

**IMPLICATIONS OF *GIFTS* IN ROMANS 12:3-8
FOR GENDER ROLES IN THE CHURCH:
A PASTORAL STUDY**

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DEDICATED TO: *My family Carina, Paul, James and Carin,
you encouraged me and had to endure so much
of my absence while toiling at this work.
Also dedicated to my mother,
Jennifer Grosskopf.*

To God be the glory!

ABSTRACT

This research attempts to determine how gifts of individual believers can enrich the respective gender roles in church and society.

Some Pauline writings were studied, and in addition to Romans 12:3-8, exegesis is also done on other passages (1 Corinthians 12:1-31 and Ephesians 4:4-16) dealing with the "body of Christ" (*gifts*). An exegesis on passages concerning the role of women (*gender*) (1 Corinthians 11:3-16, Ephesians 5:21-33, 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35, 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and Romans 16:1-16) in church and marriage follows. By doing this, biblical guidelines are found on how *men and women* should exercise their *gifts* in the church. Galatians 3:28 is found to form the basis for all Pauline writings. Here Paul puts the given fact that "*in Christ Jesus*" male and female "*are one*" and therefore equal before God. There still remains a created difference between male and female. Turning to *gifts*, men and women have equal access to all gifts, but the way in which they exercise the gifts may have certain nuances.

This research attempts to correct the old practice by using Zerfass's method of putting the basis theoretical perspectives into interaction with metatheoretical perspectives, so that a new practice is developed. This means that a study of other relevant sciences (i.e. Psychology, Sociology, Law, Feminism / Feminist Theology) concerning *gifts* and *gender* had to be done. Supplementing this with an empirical study, it is determined how gifts are used among the genders in daily practice. In this way the real experiences of men and women in church are reflected.

The research comes to a close when pastoral consequences are drawn, and a strategy for churches is proposed.

The finding is that both men and women should take part in the offices of the church, because they are on an equal footing with one another.

UITTREKSEL

Hierdie navorsing poog om vas te stel hoe gawes van individuele gelowiges die onderskeie geslagsrolle in die kerk en samelewing kan verryk.

'n Aantal Pauliniese Skrifgedeeltes is bestudeer, en benewens Romeine 12:3-8, is ander Skrifgedeeltes (1 Korintiërs 12:1-31 en Efesiërs 4:4-16) wat handel oor die "liggaam van

Christus" (**gawes**) geëksegetiseer. Daarop volg 'n eksegeese van gedeeltes rakende die rol van vroue (**geslagsrolle**) (1 Korintiërs 11:3-16, Efesiërs 5:21-33, 1 Korintiërs 14:33b-35, 1 Timoteus 2:8-15 en Romeine 16:1-16) in die kerk en samelewing. Hierdeur word Bybelse riglyne gevind waarvolgens **mans en vroue** hulle **gawes** in die kerk behoort uit te leef. Daar word bevind dat Galasiërs 3:28 die basis vir alle Pauliniese geskrifte vorm. Hier stel Paulus dit as 'n gegewe dat man en vrou "*in Christus Jesus ... één*" is en daarom gelyk voor God. Nogtans bly daar 'n geskape verskil tussen mans en vroue. Wanneer na **gawes** gekyk word, het mans en vroue gelyke toegang tot alle **gawes**, maar daar mag sekere nuanseverskille wees in die manier waarop hulle dit beoefen.

Hierdie navorsing het ten doel om die ou praktyk reg te stel deur Zerfass se metode te gebruik, waar die basisteoretiese perspektiewe in 'n wisselwerking geplaas word met metateoretiese perspektiewe, sodat 'n nuwe praktyk ontwikkel kan word. Dit beteken dat 'n studie van ander relevante vakgebiede (d.i. Sielkunde, Sosiologie, Regte, Feminisme / Feministiese Teologie) rakende **gawes** en **geslagsrolle** gedoen moes word. Deur dit aan te vul met 'n empiriese studie is vasgestel hoe **gawes** onder die geslagte in die alledaagse praktyk werk. So is die werklike ervarings van mans en vroue in die kerk verteenwoordig.

Die navorsing word afgesluit met pastorale konsekwensies wat gemaak word, en 'n strategie vir die kerk word voorgestel.

Die bevinding is dat beide mans en vroue in die ampte van die kerk betrokke behoort te wees, omdat hulle op gelyke voet met mekaar staan.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During my Master's degree studies under Prof. Dr. Julian C. Müller in 1999 and 2000 I was first 'accidentally' – although not coincidentally – confronted by the topic of gender. When I think of gender, I have always had the idea that despite all its difficulties, life should somehow be fair and just. Whenever inequalities arise in whatever circumstances, I don't feel at ease. This led me as a pastoral worker to develop a keen interest in the way the genders function in everyday life. Dealing with couples that experience some form of crisis usually shows how intriguing the interaction between men and women can be.

When there are inequalities with regard to the genders in churches, uneasiness arises once again. Therefore, when tackling this thesis, I could not escape the necessity to study what the Bible teaches about the genders, as well as what other sciences say about the matter. This led me to do a research on gifts among the genders in church and society, because God certainly wants justness in His church.

There are a number of people or groups of people to whom I am most grateful. Thank you very much to my supervisor and promoter, Prof. Dr. George Lotter, for the very patient, thorough, painstaking and pastoral way he more than accompanied me through the whole process of forming my thoughts on the theme. Prof. Fika van Rensburg, who immediately drew me into his project "Women in Church and Society", certainly helped me in getting more insight by exposing me to the academic thinking of scholars from South Africa as well as from abroad. It was a great honour. Mrs. Malie Smit and Mrs. Gerda van Rooyen as well as many other personnel of the University's libraries, your assistance was priceless. Thank you to all the people that provided accommodation during the different occasions that I had to stay in Potchefstroom and even away from home in Coligny. Thank you to Dr. Amanda van der Merwe, for taking care of the language usage. I am also indebted to the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk Coligny-Oos* in whose service I have been during most of my studies. They were patient, generous and of great support during my periods of leave. Also a great thank you to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, Knox-Zion Congregation in Carberry, Manitoba, in whose service I have been for the past almost a year, having to "inherit" my studies while I had to make some improvements on the research, and bearing with me while I had to invest so much time into it. I thank Providence College and the University of Manitoba for the use of their facilities, while Prof. Mervin van der Spuy and Prof. Annatjie Badenhorst respectively were instrumental towards the use of the mentioned facilities.

Last but certainly not least, thank you to my wife, Carina, and our children, Paul, James and Carin for the great sacrifices they made during the time I dedicated to this research.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 KEY WORDS

Gifts, *charisma(ta)*, gender roles, gender, sexuality, patriarchy, feminism, feminist theology, submissiveness, headship, pastoral, church, society.

SLEUTELWOORDE IN AFRIKAANS:

Gawes, geslagsrolle, geslagtelikheid, seksualiteit, patriargalisme, feminisme. feministiese teologie, onderdanigheid, hoofskap, pastoraal, kerk, samelewing.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.2.1 Gender roles are increasingly being probed

Throughout the ages, the position of women in marriage, church and in society has always been troublesome (Lasch, 1997a:3). More recently, in the 1960s, a renewed interest arose in gender roles (Vorster, 1984:ix; Lasch, 1997b:93). This interest has sharpened, especially with the rise of the postmodern era (Dreyer, 1998:16-17), as well as with the concurring rise of feminism. Backer (2001) mentions that, although there are still many inequalities, changes are being made in the field of law and human rights with regard to women. This is the result of a South-African society which has increasingly become centred towards human rights, especially in response to the Constitution of South Africa. The changes regarding South African law are reflected in Section 9 of the Constitution (1996). Backer (2001) continues, saying that these changes in the field of law and human rights are implemented in the workplace to give women and men equal rights and recognition.

1.2.2 The need for biblical guidelines with reference to gender roles

In the wake of postmodern thinking, Christians need guidance as to how one deals with the above-mentioned problem of gender roles (Browning *et al.*, 1997:6; Dreyer, 1998:16-17). This is the reason for various studies, including theological studies to research gender roles (Swanepoel, 1990; Human, 1996; Janson, 1996; Lamprecht, 1996; Dreyer, 1998). The three traditional Afrikaans mainstream churches – the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika*, the Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*) and the *Gereformeerde*

Kerke in Suid-Afrika - are continuously involved in their own unique debates about the position of women in office.

The *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika* fully allowed women into the office of deacon in 1973 (Dreyer, 1977:49; Barnard-Weiss, 1999:176-183), to the office of minister in 1979 (Barnard-Weiss, 1999:193), and finally to the office of elder in 1983 (Barnard-Weiss, 1999:196).

The General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, too, paid thorough attention to women in church office (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 1990a:128-134). After allowing women to serve as deacons as from their General Synod of 1982 (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 1982:651; Barnard-Weiss, 1999:184), the General Synod in 1990 accepted the service of women in the office of elder and as minister (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 1990b:718).

Currently the *Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika* (GKSA) are also investigating the same matter of women in church office. The GKSA have had the issue of women in office on their agenda since 1973. In 1988 women were allowed to vote, but they were refused for service in any offices (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, 1988:502-523). In the meantime, the decision was made to refrain from studying the matter any further. However, the GKSA Synod of 2000 (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, 2000:401-441) decided that the gender issue should be studied again. The result so far was that the GKSA Synod of 2003 (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, 2003:579) decided to allow women to serve in the office of *deacon*.

In North America the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) has been discussing the matter of women in church office since 1970. After a somewhat stormy history about, *inter alia*, *headship* during the late 1970s and 1980s, the CRC opened all offices for women in 1995, on a few conditions that would be lifted after 5 years. This was to resolve any unrest in the CRC (De Klerk *et al.*, 2000). This treatment of the issue has led to strong theological pleas against the denial of full expression of women's gifts in church, as represented by Rachel de Koning's article in *The Banner* (2000:28-30).

In order to shed some more light on this highly debated matter of *women in office*, and on their unique giftedness, it is necessary that this research investigate what certain parts of the New Testament say about the role of women in the church.

1.2.3 “Gifts” in Romans 12:3-8 can possibly shed new light upon dealing with gender roles

In the New Testament (Romans 12:3-8) the apostle Paul mentions that the believer is equipped by the Holy Spirit with various different types of gifts (charismata). Every time the apostle Paul uses the metaphor of the *body of Christ*, (as in Romans 12:3-8) he also mentions *gifts*. The other two instances in Scripture where he uses *gifts* in conjunction with the *body of Christ* are in 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 and Ephesians 4:4-16 (Bible, 1997). The writer chose to make use of the text in Romans 12, where it seems that gifts may have consequences that enable men and women to serve in the church in a more meaningful way. (In 1 Peter 3:1-7, the apostle Peter also discusses female submission and male headship, but this study will be limited to the *Corpus Paulinum*.) An extensive bibliographic search by means of internet search engines such as *NEXUS*, *ATLA* and *Silver platter* in the Ferdinand Postma Library at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education was completed. After the bibliographic search, it has been found that no direct research has been done about pastoral implications of gifts with reference to gender roles in the church. Therefore the researcher believes that such a study could indeed deliver new useful insights and shed light on an important issue in the church of Jesus Christ.

A small sample of useful studies that have already been done includes Balge (1995:83-95), Perriman (1998) and Pfitzner and Steicke (1999), which can serve as good starting points. Balge makes a study of gifts and service in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, so that much can be tapped from this work. Andrew Perriman (1998) mainly concentrates on headship and submission, while Pfitzner and Steicke (1999) give a historical review of the process of gradual progress in allowing women to participate in the Lutheran Church of Australia's official church work.

1.2.4 Research question

The proposed thesis intends to answer the following research question:

What implications do believers' different gifts of grace – as indicated in Romans 12:3-8 – have with regard to male and female gender roles?

Questions that arise from the above research question, are:

- What light does the Bible (particularly Romans 12:3-8) shed on gifts of the Holy Spirit (also bearing 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 and Ephesians 4:4-16 in mind). What do other passages in the Bible (that deal with concepts such as headship, submission, the

command to keep quiet in church as in 1 Corinthians 14:33-35, and Galatians 3:28) teach about expressing one's gender role in church?

- What view do the supporting sciences such as sociology, psychology, law (i.e. human rights), feminism and feminist theology hold towards gifts and gender roles?
- How can the pastoral practice go about using these gifts, in order to improve in a biblically valid manner the interaction amongst the genders?

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Aim

The general aim of the proposed thesis is to research how the gifts of every Christian believer, as described in Romans 12:3-8, can contribute to a valid way of realising their respective gender roles in the church.

1.3.2 Objectives

In order to achieve the above aim, the following objectives are proposed for the research:

1. To formulate basis-theoretical perspectives from various New Testament passages with reference to gifts, gender, submission and headship and then to formulate basis-theoretical perspectives from Romans 12:3-8 with reference to dealing with gender roles.
2. To investigate metatheoretical data from, among others, psychology, sociology, law (i.e. human rights), feminism and feminist theology, in order to understand the views of other fields of study about gender roles and gifts.
3. To establish practical-theoretical guidelines for pastoral work with reference to dealing with gender roles and gifts in church and society.

1.4 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study is that gifts of individual believers, according to Romans 12:3-8, can enrich the respective gender roles in church and society.

1.5 METHOD

To obtain the above objectives, the research will be done according to the practical-theological model of Zerfass (1974:166). Research will be *qualitative* and *descriptive* (Heyns & Pieterse, 1998:76-77).

- To investigate passages such as Romans 12:3-8 and other passages from the New Testament exegetically, in order to achieve a basis-theoretical perspective on gifts and gender roles, the grammatical-historical method will be used (Greidanus, 1989:252; De Klerk & van Rensburg, 1999:1-64).
- To do a metatheoretical study, a study will be made of literature from, among others, sociology, psychology, law (i.e. human rights), feminism and feminist theology. This will be followed by an empirical study done by means of interviews, as part of the qualitative nature of this research.
- The basis-theoretical and metatheoretical research results will be placed in a hermeneutical interchange in order to design a practical-theoretical strategy.

1.6 INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Whenever *male* pronouns are used in this research, the implication is that *female* pronouns are also included, unless otherwise specified. The same applies (*vice versa*) when *female* pronouns are used.

1.7 GREEK WORDS

In all instances where references are made to Greek words, the original Greek words are used in a Greek font, except for one case. The exception to this rule is when reference is made to the word "*charisma*" or "*charismata*" (plural), because this word is part of the key words (cf. 1.1) and it has also become a widely-used technical term for the English word "gift" or "gifts".

1.8 HERMENEUTICAL KEY

It is unavoidable for any research not to use certain hermeneutical keys. The hermeneutical key that the researcher will be using to understand the New Testament passages is socio-historical. This means that the social, economical and cultural circumstances of New Testament times are taken into account and applied to the new 21st century context. Part of the topic that is to be researched, includes gender, which brings liberationist, feminist /

womanist and post-modern influences of the 21st century context (cf. Duling, 2003:64,88-90) into scope.

1.9 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1: Introduction.

Chapter 2: Basis-theoretical perspectives on gifts and gender roles in the New Testament.

Chapter 3: Metatheoretical perspectives on gifts and gender roles – “Gifts among the genders?”.

Chapter 4: A practical-theoretical model for the pastoral practice.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter 2

Basis-theoretical perspectives on gifts and gender roles in the New Testament

2.1 NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES ON GIFTS AND GENDER ROLES

2.1.1 Introduction and objectives

The proposed thesis intends to answer the following research question: *“What implications do believers’ different gifts of grace – as indicated in Romans 12:3-8 – have with regard to male and female gender roles?”*

The objectives of this chapter are to formulate basis-theoretical perspectives from the different New Testament passages referring to *gifts, gender, submission and headship* and then to formulate basis-theoretical perspectives from Romans 12:3-8 with reference to the dealing with gender roles.

While this chapter attempts to focus on the exegesis of Romans 12:3-8, the researcher also intends to indicate the relevance of other passages in the New Testament that deal with the body of Christ, with reference to gifts of the Holy Spirit. The other passages in the *Corpus Paulinum* also referring to *gifts* in the context of the *body of Christ* – besides Romans 12:3-8 – are 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 and Ephesians 4:4-16 (Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:447; Oostenbrink, 1996:83; Bible, 1997; Oden, 2002:121). The main thrust of this chapter, however, is to investigate Romans 12:3-8. Since the aim of this thesis is to research the issue of *gifts* and how this relates to *male and female gender roles*, a brief exegesis will also be made of the Pauline New Testament passages dealing with male headship and female subordination. These passages are studied to establish a broader view on Paul’s way of dealing with gender roles. Passages on headship and submission are *inter alia* 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and Ephesians 5:21-33. Related to headship and submission are the passages on the command for women to keep quiet in church (see 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15).

For the opposite view to that of male headship and female submission, another Pauline passage (Galatians 3:28) frequently interpreted as promoting gender equality will also be investigated. Galatians 3:28 states: “(T)here is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” and this might also shed light on the role of genders and will therefore be discussed briefly.

In order to establish more about the apostle Paul's first readers, the last passage from the *Corpus Paulinum* (Romans 16) will also be investigated by means of cursory exegesis. There, in conclusion to his letter to the Romans, Paul is recorded as greeting several women. The position and relevance of these women will also receive attention.

2.1.2 Method

This chapter focuses on the basis theoretical side of the research, which means that a close look has to be taken at the theological tradition. The theological tradition includes the influence which church tradition, church history and established views on Scripture itself have had on the current practice in congregations today (Heyns & Pieterse, 1998:36). The researcher suspects that the dissatisfaction in many churches on how the genders function among each other is due to an insufficient understanding of Scriptures (cf. Fee, 2000:56).

To exegetically investigate the passages from the New Testament mentioned in section 2.1.1 above, in order to achieve a basis-theoretical perspective on gifts and gender roles, the theological-grammatical-historical method will be used (Greidanus, 1989:252; De Klerk & van Rensburg, 1999:8-46). This will be supplemented with a measure of contextual hermeneutics (Lategan, 1994:17-30, cf. Duling, 2003: 64,88-90). It remains important to bear in mind that the preaching of the Epistles in the New Testament has divine authority through the effect of the Holy Spirit (cf. De Klerk, 1983:439).

The main passage, Romans 12:3-8, on which the focus will be for the exegesis, will be dealt with according to the following seven "movements" which are contained amongst others in the guidelines which De Klerk and Van Rensburg (1999:8-46) suggest for performing an exegesis on a biblical passage toward the making of a sermon. The author refers to these as *movements* (cf. also Müller, 1996:98) instead of *steps*, because the idea in each step cannot be completed until the ideas in the next steps have also been developed, after which the exegete returns to each step again, while still progressing towards a conclusion.

The following "elements" are thus adapted from De Klerk and Van Rensburg (1999:8-46) and incorporated here as "movements":

1. The pericope
2. The literary genre of the pericope within the letter
3. Did Paul write a letter or an epistle? (see Annexure A)
4. Socio-historical approach / Sociological approach
5. Analysis of important concepts in the text verses (see Annexure B)

6. The revelation about God in the pericope
7. An own applicable social context.

2.2 AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF ROMANS 12:3-8

The text of Romans 12:3-8 (Bible, 1989:New Testament:157-158) is as follows:

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

2.2.1 The pericope

2.2.1.1 Choice of the pericope

For the purpose of this chapter, the main pericope on which there will be focused is Romans 12:3-8. The following remarks can be made as motivation for the choice of this pericope:

- **Gifts of believers, male and female:** This pericope is chosen because it can possibly shed light on the gifts of **every** Christian believer, as described here in Romans 12:3-8, and hence it may contribute to indicating a valid way of realising their respective gender roles.
- **Body with members, each member represented in the metaphor as a believer with gifts:** Because Paul applies *gifts* along with the metaphor of the *body of Christ* with its respective *members*, the researcher intends to apply it to the male and female gender roles in the church. By means of Paul's metaphor of the *body of Christ* the male and female genders can consequently also be seen as members in the body of Christ (the church).
- **Original lack of unity among Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians:** Paul was writing to Jews that became Christians and to Gentiles that became converted to Christianity. The converts from gentility had more liberal views and they were described as "strong" in their faith, because they did not stick to the conservative rules that the converts from Judaic tradition regarded as very important. The Jews still kept to their previous Jewish customs (like keeping the Sabbath, laws on clean and unclean food, as well as continuing with male circumcision) and were consequently seen as "weak" in their new Christian faith (Romans 14:1-4) (Du Toit, 1984:126-128; Moo, 1996:759). In this way the writing of this pericope is also intended by Paul to unify the "weak" with the

“stronger” believers. The result is that Paul intended the metaphor of the *body of Christ* with all its *gifts* to admonish his readers to live in unity, and not in disunity, despite their diversity (Pelser, 1998:538).

- **Division today among the genders similar to Jew-Gentile division:** The apostle Paul was addressing the division that was prevailing between the Jews and Gentiles in the New Testament age in which he was living. By means of analogy, there is a tendency that some churches as well as much of society today have allowed a patriarchal division to develop between men and women. The contents of this pericope could be a way of indicating that the discrimination between men and women in church offices should not be perpetuated.
- **Recognition of gifts as a way of healing the disunity among genders:** It is possible to investigate each gift Paul mentions in this passage. These gifts can be taken as examples of how the various gifts are found in all believers (male and female). The notion that women and men in church and society have received various gifts could enable men not to “think too highly of themselves” (Romans 12:3), in comparison to their fellow female believers.

The researcher intends to indicate that a proper understanding and use of gifts as discussed in Romans 12:3-8 can alleviate the tension that often exists among the genders in the church.

Whereas verses 1 and 2 serve as an introductory pericope, verse 3 starts with an exhortation, encouragement and admonition (Balge, 1995:84), “not to think too highly of oneself”. This pericope ends in verse 8, because a new thought unit starts in verse 9, dealing with love as the norm for social relationships (Dunn, 1988:x). The body of Christ is discussed up to verse 8. From verse 9 onwards Paul changes the discussion by dealing with Christian love.

Heystek (2000:81) has performed a valuable study on how Paul uses the *indicative* and *imperative* in this letter to the Romans. It is important to take note of the dialectic between indicative and imperative, in order to be able to distinguish between that which is already established (the *indicative*) by the risen Christ, and that which believers are exhorted to do (the *imperative*). Believers have become a new creation *in Christ*. But this new creation has not yet fully been realised in everyday practice and is something believers ought to make true in their lives (the *imperative*) (cf. Pelser, 1996:7-25). Ridderbos, H.N., (1977:257) makes the following remarks about the indicative and imperative:

... the imperative is grounded on the indicative to be accepted in faith once and for all and time and again anew. Because believers may know themselves as dead to sin and

alive to God, they must present their body and their members to the service of righteousness. The imperative preaches rebellion against an enemy (sin), concerning which faith may know and must know again and again that it has been defeated.

However, this pattern is not unique to Romans. It is also found in other Pauline epistles, such as the ones to the Ephesians (Ladd, 1977:480; Wiersbe, 1980:93; Best, 1998:353) and the Colossians (Ladd, 1977:480).

Heystek (2000:81-86) strikingly points out that in Romans, Paul states the “great” *indicative* in Romans 3:21,22 and 24, and then Romans 12:5 (“so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another”) states the “for one another” *indicative*. According to Heystek (2000:81-86), this leads to the “for one another” *imperatives* of loving one another as is indicated in the remainder of the *Corpus Paulinum*.

Therefore in the chosen pericope Paul is using the metaphor of the *body of Christ* with its different *members* to call upon his readers to act (imperative) according to the given salvation-historical fact (indicative) that they are “members one of another” (Heystek, 2000:82,85-86,88-89, 91,124,253,256).

Bruce (1985:214) describes the way in which the new life of believers as members of the church (or *body*) flows forth from the salvation that has already taken place:

Each part of the body has its own distinctive work to do, yet in a healthy body all the parts function harmoniously and interdependently for the good of the whole body. So should it be in the church, which is the body of Christ.

The author intends to research the way in which the functioning as members in the body of Christ has implications for male and female gender roles.

2.2.1.2 The context of the pericope within the whole of Romans

The pericope, Romans 12:3-8, is part of the bigger division, Romans 12:1-15:13, which describes the “outworking of the Gospel for the redefined people of God in everyday terms” (Dunn, 1988:x). Most commentaries, if not all, treat Romans 12:1-15:13 as a new main section in the book of Romans (Lekkerkerker, 1975, 2:103; Wilckens, 1982, 1:1-2; Cranfield, 1983:592; Du Toit, 1984:14; Bruce, 1985:65; Dunn, 1988:705; Fitzmyer, 1993:637; Mounce, 1995:229). Cranfield (1983:592) gives this section the heading of *The obedience to which those who are righteous by faith are called*. Fitzmyer (1993:637) heads the section with the title *Hortatory section: the demands of upright life in Christ*. Moo (1996:35) calls it *The transforming power of the gospel: Christian conduct*. Also, Theissen (2003:84) calls this

section "paraenetic". Up to Romans 11:36, Paul has been dealing with God's graceful salvation revealed in justifying people of faith. According to chapter 12, Paul thus moves his emphasis to practical matters, from doctrine to ethics (Bruce, 1985:212). Verses 1 and 2 have a pivotal role in Romans by looking back at chapters 1-11 as well as standing as a heading for all that follows in 12:3-15:13 (Moo, 1996:748) and could be seen as an introductory pericope serving as a "basis for responsible living..." (Dunn, 1988:706). This prepares the readers of the letter to understand their new life in terms of the body of Christ as the social context of faith (Dunn, 1988:718; Pelsler, 1998:538-539) in the chosen pericope of Romans 12:3-8. What Christ has achieved for the readers, should now be applied.

This pericope starts with the conjunction "Legw gar ..." and the negative plus an infinitive – "mh uperfronein" – implying an imperative, indicates the start of an independent pericope.

The following schematic outline shows how Romans 12:3-8 fits into the rest of the context of Romans, bearing in mind the fact there are commentaries that have minor variations (cf. Cranfield, 1983:27-29; Dunn, 1988:vii-xi; Fitzmyer, 1993:viii-xii; Moo, 1996:33-35):

Figure 2.1: The context of Romans 12:3-8

INTRODUCTION

Rom 1:1-15: Address and Greeting, thanksgiving, Paul's desire to come to Rome

LETTER BODY

First part:

Rom 1:16-11:36: Doctrinal section: God's gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord **(INDICATIVE)**

Second part:

Rom 12:1-15:13: The effect of the gospel for the redefined people of God in everyday terms
(forming two sections: 12:1-13:14 and 14:1-15:13) **(IMPERATIVE)**

FIRST SECTION: With six subsections based on a redefinition of children of God's everyday living

Subsection 1: 12:1-2: The basis for responsible living – the Christian's worship.

Subsection 2: 12:3-8: The body of Christ as the social context of faith.

Subsection 3: 12:9-21: Love as the norm for social relationships.

Subsection 4: 13:1-7: Live as good citizens.

Subsection 5: 13:8-10: Love of the neighbour as the fulfilment of the Law.

Subsection 6: 13:11-14: The imminence of the end as motivation.

SECOND SECTION:

14:1-15:13: The duty of love owed by the strong in the community towards the weak.

