 Corinthians 14 refers to the judging of prophecies by women, is exegetically untenable

12.1 The exegesis before the Synod (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*) states: “*However, it seems that the “instruction to silence” of 1 Cor 14:34 also includes the evaluation of prophecies*” (Acta 2009:634) and: “*everyone can prophesy, but only certain ones may evaluate*” (Acta 2009:635).

12.2 This interpretation is in conflict with 14:29 which indicates that those who should evaluate the prophecies are “the other” (οἱ ἄλλοι). There are strong indications that this “the other” should be understood as “everyone” or “the rest of the congregation”:

12.2.1 “The other” (οἱ ἄλλοι) in 14:29 links with Paul’s threefold use of the inclusive concept “all” (πάντες) in 14:31. He assures the congregation that all may prophesize so that all may learn and all may be comforted. He also in 14:1,5 encourages all to prophesize and in 14:24 envisages a situation in which some unbeliever or one not instructed comes and finds that all prophesize. In such a rhetorical situation “the other” clearly is intended as “the rest of the congregation” (those not prophesying at that stage).

12.2.2 In 14:37 Paul also invites “anyone” (τις) (who thinks to be a prophet or a spiritual one) to evaluate what he writes.

- 12.2.3 The exhortation to test prophecies in 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21 is part of a general instruction addressed to the whole congregation.
- 12.2.4 Also in 1 John 4:1 the exhortation to “try” spirits/prophecies is directed at “the beloved”.
- 12.2.5 No other place in Scripture teaches that the adjudication of prophecies is an exclusive function of the church council (elders) as is stated by the exegesis before the Synod (Acta 2009:637).

13. Tenth ground of objection: The exegesis on 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 wrongly and in an inconsequent way teaches the universal headship of all men over all women

- 13.1 The exegesis before the Synod (*Women not teaching and governance ministry*) states in its exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40: “*At congregational gatherings women, as a result of the submission that they owe to their husbands, are not permitted to speak but should keep silent*” (Acta 2009:633). Clearly it is found that the submission of the married women to her own man here is at issue.
- 13.2 In the summarising formulation of the exegesis this however is changed to: “*God gave the female members in the church a definite instruction to submission, namely that she should acknowledge {her husband’s headship}*” (Acta 2009:637) (*The words “her husband’s headship” however is a wrong translation of the original Afrikaans “die man se hoofskap” [Acta 2009:637] which should rather be translated by “the headship of men”. The objection is to the original Afrikaans version.) Also in the final conclusion and application of the exegesis mention is made of “female members” and “women” in general (Acta 2009:637-638).*
- 13.3 The shift which is evident in the above mentioned pronouncements (from submission to “her man” – to submission to “all men”) is an fundamental change which cannot be motivated from the given passage of Scripture (1 Cor 14:26-40).
- 13.4 The universal headship of all men over all women is also nowhere taught in Scripture (Acta 2009:631).
- 13.5 If the “order of creation” is used to motivate the headship of all men over all women (as is the case in the exegesis of 1 Tim 2:8-15 [Acta 2009:642]) the inevitable (and unbiblical) implication is that women (on account of the way they were created) should be submissive to (even unbelieving) men. Such a standpoint has far reaching implications for the role of women in society today and would in practice result in the same restrictions for Christian women that are presently applied to Muslim women.

14. Conclusion

It is (in light of the above mentioned objections) our conviction that the exegesis in the report before the 2009 Synod – (on account of which local churches are withheld from calling as elders and ministers female members which have the necessary gifts and qualifications) – is on key issues to such an extend unscientific and untenable (within the principles of Reformed hermeneutics), that valid and binding inferences (in the Name of the Lord) cannot be made with such certainty that the conscience of members and churches can be bound by it.

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