CONCLUSION

Rom 15:14-16:27: Paul's mission and travel plans, final greetings

2.2.2 The literary genre of the pericope within the letter

The letter of Paul to the Romans is written to a specific group of readers in specific circumstances in a certain era (Moo, 1996:14). It is, however, also written to the house churches in Rome as well as to Jews over a wider geographical area. Furthermore, it is written to believers over the rest of the world and for all times. This particular passage may be seen as an **exhortation, encouragement and admonition** within the context of the fact that Paul has just – generally speaking – started off with the more imperative hortatory part of the letter (Wilckens, 1982, 1:2; Dunn, 1988:707; Fitzmyer, 1993:638; Balge, 1995:84; Keathley, 1997:2).

After devoting eleven chapters to theological discussion and stating the indicative that we as believers are saved by grace, Paul now turns to an explanation of how this “theoretical” first part of the letter should be **applied** in everyday living (Bruce, 1985:212). Paul “calls for our bodies as a living sacrifice, a thank-offering” (Balge, 1995:84). Paul is exhorting his readers to dedicate themselves to obedience towards God. Dunn (1988:lvii) points out that:

an increasingly popular view in the second half of the twentieth century is that Paul wrote to counter (potential) divisions within Rome among the Christian house churches, particularly the danger of gentile believers despising less liberated Jewish believers.

Dunn (1988:lvi) therefore classifies this part of the letter as of a **pastoral purpose**.

This **pastoral purpose** is reflected in verses 3-8, when Paul gives examples of how the wisdom of God should affect one's life. Each individual in the church (members in the body of Christ in Paul's metaphorical language) should be characterised by meekness as he recognises his salvation as the result of grace. This meekness should have the effect of being taken up smoothly into the body of Christ. Being taken up in the body of Christ, in its turn, should lead to opportunities for ministry to the benefit of all the members in the body (Keathley, 1997:2).

This passage can therefore be seen as part of a letter, within the moral-ethical (imperative) part of the letter, meant as a pastoral exhortation to be members of the body that serve one another (Keathley, 1997:4). Mounce (1995:229) describes the section 12:1-15:13 as “how righteousness manifests itself”.

2.2.2.1 *Protreptikos logos* as a classical genre

An interesting perspective has been presented by, among others, Guerra (1995:3-8), in dealing with the *protreptikos logos* as a classical genre. Guerra describes Romans as having strong protreptic traits. He describes the *protreptikos logos* as

... a genre of literature that attempts to persuade students to pursue a proposed way-of-life. ... The protreptic goal to win someone over to a particular enterprise or way of life is achieved by demonstrating its superiority and exposing the flaws of all competing alternatives. ... In Protreptic, the rhetoric of blame or censure serves the positive purpose of exhortation: to encourage the hearer to change his/her life and proceed on a new course or to progress in one already engaged (Guerra, 1995:4-7).

This is why Guerra (1995:159) indicates that philosophical *protreptic*, characterised by an emphasis on exhortation, is an urging towards virtue. Therefore it is because Paul has just warned Gentile Christians according to 11:17-22 not to think of themselves too highly, that he continues in chapter 12 saying that it is God who gives to each his share of faith. The "share of faith" that each receives is the individual's real measure of value. Then Paul uses the metaphor of the one body and its many members, to refer to the right relationship among Roman Christians.

In a discussion on *charismata*, Fowler (1988:74-87) sheds light on Paul's theological doctrine of *charismata* and grace. Ladd (1977:534-537) and Ridderbos, H.N., (1977:446-467) both deal with *charismata* and grace, too. This view of Paul on *charismata* and grace is employed within the metaphor of the *body* to encourage unity within the diverse Christian community. Fowler (1988:74-87) then states that although gifts or *charismata* were (and are) given to individuals, they were not only given to people as isolated individuals, but to members as part of a body. Fowler continues that they (1988:74) are to be "used within the context of that body, and for the sole benefit of the body".

The author therefore poses the question whether the passage in Romans 12:3-8 could not in a likewise manner urge a church and society with patriarchal tendencies – maintaining strong differences in the treatment of men and women respectively – to have the genders working together in a more balanced way. Could the way in which the letter to the Romans belonged to an exhortatory, *protreptic* genre, and was meant to urge its original audience or readers to live in unity, perhaps also be applied in this way in the context of the 21st century?

However, it should be borne in mind that, although Paul's train of thought could be seen as being along *protreptic* lines, it remains within the broader framework of a letter. According to

Lotter (1993:22, cf. also Aune, 1987:159) in describing the types of letters found in the New Testament, there are apparently six types of letters:

- Letters between individuals (e.g. 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, 2 John and 3 John).
- Letters between individuals and groups (the category to which most of Paul's letters belong).
- Letters that had to be circulated among various communities (e.g. Galatians, Ephesians).
- A letter that is used to form a frame for another genre (Revelation to John).
- An anonymous letter with conclusion of a letter (Hebrews).
- A letter that is embedded into another genre (e.g. Acts 15:23-26).

It is therefore of the utmost importance that the letters of the New Testament are treated and studied as *letters* and that the nature of the New Testament letters are to be taken into account. Mullins (1972:388) writes in this respect:

When dealing with epistolary forms, we must not lose sight of their epistolary nature. They were tools for communication between a writer and a specific reader or group of readers. They were not used by a writer as part of a purely literary project ... They show the writer's attitude toward the *audience* to which he is writing, not his attitude toward the *material* he is presenting.

It finally becomes quite clear that Romans cannot be "put into any single genre" (Moo, 1996:15). The researcher can only conclude that the relevant passage, Romans 12:3-8, is of an *exhortatory, encouraging and admonishing nature within the broader frame of a letter* directed in specific circumstances to believers in Rome in the middle of the first century AD. Having said this, the contents of the particular passage ought to remain relevant to modern-day readers in the 21st century. By fusing the horizon of the first century with the horizon of today (Gadamer, as quoted by Gerkin, 1991:19-20), the passage can still encourage believers to live according their gifts within the church as the body of Christ. The *protreptic* purpose of exhortation, mentioned above, "to encourage the hearer to change his or her life and proceed on a new course or to progress in one already engaged" can be employed towards believers in a fresh way.

For a discussion of whether Paul wrote a letter or epistle, see Annexure A.

2.2.3 Socio-historical approach / sociological approach

In the course of history, and specifically during the latter part of the 20th century, New Testament research on hermeneutics has shifted its focus from *source* to *message*, and then from *message* to *receiver* (Botha, 1990:23; cf. Duling, 2003:88). Currently the focus is much more on the *receiver*, which makes the approach more pragmatic. In this approach, the fact that biblical texts are written to specific communities is taken into account (Botha, 1990:24; cf. Theissen, 2003:82). Because religion ranks as one of the most important social institutions of society, investigations of a social nature are carried out increasingly (Tolbert, 2000:255). When more is understood about the specific communities to whom a biblical text is aimed, the likelihood of accurately applying Scripture to contemporary issues ought to increase (Van Wyk & Van Rensburg, 1997:229-230; cf. Vergeer, 2002:668). Therefore this study makes use of a socio-historical as well as a sociological interpretation of the New Testament (Botha, 1990:55-72).

When discussing the diversity in Paul's life and thought-world, Dunn (2001:116) mentions that

... Paul introduced several features into his theology and teaching that can only have come from more distinctively Graeco-Roman thought. We need only think of his use of a concept like ... the body used as an image for different groups living together in harmony in the same city ...

In Paul's ecclesiology he utilised the familiar metaphor of the corporate body of a city or state and applied it to the small groups in cities (Dunn, 2001:122) by describing the church as the body of Christ:

... the metaphor was used in Graeco-Roman political philosophy as a way of stressing the need for the different factions (ethnic groups, trade guilds, etc.) of a city to cooperate for the sake of the city's safety and prosperity. Paul takes it over to the same effect: the unity of the body is a peculiar one, made up of many different members (limbs and organs), and dependent on the different functions and ministries working together for the common good. In other words, the body is the prime image for unity in diversity functioning as such.

Moreover, Meeks (1983:135) and Guerra (1995:159) point out that Paul was trying to play down differences of status. He wanted to stress cohesion amongst his readers in Rome, even while allowing room for diversity of individual powers. This is why Paul made an appeal for sober self-estimation in Romans 12:3. He must have known that this was a real problem in the Roman community. The fundamental reason why Christians should not be arrogant is because God gives to each individual his or her share of faith (Guerra, 1995:159).

The actual reason for division amongst Paul's Roman readers comes from the fact that there were Jews that had been converted to the Christian faith, as well as converted Gentiles that came from a totally different background. The two groups tended to be intolerant towards one another, as is discussed in Romans 14. However, Kümmel (1984:310-311) questions the equating of "strong" and "weak" with Gentile Christians on the one hand, and Jewish Christians on the other hand. Nevertheless, the fact that there was a lack of unity, whichever form it may have taken, still remains.

As this research is investigating *gender*, Tolbert's (2000:270) advice proves to be highly recommendable. Tolbert (2000:270) says that in an analysis of feminism (or gender) it is important to understand the historical material (texts) in their Graeco-Roman context.

In this respect, the research of Kahl (2000:35-49) on Galatians 3:28 (see section 2.4.5.1 on a cursory exegesis of Galatians 3:28 below) illuminates the socio-historical context in Paul's time. A research of Moxnes (1989:99-113) on *Social integration and the problem of gender in St. Paul's letters* also sheds quite a lot of light on the way "honour" and "shame" in a socio-historical context determined prestige in the Mediterranean mid-first century. In mid-first century Mediterranean society "status" or "prestige" was measured according to *honour* or *shame* (cf. Browning *et al.*, 1997:129-154; Browning, 2004:5-6). For example, this meant that a man dishonoured his head (increasing his shame) by prophesying or praying with something on his head because he was thereby abdicating the sovereignty and dignity that the Creator had given him (Bruce, 1987:104; cf. Perriman, 1998:101-102). A woman was in the same way dishonouring her head (increasing her shame) when she was prophesying or praying without a veil on her head. When a woman did wear a veil or hood, it was a warning that the person wearing it, was a respectable woman (honour increased) and that no man dare approach her. Not wearing a veil or hood and displaying her loose locks of hair were an indication that she was sexually "available" to men (Thiselton, 2000:821,828).

For a discussion of an analysis of important concepts in the text verses, see Annexure B.

2.2.4 The revelation about God in the pericope (History of Revelation)

The *revelation about God* discussed in this section, is to follow – among others – the example of Van der Walt (1997:1-210) in his excellent way of presenting God's way of revealing Himself when He sent the Messiah to the world.

Van der Walt (1997: "By way of Introduction") describes the History of Revelation as essentially dealing with facts, because it is history, not fiction. Due to the fact that these facts are simultaneously history and revelation, they "convey a very distinct message (or messages)" (cf. De Klerk, 1983:438). The result is that the focus is not only on what happened, but also on the general pattern and the relation between the event. The focus is indeed on the "meaning, the sense, of what has happened" (Van der Walt 1997: "By way of Introduction"). To put it simply, Van der Walt (1997: "By way of Introduction") argues History of Revelation "would be 'facts plus': facts plus relation (or context), and facts plus meaning (or message)".

Although Van der Walt (1997:1-210) provides an excellent example as far as method and style is concerned it will not be appropriate to quote him in this section, because he deals with another aspect of *the revelation about God*.

God allowed a man, called Paul, to be born and raised in a Jewish background. He was instructed in the Torah and his pedigree was perfect (Philippians 3:1-6). The apostle Paul was the once Hebrew persecutor of Christians (Bruce, 1977:41-52;69-73). God stepped into Paul's life when he became converted on the road to Damascus in the light that blinded him, according to the Book of Acts (chapter 9) (Bruce, 1977:74-82). In this blinding light at Damascus God let him meet Jesus Christ who had already risen and ascended to heaven. Paul's life and approach to life was never the same again. This radical intervention of God in Paul's life made him a dedicated missionary (Bruce, 1977:17-18), proclaiming the Gospel all over the Roman Empire in the time after Jesus Christ ascended to heaven. In proclaiming the gospel, he preached about free grace (Bruce, 1977:18-21), which was something he knew nothing of before he met Jesus Christ in the vision at Damascus (Acts 9). God used him to start congregations and travel as missionary. He let Paul wrestle with his own unique problems, particularly the tension between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians (Bruce, 1977:173-187). This Jew-versus-Gentile problem may have spurred Paul to deal with this matter in the chosen passage (Romans 12:3-8) by using the metaphor of the body of Christ and its members (Guerra, 1995:159).

Because it is important to God that there will be unity in His church on earth, Paul uses one of the most familiar images to humankind, namely the human body. In this way it was important to God that his children – as diverse as they may even be – should live in unity with one another (cf. Ladd, 1977:545).

Another strand in God's history of revelation is that he lets Paul use his sound knowledge of the history of Israel and of the scriptures in a great deal of his letter to the Romans. In this

way the church is a direct continuation of Israel (Ladd, 1977:394). God's secret purpose to redeem mankind, is revealed to all nations "through the prophetic writings" (Romans 16:26) (Ladd, 1977:394).

The researcher makes the following important observations: The *patriarchal narrative* that was current in the world of that day had to be changed by God's *biblical narrative*. This biblical narrative, however, was patriarchal too, due to the Judaic culture (Oden, 2002:123) that stemmed right back from the original sin in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3. God wanted man and woman to be equal, but different before Him. When Adam and Eve had fallen into sin, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came and through his redemptive and sacrificial death on the cross and his rising from death on the third day he restored this relationship. So God revealed that the biblical narrative had to be changed during the first century of the church. Due to Jesus' redeeming work the people of the early church had to start off on a non-patriarchal course. However, people's way of seeing, thinking and doing were set in certain patriarchal ways and for the believers to change from old habits was not a quick and easy process.

Unfortunately, mankind slid back into its old ways (cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994:334), causing the church to follow the example of the world instead of *vice versa*.

In the next section an own applicable social context for the understanding of the pericope will be presented.

2.2.5 An own applicable social context

Within many churches today, there is still a great deal of disunity within the body of Christ. This is part of the fallen creation. Nevertheless, as believers being members of the body of Christ, we are to make the kingdom of God visible. That is why Paul's exhortation remains valid in our day and age. We still need to know that "... though (we are) many, we form one body ..." and no-one is "... to think of (him / her)-self more highly than they ought to think..."

Although we do not have the same schism due to Jew-Christians and Gentile-Christians in the same congregation as in Paul's time, we still sometimes have a division among the genders. In practice many churches have certain offices that are exclusively reserved for men only. The same principle Paul applied regarding the schism between Jew-Christians and Gentile-Christians to get them to live in unity with one another can be used to resolve another schism that still exists in churches today, namely the division between men and women.

Even when women are allowed to participate in all the offices, they do not always participate in the decision-making as men do.

From Romans 12:3-8 this type of division could be addressed as well. When "we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us", the gifts are not given according to the genders. Even if there are gifts that men have a greater tendency to have than women do, and vice versa, it is just as true that women can have gifts that men traditionally had. The stereotypical gifts sometimes do swap around, due, among others, to social or genetic influences or even a combination. The result is that each gift can be exercised by both genders, regardless of who the person is. Each believer is thus supposed to live according to the measure of faith that he has received. There are also gifts that men do not necessarily have, that can benefit the church tremendously. A simple example is that of women nurturing children.

Besides everything that has been said so far, every gift which a member of the body of Christ receives, is precisely that: a gift. It is not a right, but a privilege to receive a gift and to use the gift or gifts that one has received. Men and women using their gifts equally within the church, glorify Jesus Christ, to whom the church belongs, forming one body, despite their variety.

2.3 CONCLUDING EXEGESIS ON ROMANS 12:6b-8 (WITH REFERENCE TO GIFTS AS SUCH)

In the last part of Annexure B it is indicated that by implication one could perhaps link all the remaining gifts mentioned up to the end of verse 8 by the same word, "analogia, -a~."

For an understanding of *gifts* in Romans 12:3-8 a deeper study of this last part of the passage (verses 6 to 8) is essential. Extensive guidelines have become available in which believers are facilitated to discover the gifts that have been bestowed upon them (cf. *inter alia* VanderGriend, 1981:1-31; 1984:1-66; Joubert, 1989:1-47; Ministry Tools Resource Center, 2004).

In verse 6, Paul starts off with the words "We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us ..." Then he follows it up with each *gift of grace* or *charism (charisma)*, followed by a description of how the gift is to be applied in life.

Some writers or commentators accept that this list is only an exemplary list (many more can be added, cf. 1 Corinthians 12:8ff. and Ephesians 4:4-16) (cf. Calvin, 1961:268; Du Toit,

1984:113). Cranfield (1983:619) also mentions that the list in Romans 12:3-8 is not exhaustive. Ladd (1977:534-535) and Ridderbos, H.N., (1977:447-448) both provide surveys on the *charismata* (gifts) that Paul describes in his letters, and both sources list a total of eighteen types of gifts. Fitzmyer (1993:647) suggests an interesting view, by describing the seven *gifts* mentioned in this passage as a carefully selected septet, which "symbolically represents the totality of God". Balge (1995:94) rightly states that any congregation that is gifted with active ministry in the seven functions Paul mentions in Romans 12:3-8 "certainly 'has the bases covered' ". It is, however, not an obligation for every congregation to have all these ministries to be alive and pleasing to God (cf. Balge, 1995:94).

Because there are such a variety of types of gifts of the Spirit, the researcher opts for the view of an exemplary list which is not exhaustive. More could be added, but these seven gifts according to the passage under discussion cover a wide enough area.

The seven gifts Paul mentions in Romans 12:6-8 will be discussed below. However, before taking each gift into discussion, a number of remarks have to be made about the pericope of Romans 12:3-8 as a whole. In any church attitudes such as pride can be extremely destructive and Paul must have had the danger of this in mind (cf. Calvin, 1961:268; Mounce, 1995:233). Paul admonishes his readers to have a sober self-estimation (Romans 12:3), and the words he uses in this connection all come from the root-word *froneo*, implying that believers should start off with an entirely new *mind-set* (cf. Balge, 1995:85). The metaphor *sober self-estimation* (Romans 12:3) suggests the idea of intoxication, and Mounce (1995:234) points out that this could be an indication that believers were in danger of becoming "egoholics".

The question now arises whether certain parts of congregations do not sometimes hold on to certain gifts and functions, without allowing other members to exercise their gifts, due to a fear that their egos may be hurt.

The main idea seems rather to be that a humble attitude is fitting for believers. A number of attitudes hinder the proper functioning of the body of Christ. Attitudes such as pride or jealousy, feelings of inferiority or superiority, as well as members competing against one another instead of working together as a team, are just a few that can cause serious division. There may be a difference in functions (*gifts* or *charismata*) in a congregation, but the believers have the same status (Moxnes, 1989:105) or dignity (Cranfield, 1983:619).

Although some members in the body of Christ have gifts or functions that seem to be more prominent, Paul admonishes the believers to exercise their gifts in sober judgement. This implies that they recognise each other's equality within the unity and that the gifts are for

-serving others (Gruenler, 1997). A serving attitude of being available for use is what Paul is urging, in contrast to a selfish boasting with one's superior gifts (cf. Gruenler, 1997). Wiersbe (1981:141) describes the use of gifts in an excellent way when he says:

Spiritual gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with. In the church at Corinth, the believers were tearing down the ministry because they were abusing spiritual gifts. They were using their gifts as ends in themselves and not as a means toward the end of building up the church.

Lekkerkerker (1975, 2:113) seems to be mistaken when he asserts that these gifts in Romans 12:3-8 are extraordinary or supernatural, giving the warning that one should not think that each member would have one or more *charisms* or *gifts*. Wilckens (1982, 3:13) puts it in a more correct light by saying that all Christians are "charismatically" gifted. From everyday experience it can be said that many believers do not know which gift or gifts are bestowed upon them. The gifts are bestowed undeservedly by God's sovereign grace on each believer (cf. Cranfield, 1983:619; Dunn, 1988:726; Fitzmyer, 1993:647; Balge, 1995:88). God's grace (*cari-*) is the resource, which is expressed particularly in gifts (*carismata*) (Lekkerkerker, 1975, 2:113; Dunn, 1988:725, cf. Fitzmyer, 1993:646).

The believers, however, receive different gifts from God. The difference of gifts in the church does not come from people wanting it that way, but because it pleases the Lord to distribute his grace in this way, and the inequality of gifts makes believers need one another mutually (Calvin, 1961:268).

When these unequal gifts are discussed in the pericope, it is noticeable that in the greater context of the whole sentence in the Greek text of Romans 12:6-8, there is no verb. Each of the six other gifts are described without the use of a verb or verbs and most commentators are in agreement with Moo (1996:764) that verses 6b-8 must be filled with an imperative verb or verbs. It would mean that Paul is "not just listing; he is exhorting each member of the community to use his or her own gift diligently and faithfully to strengthen the body's unity and help it to flourish" (cf. Barrett, 1987:237; Moo, 1996:764).

However, according to Schlatter (cited in Cranfield, 1983:618) the emphasis of the sentence is not on an imperative, but on an indicative, implying that "we have these gifts", and not just what "ought to happen", but "what is happening":

Out of the received gift arises the function, and therefore also out of the statement which indicates the gift arises the imperative which says how the function is rightly fulfilled (Schlatter, cited in Cranfield, 1983:618).

The words of Romans 12:6b deserve special attention: “eite profhteian kata thn analogian to~ pistew~” (If [a man’s gift is] prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.). Much has been written on these words. It all starts with the word pistew~ (faith), when the word is seen as used in one of two senses:

- the sense of *fides quae creditur* (the faith which is believed, the content of the faith, objective faith (Balge, 1995:88,90))
- or *fides qua* (subjective, the believing, “in agreement with the faith” (Balge, 1995:89,90)).

***Fides quae creditur* (the faith which is believed, the content of the faith, objective faith):**

Some commentators (*inter alia* Fitzmyer, 1993:647) see pistew~ (faith) used here in the former *fides quae creditur* sense (the faith which is believed, the content of the faith, objective faith). Fitzmyer (1993:647) sees pistew~ as used in the sense of “the body of Christian belief” the “believed-in object”. Then Paul would have used “eite profhteian kata thn analogian to~ pistew~” to mean that inspired preaching (profhteian or *prophecy*) must not be in contradiction with the Christian faith, not adding personal opinion (Keathley, 1997:3), because false prophesy is also possible (Fitzmyer, 1993:647). According to Fitzmyer (1993:647) Paul was curbing the charismatics and their enthusiasm and emphasising that all preaching had to be according to the Christian faith (cf. Theissen, 2003:86-90).

***Fides qua* (subjective, the believing, “in agreement with the faith”)**

As far as the second sense is concerned, some commentators (*inter alia* Lekkerkerker, 1975, 2:115-116; Cranfield, 1983:621; Dunn, 1988:727-728; Mounce, 1995:235; Moo, 1996:765-766) see pistew~ used here in the *fides qua* sense (subjective, the believing, in agreement with the faith). If it is seen this way it would bring out the meaning that the “prophets are to prophesy in agreement with the standard which they possess”. They are to take care not to say a word that is incompatible with that which they believe about Christ (Lekkerkerker, 1975, 2:115-116; Cranfield, 1983:621; Dunn, 1988:727-728; Mounce, 1995:235; Moo, 1996:765-766). They are to take care that they speak in agreement with the rest of Scripture (Keathley, 1997:3). For Dunn (1988:728) it is a matter of “how the act of prophecy comes about”, that is by the prophet prophesying according to his faith, with the faith of the prophet indicating his or her *dependence on God*. This view is closer to the reformed theology, to which confession the researcher belongs.

A COMBINATION: *Fides quae creditur* together with *fides qua*

After a lengthy discussion, Balge (1995:90) concludes that Paul may quite likely not at all have consciously used objective-subjective categories with regard to faith, that we are

posing false alternatives. The trusting (pīsti-) which Paul taught was evoked by and relied on the trustworthiness (pīsti-) of God and his word (Balge, 1995:90). He also did not teach a faith (believing, *fides qua*) without content (*fides quae*) (Balge, 1995:90).

Balge (1995:90) then suggests the following translation for Romans 12:6b: "Let the believing preacher use all the gifts that are his as a believer to proclaim faith's content."

The researcher would more likely agree with the second meaning, *fides qua*, as it highlights the fact that the prophet should depend on God and not on her- or himself.

2.3.1 A discussion of each gift in Romans 12:6b-8

2.3.1.1 Prophecy / speaking God's word (profhteia)

Some interpreters see prophecy as an *extraordinary gift*, but we should rather see prophecy as the way in which God uses natural abilities. He guides the abilities by his Spirit to proclaim his message (cf. Balge, 1995:88). Calvin (1961:269) views prophecy as nothing but the right understanding of the Scripture, since all the prophecies and oracles of God have been completed in Christ and his gospel. Prophecy is inspired preaching (Wilckens, 1982, 3:14; Fitzmyer, 1993:647). Paul gives prophecy priority among the *gifts of grace* so that prophecy is only mentioned second to "apostles" in 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11, but first in Romans 12:6b-8, because the office of apostle is not mentioned here (Dunn, 1988:727; cf. Fitzmyer, 1993:647; Moo, 1996:765). Prophecy is meant to be the proclaiming of God's word with exposition and application (Balge, 1995:88) and prophecy also reveals something new from God (Keathley, 1997). A choice should rather be made against something supernatural, and thus for natural abilities used by the Spirit of God to proclaim God's word.

However, what is most relevant for this research is that prophecy is supposed to do three things, according to 1 Corinthians 14:3:

- Prophecy must edify the congregation (build it up),
- it must exhort the believers,
- and it must encourage them (consolation) (Ridderbos, H., 1977:278; Wilckens, 1982, 3:14).

Another description for prophecy is that it makes God's will known (Murray, 1975:122; Du Toit, 1984:113). As mentioned above, the prophet must have an immediate dependency of faith, relying on God (Dunn, 1988:728).

Dunn (1988:727) and Cranfield (1983:620) point out that it should not be forgotten that it was expected that women would exercise the gift of prophecy (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:5, see section 2.4.3.1 below) and this did indeed happen, according to Acts 21:9. It is also described according to Acts 2:17.

2.3.1.2 Ministering / Service / Being a “deacon” (diakonia)

The New International Dictionary of New Testament theology (Hess, 1986:3:544) translates “diakonia” as “service, office, aid, support, distribution (of alms etc.), office of a deacon”.

Well into the New Testament period, the Greek derivatives of the root *diak-* pertained to “waiting at table” (Luke 10:40), referring to service to others (Moo, 1996:766). Serving was especially Jesus Christ’s attitude (cf. *inter alia* Mark 10:45 and John 13:1-17).

According to Romans 16:1, Phoebe (see section 2.4.6.1.2.1 below) is described as a ‘*diakonon th~ ekkhhsia~*’. Louw and Nida (1988, 1:541) describe *diakonon~* as “one who serves as a deacon, with the responsibility to care for the needs of believers” and “one who helps the believers”. The meaning of “service” – and even subservience – stemming from the root *diak-* does not always fit into the feminist way of thinking (cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994:48-49), because of it being associated with women’s traditional role under patriarchy. However, Christians bestowed with the gift of ministering or service (*diakonia*), can happily cherish the fact of themselves being described as people that serve, because following their Lord Jesus Christ’s serving example should be seen as the ultimate virtue for any Christian. After all, Jesus Christ said, “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve...” (Mark 10:45). Paul, however, uses the service words to indicate his own ministry (cf. Dunn, 1988:728) as well as that of others (Moo, 1996:766). Murray (1975:124) stresses that it must be remembered that this work of service has an intensely spiritual nature, and “the evils of underesteem (sic) have wrought havoc in the witness of the church”. The researcher, however, is of the opinion that much can be said of the fact that Phoebe’s status in the church at Cenchreae (Romans 16:1) does not have to be confined to the meaning of the word *diakonon~* as such. Phoebe’s status need not be confined to *diakonon~* because she is described in a passage of three verses, saying much more about her (Romans 16:1-3).

The function of *diakonia* was also used to denote the participation in the collection for the church in Jerusalem (cf. Romans 15:31 and 2 Corinthians 8-9) (Wilckens, 1982, 3:15; Dunn, 1988:728, cf. Moo, 1996:766). Barrett (1987:238) is very profound in contending that the word *diakonia* simply meant *service* (cf. Keathley 1997:4), moving in the direction of becoming a technical term as years went by. It surely must have been possible that the

office of "deacon" was still in the process of being established (Moo, 1996:914). The researcher is of opinion that the formal description of the "office of deacon" in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 may quite well have been written in the beginning of the 2nd century when the church was far more organised than in the time when Romans 12 was written. Many commentators (*inter alia* Thiselton, 2000:1147-1150) have almost conclusively proven the late authorship of 1 Timothy. Calvin (1961:269) asserts that *diakonia* refers to the ministry of the Word, and Murray (1975:123) sees ministry of the Word as a possibility, too. Balge (1995:90) states that the position of *diakonia* between prophecy and teaching, makes it tempting to see *diakonia* as the *service of the Word* (Acts 6:4). However, in the eyes of the researcher – and in this instance disagreeing with Calvin – this seems to make little sense, or else Paul would surely have written *diakonia tou logou*. Service of the Word is not the usual meaning of the word *diakonia* on its own in the New Testament. Moo (1996:766) more rightly poses a likely scenario: the gift of *diakonia* (ministering or service) "apparently involved especially organizing (sic) and providing for the material needs of the church".

Paul's placing of the gift of ministering or serving (*diakonia*) just after the gift of prophecy (*profheteia*) actually indicates that this gift does not have to imply service to the poor and needy, because then it would overlap with the last three gifts on the list (Cranfield, 1983:622; Dunn, 1988:728). In Cranfield's (1983:622) view *diakonia* here in Romans 12:7 would have a narrower meaning (as opposed to a more general view), pertaining to the activities that would become the duties of what later belonged to the office of deacon (cf. Murray, 1975:124). This is a sensible view.

When Paul says that the gift of service should be exercised *en th diakonia*, he would have in mind that those receiving this gift must use it as a spiritual gift they have received fully, and for the purpose the Spirit intended it for (cf. Calvin, 1961:269-270; Ridderbos, H., 1977:279; Cranfield, 1983:623; Moo, 1996:767; cf. Keathley, 1997:4). The member using this gift should put his or her whole heart into such service, which the person is endowed for (cf. Dunn, 1988:729; Fitzmyer, 1993:648). The implied warning is that a person is not to do the tasks that he has not been divinely equipped for (cf. Ridderbos, H., 1977:279; Cranfield, 1983:623). The gift is not a reason for pride (verse 3), but it is the base for a sacrificial serving of others (cf. Moo, 1996:767).

The gift of *diakonia* therefore, may have entailed tasks such as "visitation of the sick, relief of the poor, even perhaps financial oversight" (cf. Fitzmyer, 1993:648; Moo, 1996:914) and taking care of any kind of practical need (Mounce, 1995:235). Paul does not put the *gift of serving* in a type of subordinate or dependent position. He rather wants to highlight the intrinsic character of each gift to be an independent gift amidst the seven other gifts

mentioned here in Romans 12:6b-8 (Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:460). For the researcher, this concerned fear for a so-called "lower" position is misplaced, maybe even stemming from modern day liberationist thoughts. However, this idea should not be discarded from contemporary thinking about *gifts*.

Taking that which has been described for the gift of service in consideration, it may even truly be asked whether this task for Phoebe – if she performed it – was really so subordinate or derogatory.

2.3.1.3 Teaching (*didaskwn*)

In his list of gifts in Romans 12:6b-8, Paul now becomes more concrete, not describing the gifts in an abstract form, as was the case with *prophecy* and *servicing* or *ministering* (cf. Murray, 1975:125). Paul speaks about the gifts in terms of *persons* exercising the gifts. Of the seven, two have been dealt with in an abstract manner, and the remaining 5 are dealt with more concretely.

Teaching is mentioned by Paul in two of his other lists (1 Corinthians 12:28-29 and Ephesians 4:11) and in both instances the *teaching* is mentioned after *prophecy* (cf. Mounce, 1995:235; Moo, 1996:767). *Teaching* is to take the already available material from tradition, Old Testament Scriptures, the Gospels and moral instructions, communicating and explaining it to his or her audience or pupil (cf. Cranfield, 1983:623; Fitzmyer, 1993:648; Balge, 1995:90).

The gift or function of *teaching* differs from that of *prophecy* in that *teaching* is insight into old (existing) revelation from God, whereas *prophecy* is new insight into God's will (Dunn, 1988:729). The thin line between *teaching* and *prophecy* is that *teaching* has the function of preserving continuity in the church (cf. Moo, 1996:767), while *prophecy* is life-giving to the church (Dunn, 1988:729). According to Murray (1975:125), who puts it differently, the one who expounds the Word of God does *teaching*, and he is not an organ of revelation as the *prophet* is. This latter "looser" meaning of *prophet* is however not in agreement with the discussion that was made in the first paragraph of section 2.3.1.1 above. *Prophecy* would rather still be the making known of God's will as opposed to *teaching* which has more emphasis on instruction.

It is noteworthy that, according to Acts 18:26, Priscilla (or Prisca) (see section 2.4.6.1.2.2 below) and Aquila explained (*exegeto*, derived from *ektiqhmi*) the way of God more accurately to Apollos (Oden, 2002:125). This, obviously, was part of the function *teaching*

performed. Vollie Sanders (1993:54) points out how the couple, Priscilla and Aquila, both had an immediate and long-range impact on Apollos' faith. Fee (2000:72) makes mention of the fact that Paul uses Priscilla's (or Prisca's) name first and that he praises them because "they [plural] risked their lives for me". Furthermore, Paul greets the church that meets in *their*, not Aquila's, house. This is clear evidence that much had already been transformed by the gospel (Fee, 2000:72). The gifts are not separated among the genders, but are bestowed upon both women and men alike (Oden, 2002:122). At this point it may be stated that *teaching* does not seem to be gender-specific at all.

2.3.1.4 Exhorter / one who encourages / comforter (paraka lwn)

Many times the gifts have a way of overlapping in a general sense, because a word such as *paraka lwn* denotes very much the same activity as that of a prophet or a teacher (cf. Cranfield, 1983:623). Paul, in any case, may just as well have chosen his words in such a way that they could have had a broader meaning, for example such as is the case with *diakonia* (Dunn, 1988:730). But when one turns to the more particular focus of the gift of *exhorter* (*the one who encourages, or: comforter*), it becomes clear that this gift is directed towards helping Christians live out their obedience to the gospel (cf. Cranfield, 1983:623). Because the very wide view of *diakonia* (ministry, service) (see section 2.3.1.2 above) would have been a more developed meaning that came as the church became more organised, the argument would be to differ from Dunn towards a narrower idea than a broad one. The work a *teacher* does is to explain, while the work an *exhorter* does is to apply (Barrett, 1987:238). Murray (1975:125) draws the distinction between *exhortation* as directed towards the heart, the conscience and the will, in cultivating virtues such as patience and perseverance, while that of teaching is directed towards understanding.

The researcher would like to summarise the above views by equating the gift of *exhorter* or *encourager* to that of the pastor, or the practical theologian applying Christian values, the one who has his or her eyes on the concrete situation (Cranfield, 1983:624) of the congregation or individual.

2.3.1.5 Giver (metadidou~)

There are two possibilities as to what is meant by the *giver* (metadidou~). Cranfield (1983:624) indicates that it is possible to accept both views, as there were many examples of how the second, more public possibility was exercised in the early centuries. In the first instance it could be one who shares his own resources with those that are not as privileged as he is (cf. Wilckens, 1982, 3:15; Cranfield, 1983:624; Moo, 1996:767-768). The second

possibility is that it could be one who distributes the church's resources as a whole to the underprivileged (cf. Wilckens, 1982, 3:15; Cranfield, 1983:624; Moo, 1996:767-768).

The attitude of the *giver* is described by some as "with all your heart" (cf. Barrett, 1979:238; Bruce, 1985:215). The *giver* displays his charity with a singleness of heart and intention (for the Greek word *aplothti*), giving straightforwardly without remorse or ulterior motives, not thinking twice about the deed (cf. Ridderbos, H., 1977:280; cf. Sanday & Headlam, 1977:357; Fitzmyer, 1993:648; Moo, 1996:767-768) and under no compulsion (Mounce, 1995:235). God loves the cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Cranfield (1983:625) stresses another noteworthy aspect of the *giver*, in that it is not mere financial strength that enables him to give, but the charisma is a spiritual capacity, which is a God-given inclination (Ridderbos, H., 1977:280).

The researcher must add that although this inclination can be found among men as well as women, he observes it more among women. It also seems as if Phoebe in Romans 16:1-3 had this type of inclination as (see section 2.4.6.1.2.1).

2.3.1.6 Leader (proistameno~)

Moo (1996:768) and Balge (1995:91), among others, distinguish between two senses in which Paul may have meant the function of leader (proistameno~). The first possibility is that of one who presides, rules, or has authority over the work in a congregation (cf. Calvin, 1961:270; Newman & Nida, 1973:238; Sanday & Headlam, 1977:358; Balge, 1995:91; Moo, 1996:768). The second (less likely) possibility is that the function of proistameno~ was one of coming to the aid of others, close to what is today seen as the work of the Christian social worker (cf. Lekkerkerker, 1975, 2:116; Wilckens, 1982, 3:15; Cranfield, 1983:626-627; Bruce, 1985:215; Dunn, 1988:731; Balge, 1995:91; Moo, 1996:768). This *gift* could be exercised at church or at home (cf. 1 Timothy 3:4,5,12) and it had to be performed with zeal and energy (Sanday & Headlam, 1977:358) and with eagerness or diligence (Moo, 1996:768). The task of the *leader* was carried out for the benefit of others in biblical times (Mounce, 1995:235). The gift of *leader* is sandwiched between two of the last three gifts in a row of seven, and Cranfield *inter alia* (1983:626) suspects that the gift mentioned here could have a close link to that of *giver* and *the compassionate*.

Murray (1975:126) emphasises that the gift of *leader* of the church could not have been the task of one man. Taking all the above into consideration, there are some commentators that point out that the woman called Phoebe in Romans 16:1-3 (see section 2.4.6.1.2.1) was

someone who performed the function of *leader* (cf. Wilckens, 1982, 3:15; Cranfield, 1983:627; Dunn, 1988:731). Phoebe is described in Romans 16:2 as a *prostati-*, which is the feminine form of *prostath-*, is the cognate noun of the verb *proistanai* (Cranfield, 1983:627). It is, however, inconclusive whether Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:170) is right in saying that Phoebe was “*a minister over the whole church*”. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:170) can in turn not be proven wrong either, because the meaning of the two related words, *proistameno-* and *prostati-* can indeed point towards the nuance of one that presides, rules, or has authority over the work in a congregation.

2.3.1.7 The compassionate (*eIewn*)

The *compassionate* (*eIewn*) is the believer with the God-given gift or aptitude (Cranfield, 1983:627) or inclination to provide in the needs of the poor (Moo, 1996:769). Nevertheless, the performance of this function should most probably be seen more generally. Moving toward a clearer meaning the *gift of the compassionate* could include any act of mercy towards others, for example visiting the sick, old-age care, care for widows and orphans, care for the disabled and giving to the poor (cf. Lekkerkerker, 1975, 2:116; Ridderbos, H., 1977:280; Wilckens, 1982, 3:15-16; Cranfield, 1983:627; Dunn, 1988:731; Mounce, 1995:235; Moo, 1996:769). Questionably, Fitzmyer (1993:649) even adds the burying of the dead and providing for those in jail.

Dunn (1988:731) points out that this is the only case in Pauline literature in which *eIewn* is used in the human context of mercy rather than divine mercy. Noting that the word “mercy” in the New Testament denotes the outstanding Jewish pious act of almsgiving, Dunn (1988:731) postulates that Paul could have distinguished this gift from the previous two “welfare ministries” at the end of the list, in order to narrow down the gift to almsgiving alone. Moo (1996:769) rightly argues that this restriction Dunn (1988:731) suggests as a possibility cannot be justified, because the connection of the word “mercy” to Jewish almsgiving is not widespread enough.

Calvin (1961:270) offers a remarkable exposition for Paul’s description, arguing that the person performing the gift of *compassion* should do it with cheerfulness. The implication would be that such a person may not, as frequently happens, “spoil the services which they render by their morose attitude” (Calvin, 1961:270). If the person who is helped, observes gloominess on the face of those who help him, he will feel offended (Calvin, 1961:270; cf. Lekkerkerker, 1975, 2:117; cf. Ridderbos, H., 1977:280; cf. Balge, 1995:91; cf. Keathley, 1997:4).

Therefore, Cranfield (1983:627) aptly remarks that someone who helps as *the compassionate*, would naturally do it cheerfully (ilargoth-) if he knows he is doing it in thankfulness for what Jesus Christ has done for him.

2.4 CURSORY EXEGETICAL STUDIES OF OTHER PAULINE PASSAGES ON GIFT AND GENDER

2.4.1 Introduction

This section will only briefly examine the passages in the *Corpus Paulinum* that bear resemblance to the main theme of this research (see section 2.1.1 on “Introduction and objectives”). While a more in-depth study is done with Romans 12:3-8, the other Pauline passages are not examined as deeply as the mentioned Romans 12 passage. They support the theme of this research, but do not stand in the centre as *gifts* according to Romans 12:3-8 do.

Firstly, other passages on the “body of Christ” will be examined in 2.4.2 (1 Corinthians 12:1-31 and Ephesians 4:4-16). Next, the passages on “headship” and “submission” are analysed in 2.4.3 (1 Corinthians 11:3-16 and Ephesians 5:21-33). In 2.4.4, the command for women to keep quiet in church will be briefly taken under scrutiny (1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15). Then in 2.4.5, a passage (Galatians 3:28) frequently interpreted as promoting gender equality will also be investigated. Lastly a passage in Romans, where Paul greets a number of people, including women (Romans 16) will be briefly studied (2.4.6).

2.4.2 Other passages pertaining to “body of Christ”

As far as the separate gifts are concerned, Paul does not provide a systematic list of gifts (Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:446-447), but rather emphasises the variety of gifts and services that God bestows upon the congregation. It would thus be futile to compare a list from Romans 12 to a list from 1 Corinthians 12 (as well as to one from Ephesians 4). It would be more meaningful to point out that which is unique regarding *gifts* in each passage. That which is unique will enhance the researcher’s insight into Paul’s more general understanding of *gifts* in the *body of Christ*. It is for this purpose that the “new” thoughts specifically regarding *gifts* – different to those in Romans 12:3-8 – in this passage (as quoted above) are underlined.

2.4.2.1 A cursory exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

The text of 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 (Bible, 1989:New Testament:170-171) reads as follows:

¹Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers (and sisters), I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. ¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot would say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear would say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many members, yet one body. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' ²²On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; ²⁴whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, ²⁵that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. ²⁷Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way."

According to verses 4 to 6, Paul mentions the fact that there are "varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit, ...", "varieties of services, but ... the same Lord...", "varieties of activities, but ... the same God", each time referring to another person in the Trinitarian formula. The use of the three persons surely refers to the *one* divine origin of the gifts (Ruef, 1977:127; Morris, 1978:169; Bruce, 1987:118; cf. Thiselton, 2000:928). By "variety" Paul also wants to point out to the Corinthians that there are many gifts and not only the one gift of "speaking in tongues" (Ruef, 1977:127; cf. Thiselton, 2000:928). Paul is integrating the "speaking in tongues" so that Christians would not appear to be crazy (Theissen, 2003:79). "The Spirit does not confer the same gifts on each believer" (Bruce, 1987:118; cf. Zodiates as quoted in Thiselton, 2000:930). Gifts are distributed amongst all believers. All do not receive the same gift, but all these gifts come from the same Spirit, implying that there cannot be any "rivalry, discontent, or a feeling of superiority" among believers (Barrett, 1987:283-284). It is

the same God who activates all the gifts in everyone (verse 6), and therefore – although uniformity among believers cannot be expected – unity lies in God who is at work (Barrett, 1987:284; cf. Thiselton, 2000:933). After describing how diverse these gifts are, verse 11 summarises all this again, by repeating that “all these (gifts) are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses”. This implies, according to Barrett (1987:286), that each believer receives some gift. Oden (2002:121) points it out rightly that “the Spirit administers them (the gifts), knowing what gift best befits each believer for service ... and each congregation’s needs, and the world’s needs” (researcher’s parenthesis).

Applied to the genders, this text cannot mean that *men* have to decide which gifts the Spirit can give to women and which not, because it is the *Holy Spirit* who assigns the gifts.

The rhetorical questions “Are all apostles? ... are all teachers ... do all possess gifts ...?” in verses 29 and 30 suppose a self-evident negative answer (Ruef, 1977:139; Barrett, 1987:296; Bruce, 1987:123; cf. Thiselton, 2000:1022-1023). Each believer depends on the ministries of the rest of the church (Barrett, 1987:296; cf. Thiselton, 2000:1023). Hereby Paul once again stresses the principle of diversity in unity (Bruce, 1987:123; cf. Thiselton, 2000:1023). The theme that clearly runs through this pericope like a golden thread, is unity despite variety and differences. Applied to *genders*, the church consists of women and men alike, forming one unity.

2.4.2.2 A cursory exegetical study of Ephesians 4:4-16

The text of Ephesians 4:4-16 (Bible, 1989:New Testament:191) reads as follows:

⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. ⁷But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. ⁸Therefore it is said, “When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.” ⁹(When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) ¹¹The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. ¹⁴We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. ¹⁵But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

Essentially, only verses 7 and 11 in this passage are relevant to the theme of this research. Before dealing with verse 7, a brief reference is made to the preceding verses in the pericope, verses 4 to 6. Verses 4-6 have laid the foundation for the readers who are believers (MacDonald, 2000:289). This foundation is that the believers are to be one; the body is not supposed to be divided (Hendriksen, 1976:188).

Paul continues in verse 7 by pointing out that within this body as a unity there is diversity (see section 2.4.2.1 on 1 Corinthians 12:1-31). He says, "each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift". The gifts are not always of the same size or of the same nature; Christ decides how to bestow the gifts according to his plan (Wilson, 1978:85; Best, 1998:377; MacDonald, 2000:289). No one has been skipped (MacDonald, 2000:289); "each" has received this grace that Christ has given. This is not for the believer's own glory, but for the benefit of the whole body (Hendriksen, 1976:188-189; Best, 1998:377). No believer should be boastful about his or her gifts. This thought pattern is much the same as the words we find according to Romans 12:3 where Paul warns the believers not think too highly of themselves (see section 2.3).

Moving from the verse under discussion, verse 7, it should be noted that these *gifts* are those which are received, while in the next verse discussed, verse 11, the gifts are the people themselves, believers "who have a particular role to play in the church" (Best, 1998:376,388). (It is noticeable, too, that in this passage Christ is the giver of the gifts, in comparison to God who gives in 1 Corinthians 12:28 (Best, 1998:388; MacDonald, 2000:291).)

A concept that has to be kept in mind is the fact that as far as gifts are concerned, there is a direction in which the transaction of gifts flow. The giver is the triune God who is giving the *gifts* to the believers. The receiving end is thus the believers and it implies grace from God towards the receiver. According to verse 11 Paul describes the *gifts* that are given (to the church, by implication). These *gifts* are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The *gifts* have not been deserved or worked for. By grace, Christ has given them to the church, and they are not the result of works (Best, 1998:377). The purpose of the gifts is that they are to equip the saints and to build up the church (Ephesians 4:12).

The gifts have to serve a purpose to obtain a certain goal. Starting at verse 11, in the Greek manuscript, verses 11 to 16 are one long sentence, implying that the whole argument flows from verse 11 (Best, 1998:388). The context supports the idea that the reasoning up to verse 16 stems from verse 11, showing the purpose of the *gifts* (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) (Hendriksen, 1976:197). These *gifts* are given to the church to equip

the church (Fowler, 1988:78) and to build up the body (Wilson, 1978:85; Oden, 2002:121) so that the body can grow towards maturity. All believers have the priestly task to equip the other, and together they are responsible to edify the church (Hendriksen, 1976:198; Breytenbach, 1992:395). The purpose therefore is to enable the church (the body in Paul's metaphor) to mature by believers that are equipped to facilitate this ripening development.

Therefore, there is no way of determining whether these offices or gifts in verse 11 are only meant for men (Best, 1998:394). Best (1998:394) also adds that notice should be taken that Junia, a woman, is termed an *apostle* in Romans 16:7 and that the New Testament also records women as *prophesying* (Acts 21:9) and *teaching* (Acts 18:26).

Best (1998:393) makes mention of the fact that the gifts listed in verse 11 refer to preaching, ruling and teaching, and that they are "primarily ministries with a verbal orientation", and that there surely ought to be non-verbal areas of ministry, such as *loving care*. However, there are no references in Ephesians 4:4-16 to the "more practical functions of administration or caring for the needs of the poor" (MacDonald, 2000:291). This could mean that if women also indeed received these gifts, they must have performed tasks in the church that are today seen as traditionally the tasks that fit into the male stereotype.

2.4.3 Two passages pertaining to "headship" and "submission"

These two passages move away from the *gift*-part of the theme of this research, to the *gender*-part of the theme.

2.4.3.1 A cursory exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 11:3-16

The text of 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 (Bible, 1989:New Testament:169) reads as follows:

³*But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ.* ⁴*Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head,* ⁵*but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head—it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved.* ⁶*For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil.* ⁷*For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man.* ⁸*Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man.* ⁹*Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man.* ¹⁰*For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.* ¹¹*Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman.* ¹²*For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God.* ¹³*Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled?* ¹⁴*Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him,* ¹⁵*but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering.* ¹⁶*But if anyone is disposed to be contentious—we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.*

The meaning of the word *kefalh* in this pericope comes under scrutiny, in order to determine how and whether the concepts of *headship* and *submission* are at work in 1 Corinthians 11:3-16.

In order to understand the hierarchical tones in the pericope, it is imperative first to have some insight into the socio-historical background of the passage. Therefore a brief explanation is given below:

2.4.3.1.1 An explanation of the socio-historical background of 1 Corinthians 11:3-6

Many recent commentators on 1 Corinthians – and the New Testament as a whole – see this passage against the backdrop of the Mediterranean complex of an “honour” and “shame” social value system that was prevalent in the mid-first century. The prestige of a person or group was measured in terms of “honour” and “shame” (Moxnes, 1989:100; Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994:230-232; cf. Browning *et al.*, 1997:129-154; Dreyer, 1998:155; Fee, 2000:63-64; Thiselton, 2000:826; Browning, 2004:5-6). In our modern western industrialised culture, the equivalent rating of prestige would be found in the extent to which an individual or family possesses economic assets or not (cf. Dreyer, 1998:155). Seen within the context of 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, this quest for “status”, “prestige” and “honour” can be found in the use of *disgrace* (head covered or not covered, in verses 4, 5 and 6) and *glory* (a woman’s long hair, in verse 15). This meant that a man dishonoured his head (shame increased) by prophesying or praying with something on his head (verse 4), because he was thereby abdicating the sovereignty and dignity that the Creator has invested him with (Bruce, 1987:104; cf. Perriman, 1998:101-102). A woman was in the same way dishonouring her *physical* head (shame increased) when she was prophesying or praying without a veil on her head (verse 5).

Although there are commentators (cf. Thiselton, 2000:828) that choose for understanding *kefalh* (head) as both physical as well as metaphorical for *head* as husband, the researcher would at first prefer to make a choice for the woman’s *anatomical or physiological head*. Osiek (2004:24) however, sees it differently, she points out that “head” refers to a leader or authority of one person above another. The researcher’s choice for the woman’s *anatomical or physiological head* is made due to the implied tones of “honour” and “shame” in the passage under discussion. Barrett (1987:251), pointing out that mention is made of *shaving* in the last part of the same verse, makes an argument for her *physical* head, too. When a woman wore a veil or hood, it was a warning that she was a respectable woman (honour increased) and that no man dared approach her. Not wearing a veil or hood and

displaying her loose locks of hair were an indication that she was sexually “available” to men (Thiselton, 2000:821,828). Paul emphasised that this would be highly inappropriate while Christian men and women were worshipping. Similarly, Schüssler-Fiorenza (1994:233) says that 1 Corinthians should be understood against the contextual background of Paul arguing “against orgaistic (sic) behavior in the worship of the community”. Therefore, an argument is made for the fact that this pericope applies to a culture that does not exist anymore. In which way could it still apply to the 21st century church? Thiselton (2000) has a reasoning (discussed further below) that may shed light on this question.

Before proceeding further, it should be mentioned that Paul was also curbing the *blurring of sexes*, in the light of homosexuality and lesbianism which was rife among the pagans Corinth in the first century (cf. Fee, 2000:62-63). For Paul, the Christian community had to live and dress in such a way that no one would confuse a male for a female, or *vice versa*. The genders had to be distinct (Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:462; Ruef, 1977:108-111; Barrett, 1987:251; Murphy-O’Connor, 1997:289-290; Fee, 2000:61; Thiselton, 2000:805).

Certainly the cultural background described above is no more the same today. This leads to the question whether *headship* and *submission* is still valid today. Thiselton (2000:804) rightly argues that it would do injustice to either Paul’s view of gender or to his perspective on God and Christ if this passage were seen as either bare egalitarianism or an overemphasised “subordinationism”. Such a great deal of the language used in this passage refers to a large variety of nuances in metaphors and culture, so that it becomes extremely difficult to understand the language in terms of lexicography alone (Thiselton, 2000:801).

Thiselton (2000:812-822) chooses a view (opposed to the researcher’s viewpoint in favour of a woman’s *anatomical* or *physical* head) and argues quite convincingly that there are three meanings according to which the Greek word *kefalē* functions:

- i) Head
- ii) Source
- iii) Pre-eminent, Foremost, and Synecdoche for a Representative Role.

Thiselton (2000:800) prefers the latter meaning, i.e. “Pre-eminent, Foremost, and Synecdoche for a Representative Role”. Accordingly, Thiselton (2000:800) translates verse 3 as follows:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:3 “However, I want you to understand that while Christ is preeminent (or head? source?) for man, man is foremost (or head? source?) in relation to woman, and God is preeminent (or head? Source?) in relation to Christ.”

The researcher has to admit that there are so many diverse translations for κεφαλῆ that it is extremely difficult to arrive at one conclusive translation. Fee (2000:62, 64) describes the use of the word “head” as a wonderful word play. Thiselton (2000:811) respects all previous commentators advocating hierarchical authority, such as *inter alia* Barrett (1987:248). Thiselton (2000:811) then continues by pointing out that Paul was probably setting up a “complex and conscious dialectic” between a *gender-distinctive order in creation* on the one hand, and a *gospel order of reciprocity and mutuality*. As Gundry-Volf is quoted by Thiselton (2000:811), Paul may have been appealing to creation (in Genesis) to support an exhortation to accept a type of “foremost” relationship between male and female believers, and simultaneously stressing their new social equality in Christ without denying their gender differences (cf. Fee, 2000:64).

A quote from Murphy-O’Connor (1997:290) is significant at this point:

1 Corinthians 11:11-12 is the first and only explicit defence of the complete equality of women in the New Testament. Paul overturned the traditional argument from the chronological priority of the male in the creation narrative by pointing out that the chronological priority of woman in the birth of a male is just as much part of God’s plan for the order of his creation (1 Cor. 11:12). ... Equality is the issue here, not complementarity.

In the next section the focus is shifted to Ephesians 5:21-33.

2.4.3.2 A cursory exegetical study of Ephesians 5:21-33

The text of Ephesians 5:21-33 (Bible, 1989:New Testament:192) reads as follows:

²¹ Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²² Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. ³² This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. ³³ Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

First of all, this passage is distinctly a description of how *marriage in particular* ought to be (Lloyd-Jones, 1975:85-235; Wilson, 1978:115; Wiersbe, 1980:141-147; Stott, 1999:220). Osiek (2004:25) argues that the passage is not primarily about marriage, but about the church, as is the whole epistle. The researcher however, would rather see it as intended for

marriage within the church. This passage, therefore, is not that as crucially relevant for gender roles within church and society, as it is for marriage. These verses refer to the relationship between husband and wife (Wiersbe, 1980:141). However, the passage is helpful in pointing out the simultaneous equality and complementarity between men and women (cf. Stott, 1999:222). The submission, to which Paul admonishes the believers in Ephesus, is thus a more specific submission for married couples and does not define submission of women towards men in general (Wilson, 1978:115).

However, this submission in marriage is qualified in more than one way. It firstly is a *submission to one another* (upotassomenoi allhlou~) out of reverence for Christ according to verse 21. Therefore this subjection is *mutual and reciprocal* (cf. also 1 Corinthians 7:3-4 where men and women are described as equal in sexual matters). This *mutual and reciprocal* subjection is already a sign of the freedom in Christ that Paul is proclaiming. The *submission* would most likely be for the sake of spreading the gospel amidst a patriarchal society that was frowning upon this new Jewish-messianic sect with their new view on gender roles (cf. Van Leeuwen, 2004:20). It is a subjection of wife to husband as well as husband to wife. Secondly, wives are admonished: "be subject to your husbands, as you are to the Lord" (verse 22). The subjection denotes something spiritual, a submission that is holy, and according to the example of the obedient relationship of a believer or the church towards the Lord (Wiersbe, 1980:143). To the researcher there is a holy and Christ-obedient quality added to the attitude of subjection, which was not present in the patriarchal society that prevailed in the times of the New Testament church.

This spiritual dimension of wives' submission is further motivated by the twofold simile or analogy in verses 23 and 24 (MacDonald, 2000:326-327). The first part of the simile in verse 23 is that the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church. The second part of the simile in verse 24 strengthens the first part, where Paul says wives should model their subjection to their husbands according to the church's subjection to Christ.

In order to understand the description of the husband as the *head* of the wife (in the first part of the simile), it is necessary to understand how Paul uses the word '*head*'. The use of *head* (kefalh) in the context of Ephesians 5:21-33 is also discussed in Thiselton's (2000:812) commentary on 1 Corinthians. Thiselton agrees with other commentators such as Cervin, Perriman and Gregory Dawes (with regard to Ephesians 5:21-33), that kefalh primarily denotes *head in contrast to body*, but more widely "that which is most prominent, foremost, uppermost, pre-eminent" (Thiselton, 2000:812). The implication is therefore that a move is made away from the traditional view that kefalh means "authority, supremacy or

leadership". To the researcher this is the type of meaning he accepts with regard to the 1 Corinthians 11:3-6 passage discussed above (see section 2.4.3.1.1).

When the first part of the simile in verse 23 continues in its description of Christ as the *head* of the body, the sentence is extended, by circumscribing the body as "the body of which he (Christ) is the saviour" (MacDonald, 2000:326-327). The implication is thus that the husband plays a type of sacrificial saviour role towards his wife, similar to the role Christ plays towards the church (Wilson, 1978:116, Stott, 1999:225). MacDonald (2000:327) is careful not to apply this saviour role to the husband, and says it is rather Christ who protects the body and he rescues it: ideas which reflect the Mediterranean values of honour and shame. In the everyday interactions men became the defenders of honour; "they protect the reputation of women who in turn must display appropriate 'shame' " (MacDonald, 2000:327).

The second part of the simile in verse 24 strengthens the first part of the simile, by describing the mirror image (MacDonald, 2000:328). Paul says wives should model their subjection to their husbands according to the church's subjection to Christ (MacDonald, 2000:328). For Paul the wife's submission is a voluntary, free, joyful and thankful attitude of partnership with her husband, a grateful acceptance of his care (Stott, 1999:226). Her submission does not keep her from being a woman, but rather positively enriches her womanhood (Stott, 1999:226).

Stott (1999:221) explains how male headship and female submission in marriage is grounded in the creation narrative in Genesis 2, in favour of which Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 11:3-12 (cf. section 2.4.3.1) and 1 Timothy 2:11-13. In both these latter Scriptures, Paul points out that woman was made after man, out of man and for man, and Paul adds that man is also born from woman, so that man and woman are dependent on one another (Stott, 1999:221). This is why Stott (1999:221) says that Paul bases his case for the husband's headship on the fact of creation, making Paul's argument one of permanent and universal validity, which cannot be dismissed as culturally limited. There are at least two cases that are culturally limited, the one being on women prescribed to wear a veil, and the other one on women keeping silent in worship (Stott, 1999:221).

Although the description before the abovementioned seems like a strong plea, reinforcing patriarchal authority of husbands, the rest of the pericope (verses 25-33) illustrates how this relationship between husband and wife is characterised as a loving and self-sacrificing treatment of husbands towards their wives (Stott, 1999:226-231; MacDonald, 2000:328).

In Lloyd-Jones' (1975:191-194,215-221) lengthy exposition, he makes it very clear how the relationship between the Christian husband and wife ought to function. In Lloyd-Jones' (1975:191-194,215-221) discussion on verses 25-33 (and in particular, verses 28 to 33, where Paul describes the loving relationship in terms of man's love for his own body and Christ's love for the church), a number of valuable aspects of the man-woman as well as Christ-church relationship are discussed. The exposition refers to Genesis 2 where Adam was originally one, and woman was taken out of him (Lloyd-Jones, 1975:192; cf. Stott, 1999:221). The mystery, which Paul mentions in verse 32, is brought to a climax by presenting Adam as incomplete without Eve, "and the deficiency, the lack, was made up by the creation of Eve" (Lloyd-Jones, 1975:192). Furthermore, as Eve was a part of Adam, taken out of his side, in a similar way "the wife is to the man, because she is a part of him" (Lloyd-Jones, 1975:215). The relationship between husband and wife is so intricate, that if a man abuses or neglects his wife, he will suffer as well as the wife (Lloyd-Jones, 1975:216). Applied to genders in the church, husband and wife, and even more generally speaking, male and female, both thus need each other. When the church has to function properly, it should be noted that male and female only really make the church complete when they both participate as members of the *body of Christ*.

Stanley Grenz (1998:617) is right then when he points out that in Ephesians 5:21-33 the example of the life of Jesus Christ is a model of mutuality, and this mutuality ought to exist between women and men.

Verse 33, at the end of the pericope, exhorts wives to fear (fobew) their husbands. Other translations say, "the wife must show reverence for her husband" or "respect him". The essence is that husbands should give their wives a loving and sacrificial (Perriman, 1998:60; Oden, 2002:128) treatment and this would clearly involve the respectful submission of wives to their husbands (Stott, 1999:231; MacDonald, 2000:332).

In the following section gender issues in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 will be studied.

2.4.4 Two passages in the Corpus Paulinum pertaining to the command for women to keep silent in church

2.4.4.1 A cursory exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35

The text of 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 (Bible, 1989:New Testament:172) reads as follows:

^{33b}As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. ³⁵If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

Before performing a cursory exegesis on this passage, it must be noted how commentators have wrestled with it in the past. This short passage is highly problematic and “immensely difficult” to translate and to do an exegesis on (cf. Thiselton, 2000:1146-1147).

Most commentators, with the exception of a small minority, doubt the authenticity or the truly Pauline origin of these verses, although some limit the “strange part” to verses 34 and 35 (excluding verse 33b). Most also suspect that these verses are an interpolation in the form of an early marginal gloss to Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians (Schierse, 1968:43; Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:461; Rief, 1977:154; Crüsemann, 2000:22; Thiselton, 2000:1147). Another probable possibility is that the verses in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 were interpolated by an early copyist. This copyist may have had the sentiments, which are also found in the apparently non-Pauline 1 Timothy 2:11f (cf. Perriman, 1998:105; Thiselton, 2000:1149-1150; Du Toit, 2001:183). Text criticism supports these possibilities, due to the way the “western” textual tradition arranges 14:34-35 after 14:40 (Barrett, 1987:330; Bruce, 1987:135). There are some that see this passage as a Corinthian slogan or a piece of Corinthian theology, which Paul quotes, only to reject it (Thiselton, 2000:1150). Many articles – both in support of and against the authenticity of the text – written to explain actually what the true text is, have been published, as Du Toit (2001:172-186) has recently pointed out in an insightful article. The researcher would conclude that this passage should not be given the same weight as other texts in forming a basis theory of Paul’s view on gender in the New Testament, because of the notoriety of its origin.

These verses (1 Corinthians 14:33b-35) are in direct contradiction to that which Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:5, where he acknowledged that women were already prophesying and praying during worship (cf. Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:461; Rief, 1977:154; Barrett, 1987:330; Bruce, 1987:134, Patterson, 1993:70). However, the researcher is of the opinion that the more immediate context of 1 Corinthians 14 itself is an indication that Paul was exhorting his readers against the unruly noise that was going on during worship. This passage could quite

easily be connected to Paul's exhortation against the chaotic worship, where women could have lost their self-control.

But if all these arguments are put aside, it becomes clear that Paul exhorts women to keep silent in the assemblies of the church (Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:461). However, this passage seems more rigid, less flexible than the way Paul has described the renewal of the created order *in Christ* (Barrett, 1987:330). This passage can be seen against the broader context of speaking in tongues and all sorts of ecstatic experiences, tending to become chaotic. And then it may well be possible that Paul was just trying to exercise constraint by preventing women from "going overboard" and thereby increasing the shame of the congregation (cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994:230-232). Maybe the women are not being commanded to submit to their husbands, but to submit to the principle of order, which is part of Paul's discussion in chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians (cf. Thiselton, 2000:1153-1155).

2.4.4.2 A cursory exegetical study of 1 Timothy 2:8-15

The text of 1 Timothy 2:8-15 (Bible, 1989:New Testament:207) reads as follows:

⁸ I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; ⁹ also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. ¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. ¹² I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; 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 she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

Once again, this passage must firstly be understood against the prevailing socio-historical background of the time in which it was written, and secondly against the goal Paul had in mind in writing this letter to Timothy in Ephesus.

In the first instance, the Judaic view of the status of women was much stricter. What is described here is a major step beyond Judaism, because Jewish women were not allowed access to more than the outer court of the temple, nor to prophesy or read the Torah. Among the Greeks this tradition was even more limiting (Guthrie, 1977:76; cf. Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:460-461; cf. Torjesen, 2000:290; Oden, 2002:123). Fee (2000:66-69) explains at length – by means of a diagram of a typical *domus* (home) – how extremely limited, or even non-existent, public life was for women in a Graeco-Roman home. According to Meeks (1983:23) the hierarchical pattern in families, with the view that the male was always superior to the female, was deeply rooted in law and custom. Seen in the light of these mentioned Judaic and Greek prohibitions, it must indeed be noted that Paul was not

preventing women from *learning* Christian instruction or doctrine, but *permitting women to learn* (verse 11) (Patterson, 1993:70; Oden, 2002:123). It seems quite probable that this passage in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 was addressed to a specific situation in Ephesus (Oden, 2002:125). One only needs to look at the circumstances in other Pauline writings, such as in Romans 16:1-3 and Philippians 4:2-3 (there are many other instances in the New Testament), to see that Paul did not always take the same position with regard to women (Oden, 2002:125). In Romans 16:1-3 (see section 2.4.6.1 below) Paul recognised the fact that women like Phoebe and Prisca did noteworthy ministry in Christian worship. According to Philippians 4:2-3 Paul commended Euodia and Syntyche as co-workers in the gospel (cf. Oden, 2002:125). Other examples are that of Chloe who is briefly mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:11 and that of Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna, (Luke 8:1-3). The latter three women were prosperous and provided Jesus and His disciples with considerable means while traveling from town to town. They continued playing a vital role in Jesus' life as well as in the early church (Luke 23-24 and Acts 1) (cf. Joubert, 2004). Therefore, the researcher would like to stress the fact that in early Christianity, women did start venturing out into public, assertive roles, contrary to the dominating Jewish and Greek culture.

Secondly, one of the primary goals Paul had in mind was to prevent false teaching to spread in the congregation (Guthrie, 1977:32; Kümmel, 1984:367,378-380; Fee, as referred to in Perriman, 1998:137). Perriman (1998:138) points out that the goal-oriented character of Paul's exhortation provides us with an important clue that the practical instructions should not too readily be seen as *absolute*. Paul's wariness about women participating in worship and the teaching ministry of the church was rooted in his great concern about the reputation of both the gospel and of the Christian community in a highly pagan society (cf. Schierse, 1968,43; Reuss, 1969:33; Guthrie, 1977:75; Perriman, 1998:142). This was due to certain women at Ephesus who were probably in some or other unknown way disturbing services of worship under the influence of false teachers (cf. Marshall, 1999:455; Oden, 2002:124-125) and therefore "they should not be put in a position where they might mislead others" (Perriman, 1998:173). But still, the fact that women were causing trouble for Timothy at Ephesus was an indirect indication that the position of women had improved in Christian circles in comparison to what was going on among the Jewish and Hellenistic groups (Oden, 2002:123).

Mention should be made that some commentators on the so-called *troublesome* passage in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 (see section 2.4.4.1 above) suspect the probability that the verses in 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 were interpolated by an early copyist. This copyist may have had the sentiments which are also found in 1

Timothy 2:11-12 (cf. Perriman, 1998:105; Thiselton, 2000:1149-1150; Du Toit, 2001:183).

Marshall (1999:460) highlights the possibility that women in the Christian community of Ephesus were glad to be able to perform the tasks in worship that were traditionally reserved for men only. There may have initially been no problem with their exercising of authority, and it may have been quite "neutral" (Marshall, 1999:460). But their actions "could have been perceived as belittling the traditional role of men, or it may have been carried out in a domineering fashion or been perceived as such" (Marshall, 1999:460). This would have meant that the quiet way of behaving and the recognition of authority which were fit for a learner, were now contrasted with teaching in a manner which was harsh and an abuse of authority (Marshall, 1999:460). According to Marshall (1999:460), this leads to an interpretation of *auqentew* ("have authority over", verse 12) which refers to a description of the nature of the teaching, rather than the role the women played in church leadership as such. It could therefore refer to an attitude and not to a role.

In the following section attention will be paid to a passage frequently interpreted as promoting gender equality.

2.4.5 A passage frequently interpreted as promoting gender equality

Galatians 3:28 is often interpreted as promoting gender equality. Hence an exegetical study of this passage is presented below.

2.4.5.1 A cursory exegetical study of Galatians 3:28

The text of Galatians 3:28 (Bible, 1989:New Testament:186) reads as follows:

²⁸*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*

The last words of this verse (en Cristw Ihsou – in Christ Jesus) seem to hold the key to the meaning of this passage. If male and female are seen as one *in Christ Jesus*, it means that the redeeming work of Jesus Christ is the crucial factor in renewing people and bringing equality among the genders and in unifying them (Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:64). *In Christ Jesus*, men and women stand as equals before God, by God's grace (Wiersbe, 1975:84; Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:460). Together with the classification between Jew and Greek, slave and free, the distinction between male and female is broken. Between male and female there is also no distinction in spiritual privilege or status anymore (Groothuis, 1998).

The consequences are vast. It would mean that the outside world should not be pressuring the church for equality, but that the gospel has provided the ultimate solution almost 2000 years ago. The *indicative* (or gift) of the gospel, is supposed to form that which believers are called to, the *imperative* (the task) (cf. Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:253-258).

The way Pelser (1996:18) puts the matter of *indicative* in relation to the *imperative* (the command form) with regard to Romans, applies likewise to Galatians 3:28. Being “one in Christ Jesus” is a status the believers have due to the fact that they belong to Jesus Christ. The believers, men and women, have been bought free from their previous status as man-over-against-woman and are to live according to that which they believe. Living according to that which they believe means that they should see things as Christ sees it and acting accordingly (cf. Pelser, 1996:18). Without Christ (a status not *in Christ*) means that men and women would not be able to live this way, the patriarchal distinction between male and female would remain a priority as long as they are not *in Christ*.

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:205-241) devotes a whole chapter to Galatians 3:28, in which she describes how Paul incorporated Galatians 3:28 into his letters, among others. Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:206) quotes Krister Stendahl in saying:

The statement (Galatians 3:28 – researcher’s parenthesis) is limited to what happens in Christ through baptism. But in Christ the dichotomy *is* overcome through baptism, a new unity is created, and that is not only a matter discerned by the eyes of faith but one that manifests itself in the social dimensions of the church.

By interpreting and adapting the baptismal formula in Galatians 3:28 in his letters to the community of Corinth (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13), Paul unequivocally affirms the equality and charismatic giftedness of male and female believers (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994:235). Hereby, Paul supports his own view on gender roles according to Galatians in his other letters as well.

Brigitte Kahl (2000:42) sheds fresh light on this passage, when she mentions that “in Christ” the “vertical” lineage of Abraham from father to son gets entirely horizontalized and inclusive. This implies that church and society no longer have to consist of hierarchical relations (Kahl, 2000:42). Nevertheless, Paul’s egalitarian inclusiveness, in rejecting hierarchy, does not reject difference as such (Kahl, 2000:45). Grosskopf and Lotter (2003:14) quote Kahl too, in pointing out that in writing to the Galatians, Paul was *recentering the female* and *decentering physical maleness* in order to develop an *ethics of mutuality*. Paul recognized difference between the genders, but viewed them to be *mutual*.

Therefore, in the larger context of *gender* in the Pauline epistles it is important to bear in mind this *newness in Christ*, which has an influence on the interpretation of gender roles.

Next, the issue of gender roles will be analysed against the background of Romans 16:1-16.

2.4.6 A passage in Romans where Paul greets a number of women

In the sections below Romans 16:1-16 will be studied, to investigate the significance of *Paul's collaboration with women*, his view about them, and in which way women were involved with ministry in church.

2.4.6.1 A cursory exegetical study of Romans 16:1-16

The text of Romans 16:1-16 (Bible, 1989:New Testament:160) reads as follows:

¹I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, ²so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well. ³Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, ⁴and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epänetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. ⁶Greet Mary who has worked very hard among you. ⁷Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. ⁸Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. ⁹Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. ¹⁰Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. ¹¹Greet my relative Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. ¹²Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. ¹³Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother—a mother to me also. ¹⁴Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. ¹⁵Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. ¹⁶Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

2.4.6.1.1 Introductory remarks

One thing Paul's reference to these early Christian women indicates, is that the assumed stereotype of women belonging exclusively to the private sphere of the home seems to be incorrect (Tolbert, 2000:269).

This error is proven wrong when we look at the pericope of Romans 16:1-16 which is headed by the name of Phoebe the *diakono~* (deacon or servant), who is mentioned in verse 1 and 2. Some scholars argue that the greetings in Romans 16 were not part of the letter to the Romans, but rather directed to believers in Ephesus (cf. *inter alia* Bruce, 1976:266-267; Barrett, 1979:281; Moo, 1996:5-9). However, the researcher prefers to agree with *inter alia* Moo (1996:9) by regarding all 16 chapters as part of Paul's letter to the

Romans. Paul commended Phoebe to the Romans and most probably she was asked to deliver the letter to the believers in Rome. The deacon Phoebe was undoubtedly of great support to Paul.

After commending Phoebe, Paul sent an extensive list of greetings (verses 3-16) to people in Rome he already must have known. The list contains 26 specific names (Phoebe's name included, as she was not greeted, but commended), of which 6 certainly were females. An additional 2, Junia and Julia, have practically conclusively been proven to be feminine names (Du Toit, 1984:151; Moo, 1996:922-923,926; Perriman, 1998:68-69), adding up to 8. Paul also sent greetings to 2 *anonymous women*. The *anonymous* greetings were to Rufus' mother (a mother, as it were, to Paul too) (verse 13) as well as to Nereus' sister (verse 15), bringing the females mentioned to a number of 10. Yet, there are 17 definitely named male persons, as opposed to 8 definitely named female persons (plus the 2 anonymous persons) in the greetings (cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994:180).

To summarise the reasoning in the above paragraph, all the women mentioned in Romans 16:1-16 were:

1.	Phoebe	Verses 1-2: Deacon, "benefactor of many ... of myself as well"
2.	Prisca	Verses 3-5: "work(ed) with me in Christ Jesus"; "risked ... for (me)"
3.	Mary	Verse 6: "who has worked very hard among you"
4.	Tryphaena	Verse 12: "those workers in the Lord, ..."
5.	Tryphosa	Verse 12: "those workers in the Lord, ..."
6.	Persis	Verse 12: "who has worked hard in the Lord."
7.	Junia	Verse 7: "prominent among the apostles"; "in Christ before I was"
8.	Julia	Verse 15: (perhaps wife of Philologus, mentioned together)
9.	The mother of Rufus	Verse 13 (no further description)
10.	The sister of Nereus	Verse 15 (no further description)

Dunn (1988:lii) points out that Paul mixed Jewish and Gentile names in order to break down the division among Jew and Gentile. Therefore, the researcher poses that it may not be that inappropriate to say that the mentioning of women together with men in Paul's greetings would also be to acknowledge equality among the genders.

2.4.6.1.2 A discussion of prominent women mentioned in Romans 16:1-16

Only the women Paul describes in more detail will be discussed here, as the others are merely mentioned in the greetings. Those taken into discussion will be Phoebe, Prisca and Junia.

The remainder of the ten in the list, Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Julia, the mother of Rufus and the sister of Nereus are only described as women who have "worked (very) hard" (Mary and Persis – verse 6 and 12), or as "workers in the Lord" (Tryphaena and Tryphosa – verse 12) (cf. Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:461). Nothing more than their toiling in the Lord is mentioned, although this says a lot about the women: that they were and still are hardworking. Julia (verse 15) is mentioned together with Philologus because they may possibly have been a married couple (Sanday & Headlam, 1977:427; Cranfield, 1983:795, Moo, 1996:926). Paul simply conveys greetings to Rufus' mother (verse 13). Apparently she must have provided hospitality towards Paul on some occasion (Moo, 1996:926). To complete the list of women mentioned in Romans 16:1-16, the sister of Nereus, is also mentioned in verse 15. There is likelihood that she and Nereus were brother and sister, and the children of Philologus and Julia (Sanday & Headlam, 1977:427; Moo, 1996:926).

Paul's mentioning of these 9 women (ten, when Phoebe is included) indicates that women played an important role in the early church. In addition to their important role, it may be pointed out that five of these women are described as women who worked hard "in the Lord" (Moo, 1996:927). In the early church, ministry was therefore surely not limited to men, and there is indication that women took part in ministries that were indeed not less important than those of men (Moo, 1996:927).

2.4.6.1.2.1 Phoebe

According to Murray (1975:2:226) Phoebe must have performed an office in the church corresponding to that which belonged to men who exercised the office of deacon. However, Moo (1996:913) rightly indicates that the word Paul uses to describe Phoebe, *diakono-*, is a word that applies to every Christian (cf. Käsemann, 1980:411). Every Christian is a "servant" or "minister" of the risen Christ (Moo, 1996:913). Nevertheless, the description of Phoebe as

diakono~, refers to one of the *charismata* (gifts) (see section 2.3.1.2.) in Romans 12:7 (Wilckens, 1982, 3:131). Moo (1996:914) refers to an article by Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, titled *Missionaries, Apostles, Coworkers: Romans 16 and the Reconstruction of Women's Early Christian History*, where she acknowledges that Paul often applies the word diakono~ to himself and his co-workers. However, Schüssler Fiorenza thinks that the title here is an indication of "Phoebe as the leader and preacher of the church" (Moo, 1996:914). Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:48) in a separate work goes even further by arguing that texts such as Romans 16:1-3 or 16:7 show that leading women in the early church did not owe their positions to Paul. Paul was rather the one who simply had to cooperate with them and he just had to acknowledge their authority (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994:48). Androcentrism is what causes most scholars to play the position and influence of women like Phoebe, Prisca and Junia down, Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:48) adds. In the researcher's view, a patriarchal reading of Romans 16 would easily contribute to an underestimation of the role of women in the early church.

Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:170) argues at another point in her work, *In memory of her*, that exegetes such as Lietzmann (1963) and Michel (1955) project back into the first century the duties of deaconesses in later centuries. The projecting back (cf. Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:460) of the exegetes, Lietzmann and Michel, takes the form of depicting Phoebe in terms of the prescribed gender roles of the 20th century, as someone who only assists and cares, but Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:170) opposes these exegetes by rather describing Phoebe as a *minister of the whole church*. In this respect, Schüssler Fiorenza, in the opinion of the researcher, is perhaps slightly speculative on the meaning of *prōstati~* by giving it the meaning of "direct" or "preside over", describing Phoebe as a "leader" of the church (cf. Moo, 1996:915-916); (see further below in this same section.)

There are two more aspects in verses 1 and 2 on Phoebe that deserve scrutiny. Paul says in verse 2: "so that you may welcome her (Phoebe) in the Lord as is fitting for the saints" and "help her (Phoebe) in whatever she may require from you, for she (Phoebe) has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well".

As far as the first, "as is fitting for the saints", is concerned, the implication is that Paul to a certain extent exhorts the believers in Rome to receive Phoebe in a manner that is becoming for believers, *agiwn* (saints, holy ones). Hereby Paul refers to the Christians in a congregational connection (Ridderbos, H.N., 1977:330-331), as a very special group, in a language of belonging which indicates relations between them in terms of charged emotions (Meeks, 1983:85), which could surely be brought into the context of the *body of Christ*

(Romans 12:3-8). For the researcher, this is a clear argument for how worthy a role the female gender role is as a gift or member in congregations.

Moving to the second reason why the Romans should receive Phoebe, one finds the words "she (Phoebe) has been a benefactor". Much has been written about Phoebe as a "benefactor" (prostatī-) (Moo, 1996:915, Perriman, 1998:67). According to Perriman (1998:67) three basic senses for the word prostatī- can be identified, 1) one who leads, governs, presides; 2) guardian, patron, protector; 3) helper, carer. Perriman (1998:68) and Moo (1996:914) prefer the second meaning of "guardian, patron, protector" / "benefactor". A "patron" is the description of one who was an aid to others, chiefly foreigners (Moo, 1996:916). Phoebe could possibly have been providing accommodation and financial assistance to foreigners arriving in Cenchreae, as well as representing their interests before local authorities (Moo, 1996:916). It would however, not be too farfetched to understand that Phoebe exercised an actual leadership role in the church Perriman (1998:68). For the researcher there is enough proof from the case of Phoebe that there were women that exercised at least a prominent role in the early church of New Testament times.

2.4.6.1.2.2 Prisca

Prisca (or diminutive, Priscilla (Sanday & Headlam, 1977:418), when Luke refers to her) together with Aquila is mentioned first in four of the six instances where the couple is mentioned in the New Testament (Moo, 1996:919). Paul had been exceptionally close to Prisca and Aquila as missionary couple and he and they jointly made tents as a secular trade (Murray, 1975:2:228; Moo, 1996:919). They helped Apollos to get a better understanding of salvation in Christ (Acts 18:26) (Murray, 1975:2:227; Wilckens, 1982, 3:134; Cranfield, 1983:783) and they also intensely ministered to Ephesus along with Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:19) (Moo, 1996:919). Maybe Prisca had a leading part in instructing Apollos, which testifies something significant about women's competence in teaching (Perriman, 1998:63).

In short, in Romans 16:3-5a, Paul stresses the fact that Prisca and Aquila were committed to him and to ministry (cf. Murray, 1975:2:228; Moo, 1996:920).

Prisca and Aquila were co-workers (sunergoi) along with Paul, and they had "risked their lives (literally 'necks')" for Paul (Wilckens, 1982, 3:134; Moo, 1996:920). In their house they must have provided a meeting place for believers to worship in (Moo, 1996:920). Moo (1996:919) mentions in a footnote the possible reasons why Prisca is so many times – here too – mentioned first when the couple is referred to. It may have been that she was the more

dominant of the two, the more gifted, the one who brought most finances into the marriage, or the one who was more prominent in their house church (cf. Bruce, 1976:271; Sanday & Headlam, 1977:418; Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994:178; Moo, 1996:919). Cranfield (1983:784) suggests that Prisca's name may have been mentioned before Aquila's because she was converted before him.

Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:178) states that this couple had house churches in Corinth, Ephesus, (2 Timothy 4:19; Acts 18:18ff.) and Rome (Romans 16:4) and these house churches she speculates, "were missionary centers". Their house church was quite likely not structured like a patriarchal family but rather like a religious association (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994:179).

When the structure was less patriarchal and more a religious association, it sometimes happened that women led. Gordon Fee (2000:72-73) describes why, in a number of instances (Prisca, Nympha, Lydia, Euodia and Syntyche) in the New Testament, where these women were leaders in their households, they also led in the house churches themselves:

When a church met in this kind of household, where they would gather in the atrium, the semipublic area where business was regularly carried on, the householder would naturally serve as the leader of the house church. That is, by the very sociology of things, it would never have occurred to them that a person from outside the household would come in and lead what was understood as simply an extension of the household. To put it plainly, the church is not likely to gather in a person's house unless the householder also functioned as its natural leader (Fee, 2000:73).

Therefore, although it was against the ruling custom of New Testament times, it could be quite likely that Prisca was a strong leader in the church.

2.4.6.1.2.3 Junia

Of Andronicus and Junia it is said that "they were prominent among the apostles" and "they were in Christ before I (Paul) was" (Romans 16:7). Most commentators and writers (cf. *inter alia* Wilckens, 1982, 3:135; Cranfield, 1983:788; DuToit, 1984:151; Moo, 1996:922-923; Perriman, 1998:68-70) are in agreement that Junia was most probably female. However, Bruce (1976:271) is of the opinion that it is "impossible" to say whether Junia was male or female. Newman and Nida (1973: 292), Murray (1975:2:229) and Käsemann (1980:414) do not at all consider Junia as being a woman. Ridderbos, H., (1977:345) is reluctant to accept Junia as female. Sanday and Headlam (1977:423) reckon Junia probably to have been a woman, but they argue – in a patriarchal way – that if Andronicus and Junia were apostles they would both be masculine (cf. Ridderbos, H., 1977:345). Wilckens (1982, 3:135-136)

indicates how the expositors before the 13th century did not take any offence from viewing Junia as a woman. This is where Sanday and Headlam (1977:423) recognise that Chrysostom did not have a problem in seeing Junia as female and they quote Chrysostom as follows:

And indeed to be apostles at all is a great thing. But to be even amongst these of note, just consider what a great encomium this is! But they were of note owing to their works, to their achievements. Oh! how great is the devotion of this woman, that she should be even counted worthy of the appellation of apostle.

Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:47-48) thus rightly points out how contemporary translators have been caught up in the "androcentric-patriarchal mind-set of Western culture" by not doing justice to texts that put women in positive light as leaders in the early church.

As far as the name Junia is concerned, Cranfield (1983:788) among others mentions that if the last "i" in the name were accentuated with a circumflex as in the Nestle Greek New Testament, it must be the accusative of *Iounia*~ and masculine. However, if it is accentuated with an acute accent on the same "i", it will be the accusative form of the Greek spelling of the common Roman female name "Junia" (Cranfield, 1983:788). Since all the accents and punctuation marks were only added to the Greek manuscripts afterwards, the above argument could only support the fact that patriarchal handling of the text could have been biased towards a male reading (cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, 1994:47-48). It may therefore carefully and safely be concluded that Junia was a woman. If Junia was a man, the whole argument that follows, would fall away.

Assuming that Junia was a woman, Moo (1996:923) argues in agreement with most other commentators that she most probably was the wife (or perhaps the sister (Newman & Nida, 1973:292)) of Andronicus. Andronicus and Junia were "prominent among the apostles" according to Romans 16:7. It was exactly because Paul called Junia an "apostle" that commentators found it difficult to view a woman as holding such an authority in the early church (Moo, 1996:923). On the other hand it is this same aspect that makes contemporary commentators so eager to identify Junia as a woman, because if Paul recognised a woman as an apostle, this would support the argument that the New Testament does not place restrictions on women in office (Moo, 1996:923).

In this respect Brown (1986:1066) may be quoted:

What light does the NT shed on the question of the ministry of women today? The type of answers that are given often *depend upon the type of questions asked*. If we ask what are the formal precedents or the explicit statements of the NT *we have already shaped the answer ...* (Italics added by researcher.)

However, as far as apostleship is concerned, many commentators jump to the conclusion that the type of apostle referred to here is that of the *Twelve*, where a strong authoritative type of leadership is implied (Moo, 1996:923). But Paul does not always refer to *apostle* in this narrow sense. He also uses the word in a broader sense as in 1 Corinthians 15:7 where the risen Lord appeared to these apostles (Perriman, 1998:70). Paul was quite likely indicating mere *travelling missionaries* (Moo, 1996:924).

The words in verse 7d, "they were in Christ before I was", indicate that Andronicus and Junia were converted before Paul and therefore were his seniors as Christians (Cranfield, 1983:790). Their conversion could have been in the early stages of the Christian church; maybe they were even eyewitnesses to Jesus' life, but all this is just speculation.

2.4.6.1.3 General remarks about prominent women mentioned in Romans 16:1-16

Cranfield (1983:789) rightly remarks that Paul's mention of Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, the mother of Rufus, Julia and the sister of Nereus is strong and significant evidence of how false the "widespread and stubbornly persistent" idea is that Paul saw women as unimportant. This, in the view of Cranfield (1983:789), is something that has received far too little attention in the church. Gruenler (1997) points out that the whole list of names in Romans 16:1-16, all put together, gives us a sense of unity despite the diversity within the family of believers at Rome. The people greeted range from the privileged to those with names of slaves (Ampliatius in verse 8 and Urbanus in verse 9), husbands and wives (possibly also Philologus and Julia, verse 15), women and men, Gentiles and Jews (although Gentiles predominate). The social unity and the universal acceptance of the believers in Rome by Paul is to be confirmed by the holy kiss (verse 16) (Gruenler, 1997). Paul has been arguing for the unity in Christ throughout the letter and this unity is demonstrated in a striking way by Paul's cohesive list of co-labourers, coming from many walks of life (Gruenler, 1997). Romans 16 represents a cross-section of the church in a wider sense and the unifying attitude of serving characterises those who have been redeemed by the greatest Servant of all time, Jesus Christ (Gruenler, 1997). All these believers who want to serve, women as well as men, are eager to share the good news with others (Gruenler, 1997).

2.5 BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES WITH REGARD TO THE GIFTS AND GENDER ROLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

REGARDING THE SEVEN GIFTS ACCORDING TO ROMANS 12:6B-8

- **Prophecy / speaking God's word (profhteian)**

Prophecy is mainly the proclaiming of God's word with exposition and application, revealing something about God. It must edify the congregation, exhort the believers, and encourage them, making God's will known. Paul expected women to exercise the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 11:5).

- **Ministering / Service / Being a "deacon" (diakonia)**

The gift of service in Romans could have had many meanings. It could have been the description of the role that the deacon fulfilled as the church became institutionalised later on. Some want to see it as the service of the Word, to match with the preceding gift of prophecy and the following gift of teacher. Paul also referred to his ministry as *diakonew* or *diakono-*. As far as the female gender role is concerned, if it was meant to be simply "service to others", it does not matter either, because this was ultimately the role which Jesus Christ modelled in his earthly mission.

- **Teacher (didaskwn)**

The person who has received the gift of teacher takes the already available material from tradition, Old Testament Scriptures, the Gospels and moral instructions, communicating and explaining it and to his hearers. Therefore teaching differs from the prophet in that teaching is insight into existing revelation from God, while prophecy is new insight into the will of God. Teaching preserves continuity in the church. According to Romans 16:3, in conjunction with Acts 18:26, Prisca (a woman known to Paul) was an outstanding teacher, as she taught Apollos more about the "way of God".

- **Exhorter / one who encourages / comforter (paraka lwn)**

The gift of *paraka lwn* (exhorter, encourager or comforter) had more or less the function to help the believers realise their obedience to the gospel. What the teacher explains, the exhorter applies. The function can also be described as directed towards the heart, conscience and will, while it cultivates virtues such as patience and perseverance. The exhorter / one who encourages / comforter, in modern terms, does the pastoral and practical theological dimension of church work.

- **Giver (metadidou~)**

The person performing this gift of *giver* could have been doing it in Paul's time by sharing his own resources with less privileged people. It could also have been that this person was distributing the resources that belonged to the church as a whole among the poor. It was to be done in singleness of mind, without ulterior motives and ungrudgingly. The work Phoebe did, resembled much of this gift.

- **Leader (proistameno~)**

The role of *proistameno~* could either have been that of leading or ruling over the work in a congregation, or it could have been something similar to what the social worker does nowadays, providing support to those in some kind of need. When Phoebe is described as *prostati~* in Romans 16:2, *prostati~* is directly related to the word *proistameno~*, and therefore Phoebe's work could have been either that of a church leader or that of supporting people in need.

- **The compassionate (elewn)**

This gift could have the function of providing in the needs of the poor, but it could also include any act of mercy towards others, for example visiting the sick, old-age care, care for widows and orphans, care for the disabled or even providing for those in prison. This work should be done cheerfully, and if it is done with remorse, it would be offending to the receiver.

BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING GIFTS

ACCORDING TO 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-31

All gifts in the church (the body of Christ) have a divine origin. The Triune God gives a variety of gifts, and the believers in Corinth had to know that "speaking in tongues" was not the one and only gift that there was to receive. Gifts are not reserved for an elite group, but all believers receive gifts, and certainly each believer does not receive the same gift. Because one God bestows the gifts upon the believers, the believers cannot be divided. They must be one, as God is one. When the Spirit administers the gifts to the believers, He knows what gift is best for each believer and He also knows what gifts are best for each congregation's needs. When the Spirit knows which believer should receive what gift, no believer can think that he *achieves* some honour, because it is the Spirit that *ascribes* the gifts. So there is neither place for being boastful about one's gifts, nor for feeling inferior about one's gifts. If one or more members lead, the others should not wish they were leaders, because all cannot be leaders. The gift or gifts of each member in the body of Christ are needed and therefore all the members in the whole body function as one interdependent "organism".

BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING GIFTS

ACCORDING TO EPHESIANS 4:4-16

Stemming from the fact that the body is one, Paul points out that there is diversity. Christ determines by grace what size of gift he wants to give, and what the nature of the gift would be. No one is skipped when Christ bestows gifts by grace. Believers receive gifts so that they can serve in the body of Christ for the benefit of the body, and not for the believer's glory. According to verse 11 the *gifts* are the people themselves. These *gifts* as people are "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers", all given undeservedly. The *gifts* are given to the church to equip and build up the body. All believers have the priestly task to equip the others and edifying the church. There is no way of reserving the gifts in Ephesians 4 to men only. While the gifts listed in verse 11 are primarily verbally orientated – not pertaining to non-verbal gifts like loving care – it could have implications for women. It would mean that if women also received these gifts, they must have fitted into roles in the church that today are seen as traditionally the tasks according to the male stereotype.

BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

REGARDING HEADSHIP AND SUBMISSION ACCORDING TO 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3-16

The idea of a new social equality in Christ, forms the *indicative* of the gospel, proclaiming that after the salvation, which Jesus Christ brought about by rising after his crucifixion and death, is what counts for gender roles in the church. By the new creation *in Christ*, men and women are re-created to stand as equals before God (*the imperative of the gospel*), despite their distinctive gender differences. These distinctive gender differences will and should never change, this is how God intended it for humanity. The genders are mutually interdependent, as Paul puts it in verses 11-12: "*Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God.*" All this would also not change as culture changes either, because in this passage the description about covering or not covering heads had to do with culture. However, Paul stressed their new re-created social equality *in Christ*.

BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

REGARDING HEADSHIP AND SUBMISSION ACCORDING TO EPHESIANS 5:21-33

After all that has been said about wives' submission to their husbands, the standard is set by the first verse of the passage (verse 21). Paul clearly exhorts Christians *in general* to "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ". The Son of God, Jesus Christ, took on the ultimate subordinate role, and he called men and women to follow his serving model. This

means that the life of Jesus Christ offers a model of mutuality that ought to exist between women and men. From this passage it becomes clear that male and female were fundamentally created different from one another and Paul exhorts his readers (as in the other male-female passages) not to disturb the difference. However, marriage makes these two different sexes one, complementing each other in marriage. This difference between the genders has a fundamental effect on church and society, but does not change the fact that they are created equal before God and are redeemed by Christ to be equal once again.

**BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE COMMAND TO KEEP SILENT
ACCORDING TO 1 CORINTHIANS 14:33B-35**

The command for women to keep silent during worship may be seen strictly in the context of glossolalia and all sorts of ecstatic experiences. The command for silence should rather not be seen that much as a reinforcement of gender differences (and gender hierarchy). It should rather be interpreted as intended to keep the order intact, and to keep the Christian community from being repulsive (against the background of "honour" and "shame"), but rather to be attractive, with a missionary character.

BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

REGARDING THE COMMAND TO KEEP SILENT ACCORDING TO 1 TIMOTHY 2:8-15

Undoubtedly, there is no indication in this passage that Paul assigns leadership roles to women in the ministry of the church. In this passage women were only permitted to learn from someone teaching them (something not allowed in surrounding Judaism). There are some clear reasons why nothing can be found about women being allowed to take part in public ministry. The false teaching that was prevalent in Ephesus made it important that women were rather to learn in silence and in full submission to God. Paul may have had (some unknown) good reason to expect that false teachers could get a hold on the women in the congregation. The false teachers getting a hold on some of the women and the women subsequently teaching would have put the "missionary" example towards outsiders in jeopardy. It may also have been that women overplayed their authority, and Paul was correcting this behaviour, because there were many other instances where women took part in ministry (and were acknowledged by Paul) in the church.

BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING EQUALITY

ACCORDING TO GALATIANS 3:28

In viewing male and female as one *in Christ*, the salvation work of Christ is the crucial factor for bringing unity as well as equality between men and women. This is solely a deed of grace from

God that manifests in the lives of human beings and it is not a "right". There ought not to be any pressure from the outside world on the church to attend to gender equality, as this equality can only truly be *in Christ*. The equality between male and female is a status believers have due to the fact that they belong to Jesus Christ. According to Galatians 3:28 it is *in Christ* that the vertical lineage of Abraham from father to son has been diminished in order to re-centre females in an inclusive and mutual community of believers.

BASIS-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE WOMEN MENTIONED

ACCORDING TO ROMANS 16:1-16

- Although the common custom in the society surrounding the early church was far more patriarchal, Paul brought the gospel of Jesus Christ, proclaiming that in Christ men and women have been redeemed to be equal. Their status due to the fall into sin (Genesis 3) has been restored by the risen Lord to make man and woman equal before God (cf. Galatians 3:28 and John 17:11,21).
- Paul acknowledges the fact that women toiled, as it were, shoulder against shoulder with him in spreading the gospel among those that have not yet heard it. It is remarkable, and surely not sheer coincidence, that Paul used the phrase "worked hard" in connection with women, while other descriptions go with men.
- The three women that are highlighted as prominent people in the passage, Phoebe, Prisca and Junia, all had some or other type of influence that they exercised in the spheres in which they were working. Phoebe made a significant difference by being extraordinarily helpful to those in the church at Cenchreae. Based on this Phoebe was highly recommended as bearer of the letter to the Romans. Prisca's work together with her husband Aquila as missionary was noteworthy because they worked independently. The fact that Prisca's name is mentioned first could indicate that she was more gifted than her husband, which implies that there is nothing wrong if women exceed their husbands. Junia's case points to the fact that women also belonged to the wider circle of apostles, and she and her husband were exemplary missionaries.
- There is no doubt that this passage indicates how women were already part and parcel of the church's public ministry in a society where society was patriarchal.

2.6 SUMMARY

The objectives of this chapter were to formulate basis-theoretical perspectives from the different New Testament passages referring to *gifts, gender, submission and headship* and

then to formulate basis-theoretical perspectives. These crucial perspectives have been proposed in the abovementioned columns.

In the next chapter metatheoretical perspectives on *gifts* and *gender roles* will be discussed and finally be out in a hermeneutical interchange with the basis-theoretical perspectives in order to formulate the practical-theoretical perspectives in chapter 4.

Chapter 3

Metatheoretical perspectives on gifts and gender roles - “Gifts among the genders?”

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Two aspects are dealt with in this chapter. Firstly, the researcher investigates what some other *relevant disciplines* (psychology, sociology, law and feminist theology) say about *gifts* and *gender*. Secondly, a *qualitative data analysis* (the empirical component of the research) is performed, in which the response of the six persons involved in a questionnaire are discussed.

Contrary to the pattern in the past, the issue of women in different positions received a lot of attention lately (cf. Buxton, 2003:1). This matter also calls forth the related issue regarding the gifts (or talents) of women, not only in the church, but also in a wider spectrum of society. Grosskopf (2002:1-4) for instance points out that Paul actually uses the metaphor of the *body of Christ* with its *members and their gifts* (in Romans 12:3-8) to emphasise the necessity to recognise, appreciate and nurture differences. He has shown convincingly that Romans 12:3-8 addresses domination and the misuse of power, which spoils relationships, and this passage could indeed serve as a critique on the division brought about in those instances where imbalances amongst the genders are still persisting. Brigitte Kahl (2000:49) refers to Galatia and speaks about the *recentering of the female* and a *decentering of physical maleness* in order to develop an *ethics of mutuality* (italics by researcher) – something that should get attention today as well. The apostle Paul was promoting the concept of oneness in Galatians 3:28, bringing a liberating vision of egalitarian inclusiveness and rejecting hierarchy but not difference as such (Kahl, 2000:45).

This chapter proposes that theological research should look seriously what has been published in *other* disciplines concerning the acceptance and integration of and the enrichment by the gifts of women, both in the church and society at large. In this chapter an attempt will be made to go outside the boundaries of theology in order to draw upon other bodies of knowledge, notably Psychology Sociology, Law and Feminist Studies. Heyns and Pieterse (1998:50) describe a meta-theory as a theory in which scientific points of departure are expounded which are universally shared with other disciplines. After discussing the contributions of these disciplines, a conclusion will be drawn where recommendations are made. In this respect Carmody (1996:251) is right when she concludes that Christian

feminists should keep talking to secular feminists, because the latter enable the Christians to stay honest with themselves and *vice versa*.

It may be peculiar that a male researcher writes about this issue, but the remark by Phyllis Bird (1999:130) should put all men at ease:

Ultimately it (feminist reading – researcher) should make sense to men as well. Feminism, and feminist interpretation, is not idiosyncratic, concerned only with female history and female nature, but aims to provide a more adequate account of our gendered human nature and history.

For the purposes of this chapter, a number of models can be used. Heitink (1999:112-120) gives an overview of models used in Germany and in North America. In his discussion, Heitink (1999:112-120) makes mention of models such as those of *inter alia* R. Zerfass and G. Otto (both in Europe), S. Hiltner, Don S. Browning, D. Tracy and James W. Fowler (all in North America). Browning, in his 1983 work, "Practical Theology", makes the following remark:

There seems to be a growing desire to make theology in general more relevant to the guidance of action and to bridge the gap between theory and practice, thought and life, the classical theological disciplines and practical theology (cf. Heitink, 1999:117-118).

The main thrust of practical theology is to bridge the gap between theory and practice. From the many different models then, the researcher chose to use the model of Zerfass, as Heitink describes it (1999:113-114). This model is similar to the striking model of James W. Fowler, which was developed almost a decade later in 1983 (cf. Heitink, 1999:118-119). The reason for this choice lies in the fact that Zerfass's model indicates dissatisfaction with the current praxis (women less recognised than men in official church work). In order to improve the praxis, it would not help to only consult church tradition and existing theology, as the same conclusions as in the past would then continue. Once the praxis is examined by using a series of instruments from the social sciences (situational analysis or metatheory in Zerfass's model), tensions can become visible, such as that women are appreciated for their work in various other professions (cf. *inter alia* Van de Kemp *et al*, 2001:109). For Zerfass (quoted by Tucker, 2003:2), consulting the other sciences is vital for practical theology, and therefore practical theology is now classified as

an operational science involving reflection, theory, methodology and research (or "Handlungswissenschaft" in German) on a par with *psychology, sociology, pedagogy, political science, economics and communication sciences* (researcher's italics).

When the existing praxis – with certain actions flowing forth from the visible tensions that the situational analysis (metatheory) illuminates – is renewed, a new praxis can be formulated (cf. Heitink, 1999:113). Moving in the direction of such a new praxis, metatheory functions in such a way that it defines scientific premises that are shared more or less universally with other sciences. Basis theory in its turn is developed by the specific science (theology in this case) for its own purposes (Heyns & Pieterse, 1998:49). *(Refer to Figure 3.1 on next page.)*

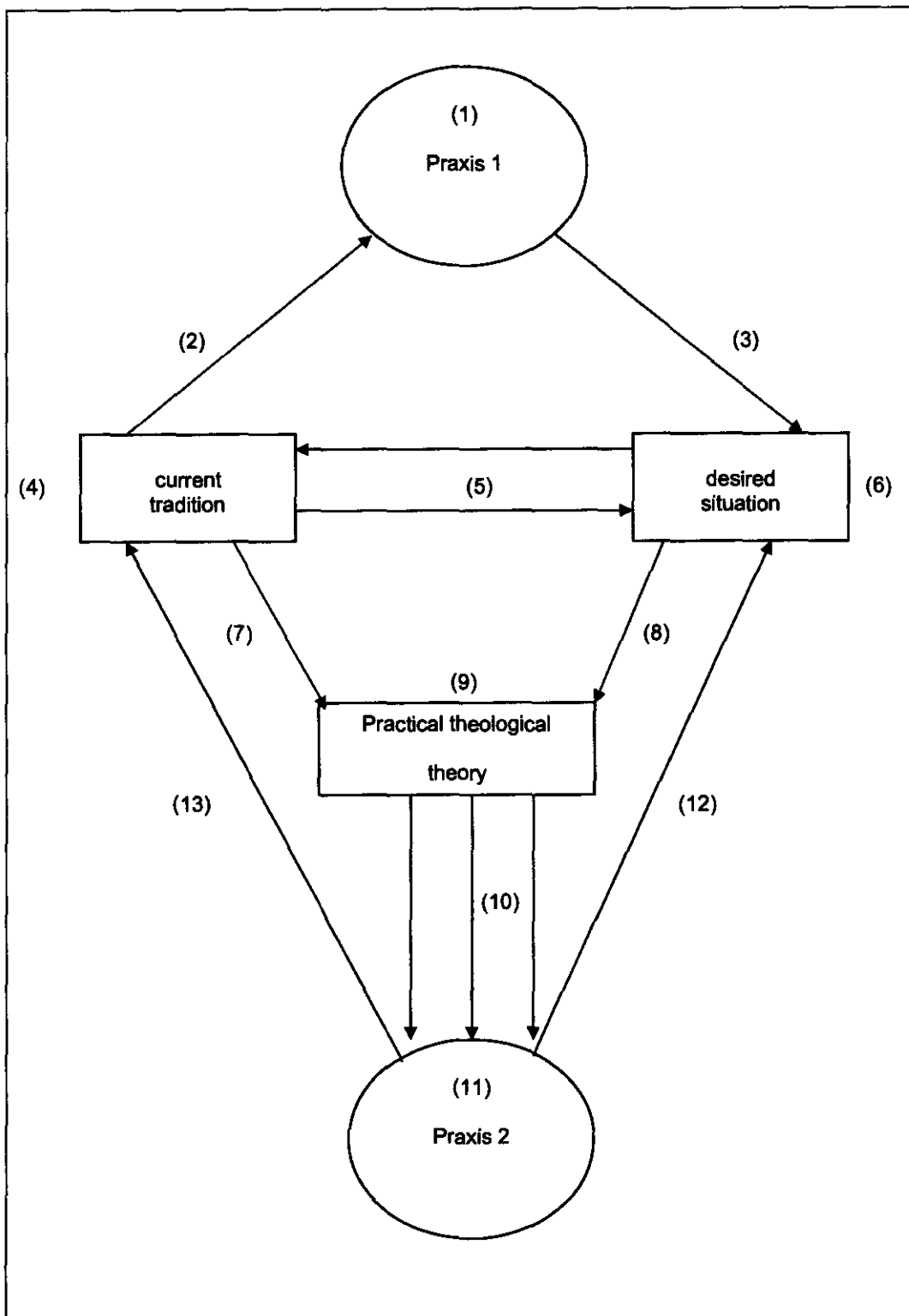
It may be appropriate to quote Gerben Heitink (1999:119-120) when he refers to the feminist Rebecca S. Chopp who suggests even something more should be done in practical theology:

Rebecca S. Chopp offers a critical approach from the perspective of liberation theology and feminist theology. She criticises the "revised correlation method" of Tracy and Browning, identifying it with a purely academic way of "doing" theology, more specifically of "doing" modern liberal theology. This approach is focussed on the problems of modernity, as the cognitive crisis of the Christian faith in modern culture, without engaging itself in the praxis of the victims of history.

Therefore, it would be most helpful for the researcher to take note of what happens "in the praxis of the victims of history" (Chopp, as referred to by Heitink, 1999:120).

This chapter, then, will consist of two sections: firstly a study of gifts and gender roles with regard to other relevant sciences will be performed (section 3.2), followed by the second section (section 3.3), a qualitative data analysis, also regarding gifts and gender roles. In the first part, discussing the views of four other relevant sciences, the researcher starts on an individual level, Psychology (section 3.2.2). As is done with the other three as well, Psychology is dealt with from a feminist perspective. The same approach will be applied to Sociology, which deals with people in groups (section 3.2.3). A look will then be taken at Law in relation to Feminism (section 3.2.4), concluding with a discussion of Feminism and Feminist Theology itself (section 3.2.5). The second main section consists of an analysis of a questionnaire that was completed by six respondents (section 3.3). In this way the research "listens to" other sciences as well as to what "people in the world outside" say.

Figure 3.1: Diagram of the model of Zerfass (Heitink, 1999:114)



3.2 OTHER RELEVANT DISCIPLINES

3.2.1 Introductory remarks

Within the ecclesiastic reality, the phenomenon of male as well as female involvement in church life is being studied in this practical-theological research. In the past three or more decades, female involvement in the church, including election in the offices of deacon, elder, minister, priest and bishop have been studied and scrutinised world-wide (cf. Pfitzner & Steicke, 1999:136-146; Grey, 2001:9-10; Isherwood & McEwan, 2001:17). While a basis-theoretical understanding from the Bible and theology as a whole can cast light on the subject of female involvement in the offices of the church, there are other disciplines that also shed light on female involvement and enrich this study. Clark (2001:397) argues that: "... scholarship on women and gender in religion, is highly dependent on theoretical and historical approaches *derived from the other academic disciplines*" (italics by researcher). The whole feminist movement, with all its various shades, is closely linked to the matter. The disciplines of Psychology, Sociology and Law each study certain matters that are unique to their respective disciplines. However, it is possible that their fields of study can sometimes overlap with one another. Each of the mentioned disciplines also pay attention to feminism, while feminism as a discipline, in turn, links up with the discipline of Theology in the form of Feminist Theology as a separate discipline. Therefore, when Psychology, Sociology and Law are discussed, they can respectively also be seen as *Feminist Psychology*, *Feminist Sociology*, and *Feminist Law or human rights or women's rights*, linking up with *Feminist Theology*.

In analogy to a work on Didactics by Fraser *et al.* (1990:3-8), ecclesiastic reality can be described in a similar fashion to the way educational reality and didactics are described, in a manner of *linked-ness* and *overlapping*. Hence, the linked-nesses and overlapping areas make it possible to explore the issue of gender and gifts, forming a type of common ground amongst the various disciplines. It would entail a focus on feminist issues on a wider plane where links can be made with other relevant disciplines like psychology, sociology, law and feminist theology.

The disciplines which will be discussed here are Psychology (3.2.2), Sociology (3.2.3), Law (i.e. Human rights or Women's rights) (3.2.4) and Feminism / Feminist Theology (3.2.5).

3.2.2 Psychology

To start off on the most personal, individual, one-on-one level, the feminist focus of psychology is discussed firstly. An investigation is made of what is described on a psychological level amongst the genders. Are there for instance, traits that tend to be more present in females and less in males, and vice versa? The differences between the two sexes have been investigated regularly, in researching feminism from a psychological viewpoint.

But before any further discussion, a distinction should be made between **gender** and **biological sex**.

3.2.2.1 Distinguishing between **gender** and **biological sex**

Sometimes the term **gender** is misunderstood. **Gender** is mainly seen as the part of human nature and personality that is culturally shaped by society to be feminine or masculine, while **biological sex** refers to the given fact that a person is born as a male or female individual (cf. Encarta, 2004; cf. Kearl, 2004). The roles that men and women follow are prescribed by culture and society (cf. Kearl, 2004). Hence that society at large tends to be reluctant to accept feminine traits found in a biologically male individual, or masculine traits in a biologically female individual.

The researcher now returns to the focus of this section, **feminism** from a **psychological viewpoint**.

Some feminists, especially those inspired by Simoné de Beauvoir in her 1949 book *The second sex* (English translation), have even made an attempt in the middle of the 20th century to solve the problem of female suppression by males, by developing the idea of an **androgynous human being** (Pretorius, 1996:91; cf. Lasch, 1997a:4). De Beauvoir writes that a human being is not born as a woman, but is **made** one (Pretorius, 1996:92). The problem were to be solved by raising children psychologically androgynous – neither male nor female (cf. Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1988:29; cf. Edwards, 1989:56; Pretorius, 1996:92). Because the biological nature cannot be changed, the culture has to be changed and thereby a psychologically androgynous human is produced, causing a woman not to play a complementary and supplementary role, but to be a free and autonomous person (cf. Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1988:29; Pretorius, 1996:92). Therefore, the ideal is that male and female would be found in one person (cf. Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1988:29; Pretorius, 1996:92; cf. Grenz, 1998:626-627). However, psychology has found that the wholesale abolishment of

gender or sexuality could lead to deviations such as homosexuality (cf. Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1988:30; Pretorius, 1996:99). Pretorius (1996:99) concludes her argument that human beings were created by God in his image as men and women and that they are equal in value before God, but different as far as gender and role are concerned.

According to a study done by Noldon & Sedlacek (1998:107) among 172 male and 153 female academically talented university freshmen, it was found that there might be **gender-specific** issues that could apply when considering such students. This had to be done, in order to make it possible for them to still succeed despite certain barriers they had to face. Women students sometimes tended to have a fear of success. There were distinct differences in how women and men experienced college. For instance, a larger percentage of women than men were willing to do volunteer work, but far more men deemed participation in intramural activities as important (Noldon & Sedlacek, 1998:107).

There were even more differences that seemed to be connected to gender. Noldon & Sedlacek (1998:107) found that the largest percentage of women who participated in the research, indicated that their weakest subject was mathematics. On the other hand, women students were more willing to do community service that was expected from them than was the case with men. This may be an indication that there certainly are traits that tend to be gender-specific.

In some ways, the above research can have the following results regarding women in church. This type of research indicates that by using the gifts of women in the offices in the church, the church can only be enriched when women as well as men participate on an equal footing in the church. For very useful information about the discovering and use of gifts, the guidelines of VanderGriend (1981:1-31; 1984:1-66) prove to be valuable in discovering one's own gifts (cf. Joubert, 1989:1-47; cf. Ministry Tools Resource Center, 2004). Obviously, women, just as men, can have a variety of gifts. Thus, the theological research on women in church offices will also be enriched if gender-specific traits (gifts) were to be identified.

Research on gender-specific traits has been done world-wide. Psychological surveys did not show significant differences between western samples and Asian samples, for example. A Chinese study (Guiying, 2000:76-83) indicated that one of the main reasons why women underachieve was that they lacked confidence. They tended to be less likely to think of probable success, and more prone to worry about failure. The same Chinese study indicated that a gender gap exists in the ability to solve problems. Men did better. However, women were superior to men in language, memory and psychological response. Men tended to

excel when presented with new problems, while women displayed patience with old, routine problems. Spence (cf. Wang *et al.*, 1997:245) *inter alia* has suggested that masculinity can be more accurately labelled as *instrumentality* (which includes autonomy, dominance, and assertiveness). In a similar fashion, femininity can be more accurately labelled as *expressiveness* (which points to traits such as empathy, nurturing, and interpersonal sensitivity) (Spence, as quoted in Wang *et al.*, 1997:245).

Although she has not escaped criticism, Sandra Bem, the well-known cognition psychologist, speaks of a "*gender schema theory*" or "Sex Role Inventory" (cf. Gerdes, 1984:126; cf. Forshaw & Shmukler, 1993:84; cf. Sharf, 1996:466-468; cf. Ritter, 2004:585-586) according to which males and females are typed into different categories. Bem's categories (cf. Gerdes, 1984:126; cf. Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1988:29; cf. Prinsloo, 1992:78), regardless of their biological sex, are:

- Sex-typed (i.e. masculine and feminine),
- undifferentiated,
- and androgynous.

Bem's categories make it possible to see that stereotypes tend to be rigid, but cannot be predicted for male or female behaviour (Prinsloo, 1992:76-86). Therefore it can be concluded that, although there are no definite lines, gender-specific gifts, talents and traits may be found.

Although these examples are measured in countable statistics, there are feminist psychologists that keep a distance from empiricism. Mary Gergen (2001:19), who belongs to the *Feminist Postmodern Psychology* wing of psychology, is an example of someone who does not work empirically. She propagates a psychology in which she moves away from a gender-neutral, equality-based approach, to a more *woman-centred* one. Laboratory tests, she says, prove more differences between the genders than those done between those same people in the "real world". The researcher would tend to side with this view of Gergen (2001:19), in the sense that empiricism can be helpful, but doesn't give the full picture.

Feminist Psychology indicates (Gerdes, 1984:128-129, Noldon & Sedlacek, 1998:106-109; Noble *et al.*, 1999; cf. Olszewski-Kubilius & Lee, 2004:118-119) that men and women have certain psychological traits that tend to be gender-specific. Among other traits, women tend to be more inclined to serve, to care, to nurture, to speak, to remember and to persist with routine-like patience-demanding problems. Men, on the other hand, have a smaller tendency towards these characteristics (Noldon & Sedlacek, 1998:106-109; Guiying, 2000:76-83; cf. Olszewski-Kubilius & Lee, 2004:118-119). Men, more than women, tend to be problem solvers, especially fresh problems that are challenging. Men, more likely than women, fit in

tasks that are in the public sphere and that are less nurturing (Noldon & Sedlacek, 1998:106-109; Guiying, 2000:76-83; cf. Olszewski-Kubilius & Lee, 2004:118-119). Having said this, it is needless for the researcher to emphasise that these mentioned traits are interchangeable among the genders and that these descriptions are only tendencies. Obviously women performing the offices of deacon, elder and minister would be of great benefit for the church since quite a volume of time goes into the pastoral ministry, where serving, caring and nurturing are needed.

The lack of benefits for the church are highlighted by Sheerattan-Bisnauth (2001:145) when she writes that “women’s visions, voices and values, which emphasise compassion, caring, cooperation, economic justice, diversities among women, and respect for human rights, are not included”. These attributes, such as “women’s visions, voices and values, which emphasise compassion, caring, cooperation and economic justice” will be discussed later in this chapter in the *qualitative data analysis* (section 3.3).

A question that could be raised, is whether many men do not experience a threat and fear of being tempted by the sexual attraction that women working with them in church could possibly pose (cf. Isherwood & McEwan, 2001:15). Much of this fear of women (gynophobia) is explained when Milne (2002:61-69) discusses Naomi Goldenberg’s work, *Returning words to flesh: feminism, psychoanalysis and the resurrection of the body*. Milne (2002:61-69) states that many Western thinkers work with “disembodied thinking”, due to a mind-body dualism (which will be discussed later in this chapter in section 3.2.5). Milne describes (2002:63) how this results in men putting women in two basic categories: good women and bad women, much of it stemming from the book of Proverbs (cf. Lang, 1997:405-406) and other intertestamental texts. Then, when viewing women as evil, they are perceived as being seductive, deceiving and dangerous to men (Milne, 2002:64). Milne (2002:62) argues as follows:

The purpose ... is to contribute to Goldenberg’s dismantling project by exposing the patriarchal ideology through which the Bible teaches men to fear women, to fear the words and bodies of women.

Research in psychology, from a gender viewpoint, indicates that there are certain traits that tend to be found in women that can enrich the functioning of the church as the body of Christ.

3.2.3 Sociology

After the one-on-one focus of psychology, sociology, as the study of people in groups as well as in interaction with one another, should also receive attention.

In a database search for *gender* and *gifts* in *sociology*, it was found to be necessary to link up the words *trait*, *skills*, *talent* and even *character* with *sociology*, rather than with the word *gifts* itself.

A good example is Kantzara (1999), a sociologist at the University of Amsterdam who mentions that talents are skills that appear to be given. It seems as though the person does not have to make any special effort to be able to do them. Kantzara continues by saying character and certain aspects of behaviour are tied up with one another. Furthermore, ***a character tends to be neutral; it does not depend on gender.*** Therefore, Kantzara implies that *gifts* are not gender-specific, because a certain type of skill is considered as a talent, something a person is born with rather than a skill subject to cultivation through training. Various skills are ascribed to the character that come from psychological traits.

For a long time women have been excluded from public and official church life, since it was thought that they lacked the gifts and skills to perform certain duties. This viewpoint was held since the institutionalisation of the church in the fourth century (Clark, 2001:404). The result of the long-standing tradition of excluding women from public life was that women's experiences were largely overlooked in studies of *talent* development. However, during the past few years the number of female cabinet ministers in the government of the Republic of South Africa for example has increased significantly. In the year 2004 (October) the number of cabinet ministers in the government of the Republic of South Africa totaled 28, of which 12 were female and 16 male (GCIS, 2004). Despite the current entry of large numbers of women into the public sphere, generally the number of women remains relatively smaller than the number of men in the same occupations. The term "glass ceiling" has entered the language to describe these invisible, unbending obstacles women have faced in reaching the top positions in their fields. Noble *et al.* (1999) did a study to determine how women coped with and overcame personal, professional and cultural obstacles. The researchers wanted to find out what women learned in the process so that more women could be helped to identify and develop their *gifts and abilities*.

This study showed that there are certain cultural or societal aspects that women still have to overcome in order to resist "the pull of conservative sex-role stereotyping and low achievement expectations ... " (Noble *et al.*, 1999). Noble *et al.* (1999) postulate that many gifted women witness that they have experienced the pain of criticism and they have been

perceived to be “too verbal,” “too sensitive,” “too intense,” “too introverted,” and “too driven” (Noble *et al.*, 1999). Hendrika Vande Kemp *et al* (2001:124) also indicate that women bear and rear children and then sometimes fall behind their male counterparts in research and publishing. Noble *et al.* (1999) point to the same tendency that gifted women have to balance career and family. The balancing of career and family is largely a female issue and it strongly affects the professional choices of women, more so than with men.

When affirmative action was adopted in the United States in 1972, female educators in a study done by Edson (1988:20) believed advanced graduate degrees in administration were necessary for a measure of career success. They were thus still convinced that they needed *extra* education to compensate for their personally perceived inadequacies (italics by researcher).

3.2.4 Law (i.e. Human rights or Women’s rights)

Having taken a look at psychology and sociology, the focus now turns to the ways that society is regulated by law, and more specifically feminist law. In the past decades, women’s rights have received renewed attention so that the “harshness” of patriarchal society could be “softened up”. In the South African context, women were on the receiving end of numerous human rights abuses, “ ... they suffered the full range of human rights violations” (TRC, 1998:4:290; cf. Phiri, 2001:85-87; Agosin, 2002:48). It is therefore imperative to investigate how law (according to human / women’s rights) can create an environment where women can use their gifts.

Patriarchal society was inclined to be suppressive towards certain groups in society, including women. When power was abused, a reaction slowly but surely was formed against that abuse of power. Those that had less power had to be empowered (Isherwood & McEwan, 2001:19). This is why the *human rights movement* emerged. In the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (cf. Devine *et al.*, 1999:105) Section 23 states among others, “Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work ... ” It is furthermore mentioned that “the principle of gender equality in Section 2 and (in marriage) and Section 16 demands that gender biases like these are removed from all areas of life” (Devine *et al.*, 1999:106).

At the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (Amien & Farlam, 1998:54-57; cf. Agosin, 2002:46) it was said that parties were determined to implement the principles set forth in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. For that purpose, they were determined to adopt measures required for the

elimination of such discrimination in all its forms and manifestations. In Section 1, the following was stated: "For the purposes ... the term 'discrimination against women' shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women ..."

In South Africa legislation was passed to be approved in the Constitution (1996) of the Republic of South Africa, Section 9 (3), in which women (among others) are to have equal rights with men.

Strangely, whereas equality has been achieved in civil law in most countries, in many cases church laws have remained unequal, creating an uneasy dichotomy (Isherwood & McEwan, 2001:18). The danger of churches holding on to the status quo, is posed by Isherwood & McEwan (2001:11):

If churches cannot reform themselves and move with the times, they may, in fact, cease to provide spiritual leadership and be left behind while people for whom church life is important, 'the church as people', will move on, leaving the old wineskins behind, much as Christianity left Judaism behind.

Seeing matters against this background, the church as an institution cannot carry on untouched. In some church denominations women have for quite a while been allowed in all the offices, whereas it remains not to be the case in other church denominations. A good example is the whole Roman Catholic Church, which is well-represented throughout the world. A new paradigm is challenging the "governing paradigm" on the status and role of women in the church in general (Vergeer, 2002:661). The church rather has to be the light for the world, and cannot ignore changes taking place in society. In fact, a strange dichotomy exists nowadays between equality in civil law and inequality in church laws (Isherwood & McEwan, 2001:18). Moreover, women and men in the church as light bearers, should witness to the world, they should radically enact, go to the roots, take up and live what the Gospel says about the command "love your neighbour" (Isherwood & McEwan, 2001:23).

3.2.5 Feminism / Feminist Theology

From the more personal psychology, to the more public sociology, to society-regulating law, the focus now moves to feminism and feminist theology itself.

Christine de Pizan (1365-1430) has written (cf. Clifford, 2001:9):

There is not the slightest doubt that women belong to the people of God and the human race as much as men and are not another species or dissimilar race.

Christine de Pizan never used the word "feminism". It was only in 1882 that Hubertine Auclert of France used the word for the first time (Clifford, 2001:11). Feminism began in very much the same pattern as the liberation struggle, and Feminist Theology forms part of Liberation Theology and Contextual Theology (Van Wyk, 1985:33; Isherwood & McEwan, 2001:10). The Female Anti-Slavery Society, founded in 1833, showed that much common ground exists between the oppression of slaves and the subordination of women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) was an active abolitionist who brought attention to the ways in which the Bible contributed to the subordination of women (Clifford, 2001:11; Isherwood & McEwan, 2001:20). This, together with the plight for legal and economic equality of women with men in the United States, gave rise to the *first wave* of feminism (cf. Osmond & Thorne, 1993:598; Stuart & Thatcher, 1997:146-147; Clifford, 2001:11).

It was not until the 1960s that the broader *second wave* of women's liberation arose in the United States and Western Europe (cf. Osmond & Thorne, 1993:598). Then, in the late 1970s the *third wave* started. It was new in that it drew attention to differences in race and social class of women (Clifford, 2001:12). As far as South Africa is concerned, Lotter (2002:2) reports that Feminist Theology " ... did a lot to focus attention on women in general and specific within the South African context" and that theology should take cognisance of feminist authors. De Bruyn (1990:1-37) wrote an apologetic critique on the ethics of Feminist Theology. In his critique, De Bruyn (1990:30) rightly concludes that Feminist Theology among others came into being because of discrimination to a smaller or larger extent against women, while the church said nothing about it. In order to see feminism in a correct light, it has to be added that Van Wyk (1990:7-8) is right, too, when he argues that from a Christian point of view, before God no one has human rights, we only have privileges.

Bird (1999:124) describes feminism in the following way:

I understand feminism as a critical and constructive stance that claims for women the full humanity accorded to men, insisting that women be presented equally in all attempts to describe and comprehend human nature and that they be full participants in the assignment and regulation of social roles, rights and responsibilities. Feminism articulates its gender-inclusive view of human nature and responsibility over against historical and contemporary systems of thought and social organization that make males the norm and give men, as a class, power and priority over women.

Van Wyk (1985:38) illustrates how it is due to a reaction against paternalistic theology, church and scripture that the outcry comes from feminist transposing, feminist liberation, as well as from a new world in which man and woman are truly equal.

Feminism and liberation are often linked up with *postmodernity*. The postmodern era, according Van Aarde and Küng (cf. Dreyer, 1998:16) had its origin in the First World War

(1914-1918). At that stage, a world-wide rearranging took place in the ways in which hierarchies were arranged until then. Most of the prominent aristocracies and monarchies disintegrated; and even the roles of employers and employees as well as those of male and female started changing (Dreyer, 1998:16).

In order to understand how the word *postmodernity* is used, Hans K ung (as quoted by Dreyer, 1998:16) wrote something significant in 1988:

(P)ostmodernity is neither a magic word that explains everything nor a polemical catch phrase, but a heuristic term. It characterizes an epoch that upon closer inspection proves to have set in decades ago (in the face of all the resistance to it on the Right and on the Left) and is now making inroads into the conscience of the masses.

It becomes quite clear that the development of *postmodern philosophy* is closely linked to the change that took place in the roles of men and women, within the context of feminist thinking (Osmond & Thorne, 1993:596-597; Dreyer, 1998:16). However, some, like Flax (1992:195), feel that in many ways women never reaped the benefits from the bourgeois-liberal liberation as it took place during the disintegration of aristocracies during the First World War as described above.

As is the case in any other field of study, there is diversity amongst feminist thinkers (cf. Osmond & Thorne, 1993:593-596; cf. Dreyer, 1998:71-79; Clifford, 2001:32). Clifford (2001:32) mentions three broad groupings in the Feminist Theology: 1.) revolutionary, 2.) reformist, and 3.) reconstructionist. Much feminist thinking revolves around the *duality* that the Greek philosopher, Aristotle (384-322 BC) described (cf. Clifford, 2001:19). This duality, according to Aristotle, meant "that according to nature it is fitting for the soul to govern the body, the master to govern the slave, and the male to govern the female" (cf. Osmond & Thorne, 1993:596; cf. Stuart & Thatcher, 1997:144; cf. Kahl, 2000:44; Clifford, 2001:19). In each of these pairs the first is superior and the second inferior, the one governing and the other being governed (cf. Clifford, 2001:19). Aristotle's dualistic analysis causes the problem of a hierarchy of patriarchy, and must be challenged due to the fact that it is quite likely to cause opposing relations and oppressive behaviour (cf. Clifford, 2001:19). Tobler (2000:77) is right when she sees this Western, dualistic thought as divisive, as devaluing the body and the feminine, subordinating women. Judy Tobler (2000:78) refers to the work of Naomi Goldenberg, *Returning words to flesh: feminism, psychoanalysis and the resurrection of the body*, where the latter gives a critique on the way in which the mind, reason, the soul and transcendent spirit are characterised as superior to physicality and the body. Nadar (2001:81) describes her experience within the church and insists that as long as the spiritual remains separate from the physical world, there will never be a true emancipation of women.

Grenz (1998:616) indicates a slightly different dualism that leans on the fact that God is seen as the powerful, solitary sovereign over the world characterised by supposedly male traits going with designations such as Lord and King. The researcher agrees that it is possible that this could tend to lead to a perception that the male is prominent, fostering a hierarchy of male over female, where men represent God and women creation (Grenz, 1998:616-617).

Tobler (2000:90-91) points out how Luce Irigaray endeavours to solve this dualism by assuming that femininity and masculinity are by nature different but by reappropriating "female and maternal sexuality". In Irigaray's theory she recovers an avenue along which women's speech and participation in society and culture is equal but different (Tobler, 2000:90-91).

In poetic language, Irigaray reveals in a striking way the violent realities of the "unequal, sexualised power relations" between men and women:

Everywhere you shut me in. Always you assign a place to me. Even outside the frame that I form with you. ... Could it be that what you have is just the frame, not the property? ... You mark our boundaries, draw lines, surround, enclose. Excising, cutting out. What is your fear? That you might lose your property. What remains is an empty frame. You cling to it, dead. ... You close me up in house and family. Final, fixed walls. Thus displacing and expelling what you have not had? ... Alone, I rediscover my mobility. Movement is my habitat. My only rest is motion. (Quoted by Tobler, 2000:91).

Perriman (1998:13) points out how male headship validates a presumption that the natural place of the man is the public world of influence and power, while the natural place of the woman is the private, domestic world of the home (cf. Torjesen, 2000:304-307). This presumption has obviously encompassed the organisation of the church as well, and is hardly obscured by contemporary feminism and equal-rights legislation (Perriman, 1998:13).

Isherwood & McEwan (2001:12) put feminism in the right light by saying:

Feminism is not about making the world woman-centred, but about bringing the world onto balance, offering a way out of age-old dualisms and discrimination to inclusion and mutuality.

Another related issue that is relevant to this chapter is *domination*. Jane Flax (1992:193) states that "domination arises out of an *inability to recognize, appreciate and nurture differences*" (italics by researcher). Domination therefore does not come from a failure to see everyone as the same. It is the need to see everyone as the same in order to grant them dignity and respect that actually expresses the problem. So for Flax seeing everyone as the

same is not a cure for the problem. She very rightly argues that feminists should endeavour to “end domination, not gender, not differences and certainly not the feminine. The issue as I understand it is not equality and/or differences but rather how and why gender is a relation of domination – and how to end such domination.” (Flax, 1992:194). To the researcher the *misuse* of power is what is being argued against.

One of the problems for reformed theologians with Feminist Theology may lie in the fact that Feminist Theology has been situated in an entirely new context. “*Women’s experience and praxis are the primary resources, whereas androcentric texts and traditions formerly reigned supreme*” (Hogan, 1997:10) (italics by researcher). Vergeer (2002:661) describes a new paradigm challenging the present “governing paradigm” regarding women and this is exactly what has happened here. A new paradigm is developing because more and more enigmas are arising out of the established paradigm and they prove not to be solvable (Vergeer, 2002:663). A scientific revolution develops in such circumstances (cf. Kuhn, 1970:92-110; Vergeer, 2002:663).

According to Isherwood & McEwan (2001:26), while the Christian community is founded on the Gospel with the message of all-encompassing love and forgiveness, Christianity became enmeshed with politics when the Roman emperor Constantine the Great became converted to the Christian faith. The reason for this is that Constantine made Christian faith state religion. Only after this marriage between state and Christian religion, did politics slowly but surely cause the institutionalisation of racism, classism and sexism (cf. Stuart & Thatcher, 1997:145; cf. Dreyer, 1998:65; cf. Vorster, 2000:3; cf. Clifford, 2001:135; Isherwood & McEwan, 2001:26). Karen Torjesen writes in Schüssler Fiorenza’s book, *Searching the Scriptures*, about the first few centuries of Christianity before the marriage of state and church. She is right when she argues that despite the androcentric retelling of women’s stories, writings from this formative period show that women were apostles, prophets, and teachers. They exercised a diversity of ministries including baptising, disciplining, and ministering the communion. They held the full range of church offices – “bishop, presbyter, widow, deacon, and virgin” (Torjesen, 2000:291-292). It is therefore hard to categorically deny that Christian women in the first centuries actually held offices. Only when politics took over, “with its emphasis on borders and laws and military power” and its concern “with transmitting rights and defending rights”, did an androcentric society and church emerge (Isherwood & McEwan, 2001:26). Schüssler Fiorenza (1994:309-315), however, points out that the process of patriarchalisation started even earlier on, before politics caused it, but that this was a process, remains clear.

It is striking to be reminded that Jesus Christ of Nazareth consistently, in each case, refused to view women as occupying a lower place in the social order and therefore as those over whom he needed to exercise dominance (cf. Grenz, 1998:629).

3.3 A QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

3.3.1 Background

A *qualitative approach* is taken, because the data is in the form of words, sentences and paragraphs rather than numbers (cf. Neuman, 1997:7,30,327). The results provide a feel for particular people and events in concrete social settings, instead of terms such as *variables*, *reliability*, *statistics*, *hypotheses*, *replication*, and *scales* (Neuman, 1997:327-328). In this qualitative research, the method is mostly self-made, but this does not mean that it is less valid (Neuman, 1997:330; cf. O'Connor, 2004). Unlike quantitative research, it is difficult, if not impossible to put down a step-by-step procedure for doing qualitative data analysis (Guy *et al.*, 1987:278).

The following method was followed: In order to find out what happens in practice regarding gifts and gender roles, the researcher drew up a questionnaire containing eight questions which were perceived as relevant to the topic and checked by the promoter. These questions were e-mailed, personally handed to or posted to six respondents. A timeframe of five weeks made it possible to receive the answers from all the respondents. All of them (except one) are colleagues or acquaintances of the researcher and were chosen to represent as wide a sample as possible of people serving in the ministry or trained to be ministers. The context thus is mainly that of the reformed church tradition (Neuman, 1997:331).

- All the respondents are currently serving in ministry, either fulltime, or as assistant, or as theological lecturer, or in a combination of these possibilities.
- Due to the fact that the objective of the analysis is to establish how women experience their gifts and gender in church and society, *two males* and *four females* were requested to answer the questionnaire. The two males were consulted so that there could be some balance regarding the male experience of gifts and gender (cf. reference in *Introduction* to this third chapter to Bird, 1999:130).
- In order to have representation from the broader South African context, an African woman was included in the group of respondents.

3.3.2 Profile of the respondents

The identity of the respondents is kept confidential as far as possible and they are merely referred to as "Respondent A", "Respondent B", *et cetera*.

Respondent A is an ordained female minister together with her minister husband (both in their thirties) in the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (Dutch Reformed Church - DRC). She has been serving in formal ministry for about 2 years. The DRC allowed women to be ordained in 1990 (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 1990b:718)

Respondent B is a fulltime male professor in his fifties in the *Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika* (Reformed Church in South Africa - RCSA). He has served in this occupation for many years and has vast experience on the topic under study. He arranged four workshops on the theme "Women in Church and Society" at the University of Potchefstroom during 2001 and 2002. In his denomination, women have not been allowed to be ordained as ministers.

Respondent C is a part-time middle-aged male ordained minister in two rural congregations in the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk in Afrika* (NHKA) who has served in the ministry for approximately 20 years. The NHKA fully allowed women into the office of minister in 1979 (Barnard-Weiss, 1999:193).

Respondent D is a fulltime female ordained minister in her early sixties in the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). Women in the PCC were allowed to be ordained as ministers ever since 1967 (Robinson, 2002). Between doing a secular work for many years and her current position as minister, she first served as a lay associate. She introduced her answers with the following remarks:

"I will be answering the questions from two perspectives. The *first* is from a small rural congregation where I am the minister. The *other* is from a moderately large congregation in a large urban center where I was a lay associate doing visitation and outreach. This congregation was a very evangelical congregation where I was the first woman inducted as an elder only after I had been on staff for 2 or 3 years."

Respondent E is an African woman who is an ordained minister in a congregation in the African Methodist Episcopal. She also teaches at a theological seminary.

Respondent F is a woman who received full theological training to become a minister in the *Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika* (Reformed Church in South Africa – RCSA), but she has not been ordained, due to the fact that the denomination does not allow women in ministry. She teaches at a university and she is married to an ordained minister in the same church.

3.3.3 Discussion of answers to the questionnaire

The questionnaire was sent to respondents (cf. letter with questions in Annexure C). In order to capture the essence of how the respondents experience their *gifts* and *gender* in church and society, an overall impression of their respective reactions to the questions will be presented. Then the “deviation from the average experience” or “dissimilarities” (cf. Guy *et al.*, 1987:278; Neuman, 1997:428-429) will be pointed out, after which certain metatheoretical perspectives about specific trends will be drawn for the results.

3.3.3.1 Metatheoretical perspectives from the answers with regard to question # 1: “Do you feel that you are able to fully express your gifts in the church?”

Common denominator/s:

- The replies here were positive and there was even joy and gratitude about her role as minister permeating from the answers of respondent A (female). Respondent E even had an additional appointment as lecturer at a theological seminary.
- Respondent D (female) seems keen to be able to exercise even more gifts in the church, but does not have the opportunity.

Exceptions / deviations:

- Respondent F (female), belonging to the church where women are not permitted to be ordained, bluntly replied “no”.
- It is noteworthy that the men only briefly responded positively, and whereas women had two types of reactions: either enthusiasm or despondence.

3.3.3.2 Metatheoretical perspectives from the answers with regard to question # 2: “Do you see certain gifts that you can exercise better than other gifts in the church? Name them. (Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and 27-31 as well as Ephesians 4:11 will be discussed in the study.)”

Common denominator/s:

- All six respondents could identify two or more gifts which they are able to exercise, just as any other believer.
- Among the 4 female respondents, 4 have teaching (teaching also figures in both the male respondents) and 2 have leadership in common. Three women also had exhortation (or encouraging) in common. The gift of leadership has traditionally tended to be seen as more likely to be found in men, which is not exclusively the case here.
- Respondent C (male) can identify a range including prophesying, message of wisdom, “distinguishing between spirits” (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:10) and administration (all

traditionally seen as more likely in “thinking, transcendent” males). However, he also identifies teaching and encouraging, which is found in three of the females as well as in the other male respondent too.

Exceptions / deviations:

- Among the female respondents, Respondent F's answer is the least enthusiastic. It may be due to her restrictions.
- Respondent D indicates that on the one hand she has gifts such as “pastor”, “evangelism”, and “administration”. On the other hand she mentions “service”, “mercy” and “help”, which have traditionally tended to be associated more with women than with men (cf. section 3.2.2).

**3.3.3.3 Metatheoretical perspectives from the answers with regard to question # 3:
“Do you get the opportunity to apply your gifts fully as a believer within the congregation of which you are part? Describe the ways in which you do.”**

Common denominator/s:

- Respondents A, B, C, D and E report that they have many or more than enough opportunities to apply their gifts.

Exceptions / deviations:

- Respondent F is the only one that replied “no”. She uses as many opportunities as possible within her restricted context.

**3.3.3.4 Metatheoretical perspectives from the answers with regard to question # 4:
“How do you see your role in the church as a male / female?”**

Common denominator/s:

- All respondents, except C, see their roles as *not contingent upon their gender*, but rather see it as something God bestows to all believers, male and female.

Exceptions / deviations:

- Respondent C has a distinct view that it is natural for men to exercise “leadership” and “to protect”. To him men as well as women should take responsibility before God.
- Respondent A expresses great gratitude to be able to exercise her gifts as a minister.

**3.3.3.5 Metatheoretical perspectives from the answers with regard to question # 5:
“Are there certain roles that you can fulfil specifically as a woman / man in
the church?”**

Common denominator/s:

- Two respondents, A and B, say that they ***do not see gifts as related to gender at all.***
- All the respondents (except C) deny that there are differences as to what gender exercises which gifts. However, they either admit (A, D and F – all females) that there are ***certain tasks the one gender could be better with,*** or they say (A and F) that circumstances determine (A and F) who should do what. Respondent E describes “roles that are usually for men” that she fulfils in a significant way. Thereby respondent E also ***acknowledges a gender-specificity.***
- In this response there is much ambivalence amongst the respondents.
- D, C and F point towards traits such as “softness, leniency, being compromising, empathy”, “helping, mercy, compassion” and “relating with small children more easily”, all associated more with women than with men.

Exceptions / deviations:

- Respondent C holds a strong view that nature makes men intrinsically different from women in that men have a potential aggressiveness, when necessary, whereas women tend to be soft. In a sense, this strongly refers to the traditional view on gender roles and is contrary to the policy of the church he belongs to, which has already allowed women to be ordained as ministers in 1979.

**3.3.3.6 Metatheoretical perspectives from the answers with regard to question # 6:
“Do you experience any gender-connected stumbling blocks in the
exercising of your gifts in the congregation of which you are part? Name
examples of such stumbling blocks.”**

Common denominator/s:

- The men do not experience any barriers.
- The women expressed to a smaller or larger extent that they have experienced some or other form of stumbling block (except for respondent E, who has ***no*** stumbling blocks). Respondent A describes her role as a mother and as spouse to her colleague-husband as a slight stumbling block. She knows they only have to organise better (hers are therefore only practical problems). Respondent D remembers that when she worked as a lay associate the perceptions of her conservative evangelical male colleague put restrictions on his trust in her abilities. Respondent F has definite problems due to her denomination’s policy on women.

Exceptions / deviations:

- Respondent F experiences severe restrictions in exercising her gifts.

**3.3.3.7 Metatheoretical perspectives from the answers with regard to question # 7:
“Do you think Christians’ gifts are fully employed in churches? If ‘no’, in what areas is there a need for improvement? If ‘yes’, in what areas are things running smoothly with regard to the deployment of gifts?”**

Common denominator/s:

- All respondents (except A and E) expressed frustration with some form of passiveness amongst members in congregations, a passiveness which makes it difficult to have all the gifts working in the body of Christ. Respondent E, however, sees room for improvement in that the church can go out and do more work in a world that is in need.

Exceptions / deviations:

- The answers to this question have no significant deviation from the average.

**3.3.3.8 Metatheoretical perspectives from the answers with regard to question # 8:
“Do you have any other comments regarding gifts in relation to gender in the church?”**

Common denominator/s:

- *One issue mentioned is that of a sincere wish that gender would not have any influence on the functioning of congregations. Respondent E would like to see even more women in leadership positions, in an effort to strive for gender equality.*
- *The other is a concern (perhaps the other side of the issue mentioned above) that gender barriers sometimes seem to emerge due to the fallen nature of mankind.*

Exceptions / deviations:

- Respondent C is of the opinion that gender has no effect on the functioning of the church.

3.3.4 Summary of the empirical findings (qualitative data analysis)

The empirical findings of the qualitative data analysis may be summarised according to the following points:

- The sample of respondents has interesting tendencies, very much related to the length of time women have been allowed as ordained ministers, or to the absence of women in ordained ministry. Neuman (1997:335) remarks in this regard: “Qualitative researchers look at the sequence of events and pay attention to what happens first, second, third,

and so on." (cf. Guy *et al.*, 1987:279). Among the female respondents, respondent D belongs to a church in which women have served as ministers for 36 years. Respondent A belongs to a church in which women have been serving as ministers for the past 13 years. Respondent F is a member of a church denomination that has not allowed women to be ordained as ministers. These three women (A, D and F) are quite outspoken in their answers. Their responses range from moderately outspoken, where the gender barriers have not been existing for 36 years, to most outspoken where the lifting of gender barriers is still in a type of transition period. This latter outspokenness seems to be accompanied by a fair amount of enthusiasm or even euphoria, perhaps because of the wonder of being able to take part as full minister. However, Respondent F is subdued and not all that enthusiastic. She is very much aware of the gender restrictions in her church.

- The two men in the sample also show a similar tendency. Respondent C belongs to a church in which women have been taking part in the office of ordained minister since 1979, or for the past 24 years. He does not see much of a great gender issue in church life. To him the natural differences between the sexes play a stronger role. Respondent B is in the church that does not allow women in ministry. He has distinct feelings about gender, or the abuse of the distinction between their roles.
- The lifting of gender barriers in church life seems to raise women's enthusiasm about the expression of their gifts in the church.
- Although the respondents tend to deny it, there are slight nuances as to which gifts are bestowed upon women and which upon men. The softer, more empathetic, caring and compassionate gifts are acknowledged among the women. These types of gifts are also perceived as "female" by respondent C. But the gifts certainly do overlap among the genders. Teaching, encouraging, leadership and administration tend not to be as gender sensitive as the former softer, empathetic, caring and compassionate group.
- Gender barriers do not have an effect on men, but the women acknowledge that they have some or other type of stumbling block to cope with.
- The concerns aired by the respondents are that the church struggles to function as the body of Christ. This may be expected, as we have and will not reach perfection on earth, since we are always "*simul justus et peccator*" (we are simultaneously righteous and sinful).

3.4 METATHEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES WITH REGARD TO THE GIFTS AND GENDER ROLES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

METATHEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The following meta-theoretical perspectives can be derived from this chapter:

- **Psychology**

From the feminist focus on psychology, various viewpoints have been developed. Some stress the differences between the genders, while others stress the similarities between the genders. Despite attempts to develop the idea of an *androgynous human being*, most psychologists have come to the conclusion that the idea is not that viable. Instead men and women are equal in value before God, but different as far as gender and role are concerned. Recent studies in different parts of the world, in the West as well as in Asia, have found that there are possible indications of trends toward *gender-specific* traits among the genders. The implication is that the use of women in church offices could only enrich the church, because those gifts or traits that tend to found more in women bring a different dimension to church offices. It has been found in studies that women tend – among other traits – to be more inclined to serve, to care, to nurture, to speak, to remember and to persist with routine-like patience-demanding problems. Men – more likely than women – fit in tasks that are in the public sphere, tasks that are less nurturing.

Many psychologists tend to categorise men and women into a dualistic division of mind and body. This type of thinking results in men fearing women (gynophobia), because their bodily seduction could be perceived as dangerous to men, very much as sometimes depicted in the book of Proverbs.

Research in psychology, however, rather points toward the fact that traits often found more in women can enrich the church as body of Christ.

- **Sociology**

In sociology, words such as *trait*, *skills*, *talent* and even *character*, tend to be associated with the field of sociology more than the word *gifts* itself. Talents, then, are skills that appear to be given. Individuals do not have to exert themselves to exercise their talents. When it is found that character and certain aspects of behaviour are tied up with one another, character tends to be neutral and independent of gender. This would mean that talents, and therefore *gifts*,

would not be gender-specific. Seeing gifts as being both non-gender-specific as well as gender-specific (which was pointed out in the above studies in psychology), points to ambivalence, but not to impossibility.

Women, however, were excluded from public and official church life, because there was the perception that they would not have the gifts and skills to perform certain duties. The result was that women were overlooked in studies of *talent* development. Subsequently, there still remains a so-called "glass ceiling", keeping women from top positions in church and society.

Sociological studies have thus pointed out that women are still kept back by society on the one hand, and frequently by their own perceptions on the other hand.

- **Law (i.e. Human rights or Women's rights)**

The "harshness" of patriarchal society has "softened up" during the past few decades, due to the attention women's rights has received in laws that focus on human rights. The *human rights movement* emerged, in response to the abuse of power in patriarchal society. Laws enforcing equal pay for equal work were passed and gender biases had to be removed from all areas of life. This world-wide trend was also manifested in South African legislation in 1996.

However, a dichotomy arose when church laws remained unequal in many instances. Therefore the church as an institution cannot remain untouched.

Among others the dichotomy caused the development of a new paradigm which started challenging the "governing paradigm" on the status and role of women in the church in general.

This is where women and men in the church are witnessing as light bearers to the world by actually returning to the roots and practicing what the Gospel says about the command "love your neighbour", also with regard to more equal gender roles in the church and society.

- **Feminism / Feminist Theology**

Feminism started in a very similar way as the liberation struggle and Liberation Theology started. In 1833 the oppression of slaves had much common ground with the subordination

of women. There were **three waves** in the development of feminism since the early mid-1800s until the 1970s when the differences in race and social class of women received attention. A great deal was done by Feminist Theology to focus attention on women in South Africa. Therefore theology should take cognisance of feminist authors.

Postmodern thought also had an influence on the development of feminism and vice versa, in that existing hierarchies were challenged.

Three broad groupings exist within Feminist Theology: 1.) revolutionary, 2.) reformist, and 3.) reconstructionist. A view that is challenged by many feminists is that of the Aristotelian **dualistic analysis**, in which the soul governs the body and male governs female, in which case the first is seen as superior and the second inferior. The dualistic way of thinking causes a devaluing of the body and the feminine, thereby subordinating women. As long as people see the spiritual as separated from the physical world, emancipation of women is inhibited.

Attempts are made to break down the above duality, for example by describing male and female as equal but different. Another way of coping with duality is by ending domination, but not by ending gender, differences or the feminine aspects. The problem seems to lie in the abuse of power, and in the ending of this abuse.

Reformed theologians may struggle with Feminist Theology because Feminist Theology has been situated in an entirely new context. It becomes a matter of a new paradigm challenging a present "governing paradigm". When the "governing paradigm" causes more and more enigmas that cannot be solved, a scientific revolution moves people into the direction of letting go of, for example, an **androcentric** understanding of reality.

Much of the good that came with the Christian faith gradually became obliterated by politics. When Constantine the Great married state and church, racism, classism and sexism became institutionalised. Before that happened, writers point out, women were apostles, prophets and teachers, holding the full range of church offices.

It is important to note that Jesus Christ refused to view women as occupying a lower status in the social order.

METATHEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the second section (3.3) of this chapter the following aspects were researched:

- A questionnaire was given to six respondents (4 female and 2 male).
- Four females and two males responded, all from different sections mostly in the reformed world.
- The questionnaire contained eight questions that asked about aspects of gifts and gender.

Findings from the questionnaire

- There was a relationship between the length of time women had been allowed as ordained ministers in a particular church denomination and the female respondents' degree of outspokenness. The respondents range from moderately outspoken, where one of the females is in a church where women have been allowed to be ordained for 36 years, to very outspoken where the period is 13 years, and to much less outspoken where women are restricted.
- The trend was similar amongst the men. The longer the gender barriers have been lifted, the more outspoken the respondent is, and where the restrictions are still in place, there is less enthusiasm.
- Slight differences in nuances exist as to which gifts are bestowed upon women and which upon men. The softer, more empathetic, caring and compassionate gifts are acknowledged among the female respondents. There is, however, an overlapping among the genders. Teaching, encouraging, leadership and administration tend not to be as gender sensitive as the former softer, empathetic, caring and compassionate group.
- Gender barriers have a small effect on the male respondents, whereas three of the four female respondents experience some or other type of stumbling block with which they have to cope.
- Concerns that exist are that the church struggles to function as the body of Christ.

3.5 SUMMARY

Gender roles were discussed in this chapter from the point of view of a number of disciplines, as well as from the point of view of a selected number of males and females involved in the ministry. The conclusions regarding gifts bestowed on women and the

realisation of those gifts were listed above in the *metatheoretical perspectives*. In the next chapter this information, as well as the insights gained in chapter 2, will be used to formulate a practical-theoretical model for the pastoral practice, to address gender roles and gender differences concerning the gifts in church offices.

Chapter 4

A practical-theoretical model for the pastoral practice

4.1 INTRODUCTION – OBJECTIVE AND METHOD OF THE CHAPTER

4.1.1 Objective

This chapter endeavours to show that there can be improvement in the interaction amongst the genders in a biblically valid manner. To a smaller or larger extent there is dissatisfaction about the existing praxis with regard to gender roles in some churches. As pointed out in chapter 2, the exercising of *gifts* (according to Romans 12:3-8) can contribute to a more balanced way of interaction among male and female believers in the church. In accordance with the model of Zerfass (Heyns & Pieterse, 1998:49; Heitink, 1999:114) (cf. section 3.1 of this research), a new praxis can now be developed, since, together with the basis-theoretical information from chapter 2, new insights are brought in from other relevant sciences (cf. chapter 3).

Practical (or pastoral) theology has the purpose of being the “bridge” between “traditional theology” and the secularised world, in order to “... mediate theology to practice and practice to theology” (Dyson, as quoted in Lotter, 2004).

The main objective of this chapter is to establish practical-theoretical guidelines for pastoral work with reference to dealing with *gifts* and *gender roles* in church and society.

In order to achieve this objective, the basis-theoretical research results (reached in chapter 2) and metatheoretical research results (reached in chapter 3) will be put into a hermeneutical interchange in order to design a practical-theoretical strategy.

4.1.2 Method

Guidelines for Bible study will be worked out for use by persons who wish to do a study on what the Bible teaches regarding *gifts* (in the context of the body of Christ) and *gender roles* (section 4.2).

- The *Bible study* ought to help persons interested in the theme of *gifts* and *gender roles* to develop a greater sensitivity for the material dealt with in the basis-theoretical section of this research.

- Furthermore, the guidelines for ***Bible study*** could assist believers to discover how gender roles could function in a biblical way.
- The effect of the ***Bible studies*** can influence church denominations where women have not yet been allowed to take part in all the offices of the church.
- In congregations where men do most or all of the official work, men in leadership positions as well as those who are ordinary believers may benefit from the ***Bible studies*** too.
- Women in congregations such as those just described could certainly get a better understanding of their role in the church.
- A climate of a "fresh look" and renewed humbling before the Lord on this issue can be created when a thorough Bible Study on this issue is done.

After the ***guidelines for Bible study***, some ***sermon outlines*** will follow in section 4.3. Ministers, who for example wish to preach on gender and gifts among the genders, could hopefully get useful (broad) outlines for such sermons. Once again, the effect would be greater in congregations where women do not serve in all the church offices.

When the ***guidelines for Bible study*** as well as the ***sermon outlines*** are completed, the general gifts that are found in men and women will be discussed in section 4.4.

Thereafter a diagram (or model) of how ***gender*** and ***gift*** should function will be presented and discussed in section 4.5.

A strategy for the church will also be proposed in section 4.6.

4.2 GUIDELINES FOR BIBLE STUDY FROM THE PASSAGES TREATED IN CHAPTER 2

The following general method is suggested before a person starts with each Bible study:

- After praying for the Holy Spirit to lead you in studying the passage, read it while concentrating on its meaning.
- Try to rephrase the meaning of the passage for yourself.
- Try and reconstruct the circumstances in which the passage was written.
- Also read the applicable surrounding passages in Scripture.
- What do you think the passage meant to the first readers?
- Now work through the questions that are put in the Bible study, in order to grasp what the passage could mean to you today.

4.2.1 Guidelines for Bible study on Romans 12:3-8 (cf. sections 2.2.1 and 2.3)

- If you were to compare your skills with other people in the congregation you belong to, do you see your skills as more important than the skills of other members, or less important than the skills of other members? Is this in accordance with Paul's admonition according to Romans 12:3?
- In the light of the above question, how should male members see themselves in comparison to female members?
- Are there certain roles that you can fulfil specifically as woman / man in the church? Do you experience any gender-connected stumbling blocks in the exercising of your gifts in the congregation of which you are part? Name examples of such stumbling blocks.
- What does Paul imply when he says, "*For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function*" (Romans 12:4)? Is there room for attitudes such as pride, jealousy and feelings of inferiority, superiority, and a competitive spirit amongst congregation members? State why you think so.
- To whom is Paul referring when he talks about the "body of Christ" (Romans 12:5)?
- What are the members of the body (Romans 12:5)?
- Is this "body" to which you belong, one? Or are there divisions? If there are divisions, what causes the divisions (Romans 12:5)?
- In which way do you think that you are – together with you fellow congregation members – "one in Christ" (Romans 12:5)?
- In the last part of 12:5, Paul said, "*individually we are members one of another*". How does this affect your being part of the congregation of which you are a member? What should you do, and in which respect would it be different to how you do it currently?
- When Paul says "*so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another*" (Romans 12:5) he is describing what we are. When we see we are **not yet** one body, what should we do about it? Should we believe it as a given fact, or should we do more about it?
- Read Romans 12:6-8. How many gifts can you identify? Are there one or more gifts that you can identify yourself with?
- Did you notice that every gift has an appropriate description? What does this mean with regard to the gift or gifts that you have?
- How would you describe your gift in relation to what you should do (give an example)?
- Are gifts such as "speaking God's word" (prophecy), "service" (ministering), "encourager" (the exhorter), "the giver" and "the compassionate" gifts that you would assign to men only, to women only, or to both (cf. sections 3.1.2, 3.2.3.5 and 3.2.4)?

- It seems as if Paul only wanted to mention a limited number of gifts, or do you think he implies more gifts?
- Do you see anything in connection with gifts which has not been addressed yet?
- How do you think the realising of gifts in this passage applies to your circumstances as a believer?
- Should there be divisions in the way men and women take part in church life?
- Write down the names and gifts of people closest to you in church and discuss it with other people in the group what this can mean for the church if they can fully use their gifts in the church.

4.2.2 Guidelines for Bible study on 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 (cf. section 2.4.2.1)

- According to 1 Corinthians 12-14, Paul is pointing out that the Corinthian believers should not give such an outstanding high value to the "speaking in tongues". What do you think he is aiming at when he uses the words "varieties" and "same" in 12:4-6?
- According to verse 6, is it possible to have many different roles in one congregation, and to have unity at the same time? How does it happen?
- According to verses 8 through 10, Paul makes mention of a number of gifts. Can you list them? Which can you identify in your own life?
- According to 1 Corinthians 12:11, can an individual choose what type of gift he would like to have? Who determines which type of gifts a person would have?
- Can women decide which gift or gifts men have, and can men decide which gift or gifts women can have?
- What type of attitude is Paul trying to correct according to 1 Corinthians 12:14-20?
- What type of attitude is Paul trying to correct according to 1 Corinthians 12:21-26?
- Which one of the two above attitudes can you identify in your personal life? Do you think the Holy Spirit should change you, to have the appropriate attitude regarding your function in the congregation?
- When you read verses 29-30, what answer does Paul suppose? Does this fact not put you more at ease?
- According to the whole of chapter 12, do you think believers are independent of one another, or interdependent?
- How do you think the realising of gifts in this passage applies to your circumstances as a believer?
- What can *you* do to contribute to a way of church life where the example of the body of Christ is followed in the way Paul described it?
- Do you see anything in connection with gifts which has not been addressed yet?

- Write down the people you know in church and also their gifts as you perceive it. Do you observe that these gifts are gender-specific (only for men or only for women)?

4.2.3 Guidelines for Bible study on Ephesians 4:4-16 (cf. section 2.4.2.2)

- According to Ephesians 4:4-6, what does Paul say about the divisions that tend to exist among believers?
- When you have heard in verses 4-6 that unity should exist among believers, what does verse 7 say about it all? Are all believers the same?
- What or who are the gifts according to verse 7?
- What or who are the gifts according to verse 11?
- To whom does Paul imply that the gifts according to verse 11 are given?
- What are the purposes of the gifts that Christ gave (Ephesians 4:12)? Can you mention more purposes in the rest of the chosen pericope?
- Would you say that this task is only reserved for a certain type of believer as verse 11 puts it? Or do you understand it as the task of all believers in the church?
- Are the tasks in verse 11 reserved for men only (cf. Acts 18:26, Acts 21:9 and Romans 16:7)?
- How can women be part of the circumstances in which you are part of a community of believers? How can they be involved without applying tokenism?
- How do you think the realising of gifts in this passage applies to your circumstances as a believer?
- Discuss what would happen if women would exactly wear what is dictated in this part, instead of wearing contemporary clothes.
- Do you see anything in connection with gifts which has not been addressed yet?

4.2.4 Guidelines for Bible study on 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 (cf. sections 2.4.3.1 and 2.3.1.2.1)

There are two pieces of background information to this passage that first have to be borne in mind:

- 1.) In first-century Mediterranean culture prestige was determined by "*honour*" and "*shame*", and,
- 2.) women who did not wear a head covering brought disgrace (shame) on themselves and their husbands because they were removing the symbol of differentiation. In other words, they were attempting to *blur the sexes*. Paul was trying to curb this *blurring of sexes*,

because homosexuality and lesbianism was rife among the pagan Corinthians. The primary topic Paul thus deals with according to this passage is **sexual differentiation**.

Now, bearing this information in mind, answer the following questions:

- Can you identify instances where there was a threat that sexual differentiation could be ignored according to this passage?
- Does Paul forbid women to prophesy or pray?
- What should happen in the light of Women's Rights? Is the church not supposed be obedient to the law in a country (Romans 13:1-7) by adhering to individual women's rights?
- What does verse 12 say about the importance of women? Do you think there is supposed to be a hierarchy between men and women?
- Complete the following sentence: Paul is illustrating that men and women are e before God, but remain d according to their gender.
- If the primary concern in this passage were **sexual differentiation**, would you say that Paul was addressing **unmarried women** too?
- What does verse 12 say about mutual interdependence between the genders?
- Can the church function with one of the genders not being incorporated into the offices?
- Would men and women exercise leadership in identical ways? Or would their approach tend to differ?
- How do you think this passage applies to gender roles in your circumstances as believer?
- Do you see anything in connection with gender which has not been addressed yet?

4.2.5 Guidelines for Bible study on Ephesians 5:21-33 (cf. section 2.4.3.2)

- What is the function of verse 21 in relation to the rest of the passage?
- What type of submission is Paul describing in verse 21?
- What or who determines this type of submission described in verse 21?
- To whom is Paul directing this passage?
- Paul uses an image to describe marriage. What image does he use?
- Paul exhorts husbands to live in a certain type of relationship towards their wives. How would you describe this relationship?
- What type of relationship is expected from a wife towards her husband (verses 22 and 24)?
- What would cause a wife to respect her husband (verses 25-33)?

- Would a woman be as effective in church work if her husband ignores the salvation work of Christ in his life as she would be when the husband recognises Christ's Lordship over his life?
- Do you see anything in connection with gender which has not been addressed yet?

4.2.6 Guidelines for Bible study on 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 (cf. section 2.4.4.1)

- If you take a look at the whole of chapter 14 of 1 Corinthians, it may be clear why Paul summoned women to "keep silent" during worship. What do you think the reason may be?
- Is there any explicit order for women to submit to their husbands as such in these verses?
- To what or who are women to submit, seen in the broader context?
- How do you think this passage applies to today's worship service? How should women's participation in worship services be, and are they literally forbidden to say anything in worship services?
- What should happen in the light of Women's Rights regarding the position of women in worship services? Is the church not supposed be obedient to the law in a country (Romans 13:1-7) by adhering to individual women's rights?
- When women do take part in church offices, which criterion applies to them as well as to men?
- How would the church (your congregation) be different if women did not use their gifts?
- Discuss where women can be involved in the worship service even where she is not allowed in the offices.
- Do you see anything in connection with gender which has not been addressed yet?

4.2.7 Guidelines for Bible study on 1 Timothy 2:8-15 (cf. section 2.4.4.2)

Bear in mind that that which is described here is a major step beyond Judaism in New Testament times, because Jewish women were not allowed access to more than the outer court of the temple, and neither to prophesy or read the Torah. Among the Greeks their position was even more restricted. Apparently a problem also existed with false teachers in Timothy's environment. Then answer the following questions:

- How do the restrictions according to 1 Timothy 2:8-15 compare to the description mentioned above?

- Given the circumstances as described above, would there have been a credible testimony to the outside pagan world if women had a position of authority over men?
- There was one thing that women were allowed to do according to this passage. What was it?
- Seen in the light of all the other passages in this biblical study, do these restrictions according to 1 Timothy 2:8-15 have everlasting validity for all times and circumstances?
- Do you think that the Law on Human Rights, which the church should obey (according to Romans 13:1-7), would regard it as legal when women today are restricted in the same way as in biblical times?
- How do you think the change in environment affects the way women ought to take part in church life?
- What do you think the passage has to say about the way in which women should take part in church offices, for example when they are teachers in the congregation?
- Discuss what would happen when women would suddenly stop all teaching / training / involvement in the church.
- Do you see anything in connection with gender which has not been addressed yet?

4.2.8 Guidelines for Bible study on Galatians 3:28 (cf. section 2.4.5.1)

- Before the work of Jesus Christ as Saviour on the cross, there were three very distinct divisions in society. What were they?
- On which grounds do these distinct roles no longer count?
- Does the new oneness also mean that distinctions between the genders cease to exist?
- How long does the new oneness in Christ Jesus remain valid?
- What does this new oneness in Christ Jesus imply for Christians' influence towards the world? Is it acceptable that the world should influence the church to regard male and female as equal? Should it not have been the other way round?
- What can you do in church to recognise that women are one together with men?
- How do you think women should react when they are suddenly recognised in the offices of deacon, elder or minister? Should women that are chosen into such offices be wary because of what tradition has conditioned them to believe about themselves?
- How should men accept women in their midst if women become, for example, deacons?
- How should men react when women become leaders in the congregation? Should it frighten the men?
- Would women be wise in turning down a calling to leadership?
- What difference can women make if they fulfil the roles men traditionally fulfilled?
- Discuss how leadership (in any way) by a woman in the church can be enriching.

- Do you see anything in connection with gender which has not been addressed yet?

4.2.9 Guidelines for Bible study on Romans 16:1-16 (cf. section 2.4.6.1)

- Try and list the female names in this passage. How many do you get?
- Does the fact that so many women are mentioned as Paul's co-workers say something about the traditional stereotype of women? In other words, is it true that women exclusively belonged to the private sphere of the home?
- Why do you think there were so many women in the first church in Rome?
- Which women are discussed in more detail than the others?
- Describe the work that Phoebe did.
- Was Phoebe's position dependent on anything Paul did, and what does your finding say about the relationship between Paul and Phoebe?
- Do you notice with which adjective two of the women's work is described?
- Who were Prisca and Aquila (verse 3)? Do you know about other passages where they are also mentioned (consult a concordance, if possible)?
- What is the significance of Prisca being mentioned first? (Consult Acts 18:26 too.)
- Most commentators agree that Junia (verse 7) was a woman, although some insist that Junia was a man. If she were a woman, can you see something that she did that was contrary to the view of "silent", "submitting" women?
- After studying this passage, do you think women should be restricted in officially taking part in today's worship services?
- Do you think there are certain areas in church life where women cannot serve?
- Discuss how life in the contemporary has changed from the Biblical times and how this also changed the principle of women's involvement.
- Do you see anything in connection with gender which has not been addressed yet?

4.3 PROPOSED SERMON OUTLINES

4.3.1 Sermon outline on Romans 12:3-8 (cf. sections 2.2.1 and 2.3)

Verse 5 is taken as the central verse.

- The new life in Jesus Christ gives believers a new mind-set.
- No more "thinking too highly of yourself" (cf. Annexure B on *uperfronew* in verse 3).
- Beware of measuring your worth by comparing yourself to others. Do not look down on others and think highly of yourself because you possess a more "showy" gift than they have.

- Rather part of the greater whole.
- “Greater whole” is the “body of Christ”; each of us is a member of the *body*.
- All members – men and women alike – have received a *gift* or *gifts*.
- Gifts are “tools” in the congregation to build unity.
- No matter whether you are male or female, you can exercise your gifts wherever you are called to work in the congregation, as deacon, elder or minister.
- Excel at what you can do well, be the “tool” you are meant to be.
- Do not overrate yourself, nor underrate yourself, God has a specific purpose with you in your own congregation.

4.3.2 Sermon outline on 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 (cf. section 2.4.2.1)

Verse 11 is taken as the central verse.

- Nobody in the congregation has reason to feel inferior or superior.
 - Women are not inferior.
 - Women do not have to act superior.
 - Men are not superior.
 - Men do not have to see themselves as inferior when women serve an office, while the men are not serving.
- Each of us – male or female, young and old – has a specific function.
- By the work of the Holy Spirit, be what you are.
- Be part of a Bible Study group or the Sunday school in your congregation, and throw in your full weight, and don’t stay away just because there are mainly women or mainly men.
- Do what you are good at, and do it to your full potential, serving our Lord Jesus Christ to whom the church belongs.

4.3.3 Sermon outline on Ephesians 4:4-16 (cf. section 2.4.2.2)

Verse 16 is taken as the central verse.

- As believers we must remember that we are one.
- But Christ gives his unique measure of gifts to us.
- Whether you are a man or a woman, let the body of Christ benefit from your gifts that you have received.
- Neither men nor women should lag behind the other as a group in the congregation, they should work together, young as well as old.

- Equip and strengthen the other believers, so that the congregation can grow towards maturity.
- Be part of a Bible Study group or the Sunday school in your congregation, and throw in your full weight, and don't stay away just because there are mainly women or mainly men.
- When women do the work of equipping members in the congregation, they should do it as well as they can, without feeling that they are trespassing.

4.3.4 Sermon outline on 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 (cf. sections 2.3.1.2.1 and 2.4.3.1)

Verses 11 and 12 are taken as the central verses.

- Although men and women are equal in Christ, they remain different.
- Women and men need one another; we are not supposed to function separately.
- According to Romans 13:1-7, believers should also obey the law regarding the position of women.
- As men and women, we should maintain our distinctness as male and female.
- Any woman taking on a leadership role in the congregation should do it with total dedication, without offending men in the congregation.
- Women serving in an office, for example as a deacon, may do it with their distinct feminine touch.

4.3.5 Sermon outline on Ephesians 5:21-33 (cf. section 2.4.3.2)

Verses 28-30 are taken as the central verses.

- Look at the subordinate way Jesus served the church as saviour.
- Husbands should see Jesus' example and love their wives the way Jesus loved the church.
- By loving your wife this way, you prepare her to appear before God in the end.
- Marriage should be an institution in which women can thrive towards God's purpose for them on earth.
- In marriage, wives should serve their husbands in a similar way as the church serves Christ.
- Husband and wife are created differently, but remain equal before God and in the church.

4.3.6 Sermon outline on 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35 (cf. section 2.4.4.1)

The whole passage is taken as the central verse, and should be seen in its broader context.

- We should always worship the Lord in an orderly fashion.
- Even until today, when women perform their gifts in the church (as is also the case with men), it should not disturb worship in a disgraceful way.
- Make women part of church offices, because their participation would contribute towards better harmony in church.

4.3.7 Sermon outline on 1 Timothy 2:8-15 (cf. section 2.4.4.2)

Verses 11 and 12 are taken as the central verses, but the broader context, and not just the pericope involved, should be taken into consideration.

- Circumstances can arise in a congregation, where false teaching is threatening to overwhelm congregational life.
- This, among others, seems to be what happened in our particular passage.
- If women (as well as men) get overly involved in false teaching, it would do damage to the Christian witness if a woman (or *vice versa*, men) were to exercise authority in church. (The same that applies to women applies to men in our day and age. Our society has far less hierarchy between the genders than was the case in the time when the First Epistle to Timothy was written.)
- Bear witness – and do not be a stumbling block – at all times in realising the way God created you as a woman or a man.
- It is possible that women can have a very special and unique message to convey to the congregation, that men are less likely to do in the same way. This can be done in sobriety.
- Congregations should use women in their midst in offices, thereby showing outsiders that Christians respect equality.

4.3.8 Sermon outline on Galatians 3:28 (cf. section 2.4.5.1)

The whole verse can serve as a central verse, especially the second half, “there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus”.

- We as Christians may celebrate the fact that men and women are “one in Christ Jesus”.
- Gender should not be a criterion for who is to take part in the offices of the congregation.
- Jesus Christ’s work on the cross makes us as his church unique, in that men and women that have been saved have been given equal status before God.

- In this way the church is totally different to the world outside, because women do not have to fight for an equal position. Equality has already been given to them by God through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ
- Women should also not be shy to take part in the offices. When they are for example called to serve as deacon, they should not turn it down due to the roles traditionally expected from them.
- Men, do not be foolish in seeing yourself as superior to women: Jesus Christ has already changed it 2000 years ago!

4.3.9 Sermon outline on Romans 16:1-16 (cf. section 2.4.6.1)

Verses 1, 2, 3 and 7 are taken as the central verses.

- Here we can see it clearly that in Biblical times already the Christian community was totally different to the worldly community.
- Whereas society did not allow women in leadership roles, it was commonplace among the Christians.
- We see it in the example of Phoebe, the deacon. She was strong as “benefactor” in her days.
- Another woman in office was Prisca. She seems to have taken the lead in working together with her husband.
- The third woman in our passage, Junia, was well-respected as an “apostle” in the wider sense of the word “apostle”.
- If you are a woman in your congregation, remember that women are just as much members in the congregation as men are. Accept the calling: if God calls you to serve in the congregation, you do not need to hesitate.
- If you are a man, remember not to see your gender as a reason for ruling in the church.

4.4 GENERAL (COMMON) GIFTS USED BY BOTH GENDERS

The gifts mentioned in the *Corpus Paulinum* are found in Romans 12:6b-8 (cf. section 2.3.1.2), 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 12:28-30 (cf. section 2.4.2.1) and Ephesians 4:11 (cf. section 2.4.2.2).

The gifts mentioned according to Romans 12:6b-8 (cf. section 2.3.1.2) are:

- prophecy / speaking God’s word (cf. section 2.3.1.2.1 and also sections 3.1.5 on *Feminism / Feminist theology* and 3.2.3.2 on the empirical results)

- ministering / service / being a deacon (cf. sections 2.3.1.2.2; 2.4.6.1; 2.4.6.1.1; 2.4.6.1.2.1 and sections 3.1.1 on *Introduction*, 3.1.2 on *Psychology*, 3.1.5 on *Feminism / Feminist Theology* and 3.2.3.2 on the empirical results)
- teaching (cf. section 2.3.1.2.3; 2.4.2.1 and 2.4.2.2 and also sections 3.1.5 on *Feminism / Feminist theology*; 3.2.3.2 on the empirical results and 3.2.4 on the summary of empirical findings)
- exhorter / one who encourages / comforter (cf. section 2.3.1.2.4 and section 3.2.3.2 on the empirical results)
- giver (cf. section 2.3.1.2.5)
- leader (cf. section 2.3.1.2.6 and cf. sections 3.2.3.2 and 3.2.3.8)
- the compassionate / mercy (cf. section 2.3.1.2.7 and section 3.2.3.2 and 3.2.3.5)

The gifts mentioned according to 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 12:28-30 (cf. section 2.4.2.1) are:

- utterance of wisdom (cf. section 3.2.3.2)
- utterance of knowledge
- faith
- healing
- working of miracles
- prophecy (cf. section 3.2.3.2)
- distinguishing between spirits (cf. section 3.2.3.2)
- various kinds of tongues
- interpretation of tongues
- apostle
- teaching (cf. section 2.3.1.2.3; 2.4.2.2 and also sections 3.1.5 on *Feminism / Feminist theology*; 3.2.3.2 on the empirical results and 3.2.4 on the summary of empirical findings)
- assistance / administration (cf. section 3.2.3.2)
- leadership (cf. section 3.2.3.2 and 3.2.3.8)

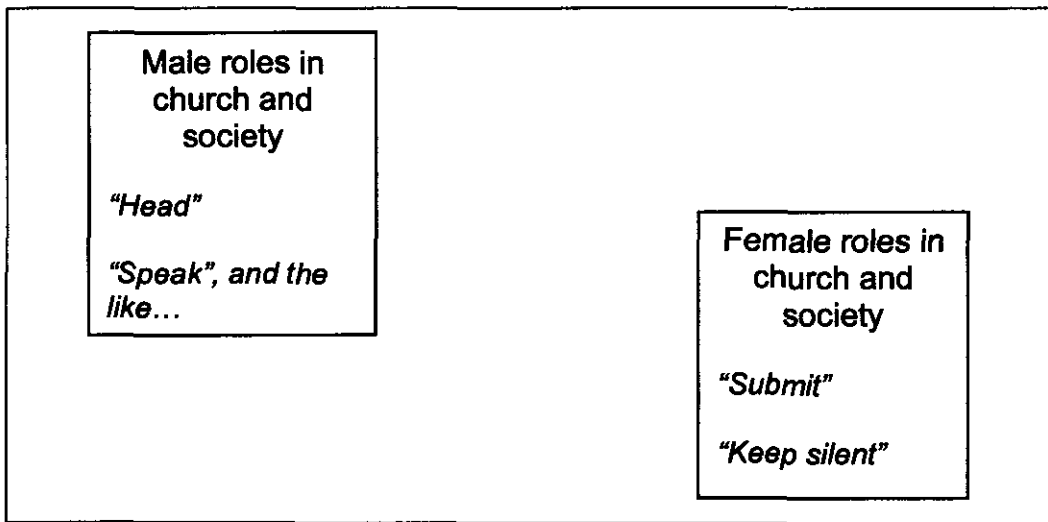
The gifts mentioned according to Ephesians 4:11 (cf. section 2.4.2.2) are:

- apostle
- prophecy (cf. section 3.2.3.2)
- evangelist (cf. section 3.2.3.2)
- pastor (cf. section 3.2.3.2)
- teaching (cf. section 2.3.1.2.3 and also sections 3.1.5 on *Feminism / Feminist theology*; 3.2.3.2 on the empirical results and 3.2.4 on the summary of empirical findings)

Gifts mentioned in all *three* passages are *prophecy* and *teaching*. The gifts appearing in *two of the three* passages are *apostle* (1 Corinthians 12:28-29 and Ephesians 4:11) and *leader* (Romans 12:8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28). Obviously all 20 (some count 18) of these gifts are not a complete list, and are rather a sample that can almost “have all the bases covered” (cf. section 2.3).

4.5 A DISCUSSION ON THE FUNCTIONING OF GIFTS AND GENDER IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

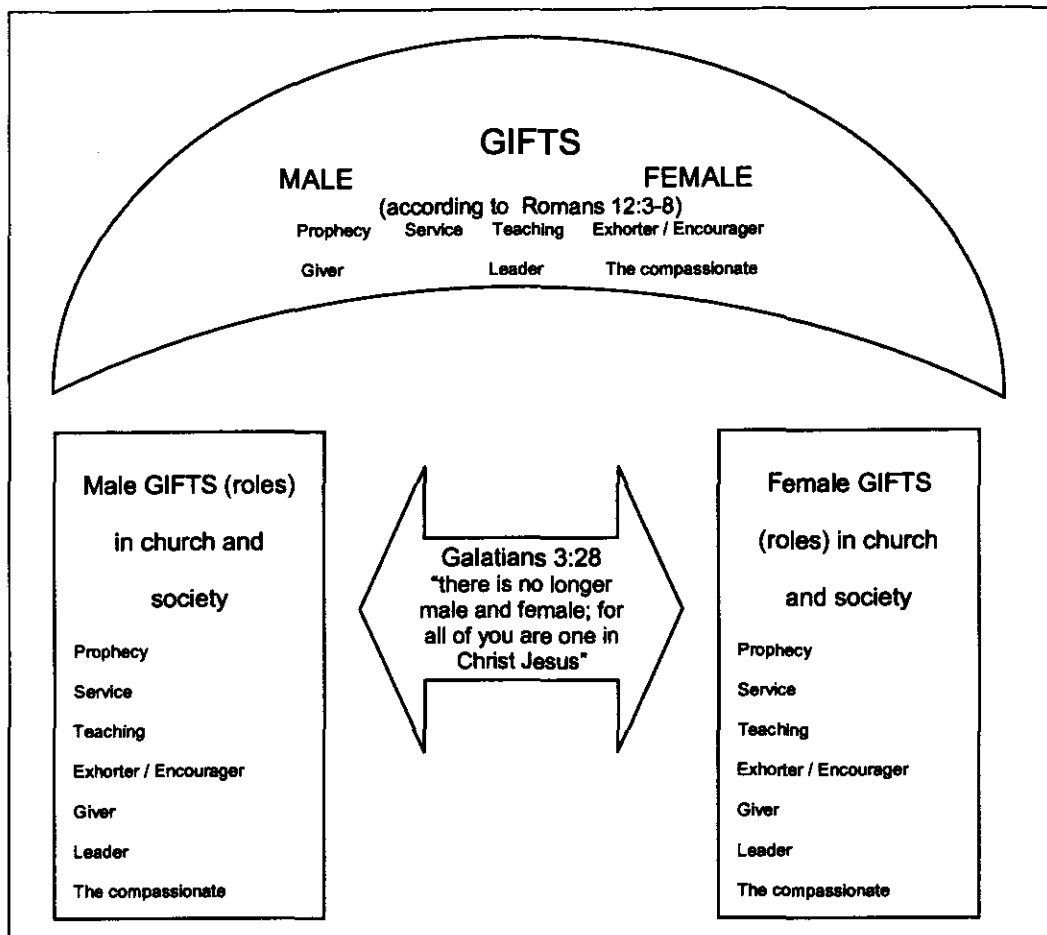
Figure 4.1: Diagram to indicate a *more patriarchal* functioning of gender roles.



Despite the simplistic nature of the diagram, it could be said that a patriarchal view exists where the roles of male and female in **figure 4.1** can be depicted as asymmetrical. **Figure 4.1** describes in a symbolic way what tends to happen in circumstances with such an asymmetrical, patriarchal view. Usually under such a view, men perform superior tasks and are seen as more important. The man is seen as “head” that may “speak” at any time, with woman “submitting” and mainly “keeping silent”.

The researcher intends to point out that the above view (or “governing paradigm”) (cf. section 3.1.4 on *Law* and section 3.1.5 on *Feminism / Feminist theology*) can no longer provide a solution to the functioning of gender roles in the church. A new paradigm has been emerging because more and more enigmas were arising from the established paradigm. Therefore the following diagram wishes to explain a new, more practically viable way for the *genders* to function.

Figure 4.2: Diagram to indicate *a more equal* functioning of *gifts* and *gender roles*.



In the diagram above both **MALE** and **FEMALE** have equal "access" to the **GIFTS** that are depicted by the "top of an umbrella". This is because the gifts are **gifts of grace**, received undeservedly from God. God in his sovereignty bestows them freely through his Holy Spirit upon whom he wants to (cf. sections 2.2.6 on *An own applicable social context* and 2.3 on *Concluding exegesis on Romans 12:6b-8*).

Social scientists sometimes tend to refuse to acknowledge that the way gifts are exercised by the one gender can be different to the way it is exercised by the other gender. The extreme of this view is the view of **androgyny**, which has mostly been proven to fail in providing a solution (cf. section 3.1.2 on *Psychology*).

Although men and women are **equal** in Christ (cf. section 2.4.5.1 on *Galatians 3:28*), differences do exist and persist between the genders no matter the amount of social interventions. This is why **male** and **female** in figure 4.2 are depicted in two different blocks. (On these **differences**, cf. sections 2.2; 2.2.6; 2.3 on *difference amidst unity according to*

Romans 12:3-8; and 2.4.3.1 on 1 Corinthians 11:3-16; cf. section 3.1.2 on Psychology; cf. 3.1.5 on Feminism / Feminist Theology.) Although gifts in Romans 12:3-8 do not pertain to gender at all, the words of Romans 12:6 can put the matter in general in perspective: "We have gifts that *differ* according to the grace given to us..." because all believers' gifts differ.

The *equality in Christ* described according to Galatians 3:28 (cf. section 2.4.5.1 on Galatians 3:28) forms the basis of the Apostle Paul's view on the way Jesus Christ brought a new dimension to all social distinctions. Men and women stand as equals before God, by God's grace. Together with the classification between Jew and Greek, slave and free, the distinction between male and female is broken. Between male and female, there is also no distinction in spiritual privilege or status anymore. The equality is the given new reality (indicative) on which Paul bases all his other writings. The new reality can be described as the "new creation" which Jesus Christ established through his death and resurrection.

It is ironic that 20 centuries swung the matter into the reverse direction, so that society – in demanding acknowledgement of women's rights – is exercising pressure on the church. Was the church not supposed to transform society?

4.5.1 Gifts that tend to be found more in either male or female

In section 3.1.2 (on *Psychology*) as well as section 3.2.3.5 (on empirical findings) it was pointed out that gender-specific traits could be identified. Female traits were described as serving, caring, compassion and nurturing (cf. section 3.1.2 on *Psychology*). Thereby it is not implied that men cannot have such traits, but it is *more likely* to be found in women. The qualitative data analysis (empirical study) pointed out that softness, leniency, being compromising, empathy, helping, mercy, compassion and relating with small children more easily were the experience of women themselves (cf. section 3.2.3.5). The softer, more empathetic, caring and compassionate gifts were acknowledged among the females (cf. section 3.2.3.5). The genders, however, do overlap. Teaching, encouraging, leadership and administration tend not to be as gender sensitive as the former softer, empathetic, caring and compassionate group (cf. sections 3.2.3.2, 3.2.3.5 and 3.4 on *Metatheoretical perspectives regarding the qualitative analysis*).

In section 3.1.2 on *Psychology* it was also indicated that men tend to be more autonomous, dominant, and assertive. This too is also found in women, but they are *more likely* to be found in men.

When these traits are compared to the gifts in section 4.4 above, it may be found that women would tend to have gifts such as

- prophecy / speaking God's word (with a feminine nuance of compassion and nurturing)
- ministering / service / being a deacon
- teaching
- one who encourages / comforter
- giver
- the compassionate.

It becomes clear, however, that almost all the gifts in Romans 12:3-8 (even including leadership) can be found in women too.

The only thing is that women would quite often exercise the same gifts *in a different fashion* than men would.

4.5.2 Instruments available to recognise and use gifts

A few valuable guidelines have been developed to assist believers in discovering their gifts (cf. sections 2.3 and 3.1.2). They make use of questionnaires as instruments for believers to discover which are the gifts that are bestowed upon them. Believers are encouraged to go and exercise those gifts that are identified as well as they can.

4.6 PASTORAL GUIDELINES TOWARDS A STRATEGY FOR THE CHURCH

When a strategy for the church is to be proposed, it must always be seen in context. In churches where women have not officially been allowed to be ordained, the strategy would be different than the strategy followed in a church where women may be ordained.

However, it is clear that women can add a dimension to ministry that would bring a sense of "wholeness" to the church. One thing that should be heeded against, is a perpetuation of the "Aristotelian dualism" (cf. sections 3.1.2 on *Psychology* and 3.1.5 on *Feminism / Feminist Theology*). Men should beware not to see women as still having to be "governed". The idea that men tend to be, think and act more "transcendent" than women, who tend to think and act more "bodily", should be handled cautiously. But that does not have to cause the exclusion of women from the offices.

With the above in mind, clearer strategies for churches may be formulated, as will be done in the sections below.

4.6.1 Different types of churches

4.6.1.1 Churches where women are allowed in offices

- When women still tend to be called only as deacon, the practice is not always bad. The office of deacon actually does the work of caring, mercy, compassion and even listening. But then it is as if they still have to focus on the “lower half” of the Aristotelian duality (cf. sections 3.1.2 on *Psychology* and 3.1.5 on *Feminism / Feminist Theology*). The question can be posed why women cannot also serve in the office of elder.
- When women do get elected as elders, the case seems largely to be that they are kept in the minority. They do not always get sent to assemblies and synods. When they are at these meetings they can indeed make a difference in the decision making. They have more compassion, caring, co-operation and softness in their thought processes (cf. sections 3.1.2, 3.2.3.5 and 3.2.4) and they may grasp “emotional” issues better.
- Male leaders in the church may sometimes tend to listen to the people in a church meeting that speak the loudest. It may be the case that they only focus on men’s opinions. In this case, men would consciously have to make an effort to allow women to air their opinion.
- Female ministers still tend to be in the minority, but it nevertheless seems as if they enjoy their work as ministers (cf. section 3.2.3.1). Where these women do indeed exercise their gift of preaching / prophecy they must cultivate an awareness for societal injustices, pains and needs. Men tend to side-step these types of issues.

4.6.1.2 Churches where women are not allowed in offices

- Awareness can be created for the benefits of women’s influence in church life.
- Women should not give up in their endeavour to be part of all the facets of church life.
- Where they do get a chance to take part in larger facets of church life, it should not be forced, but it can be done gracefully.
- By exercising their gifts gracefully, men will become aware of the feminine touch that benefits the church. In this way “gynophobic” (women-fearing) men can be convinced of the need for women in all spheres of the church.
- The opposite, an arrogance and harshness among women, would not have a positive effect.

- Men that are positive about women serving in church offices should allow their female counterparts to become involved in leadership and teaching positions (cf. Annexure D where question # 6 is answered by respondent F). (The *Bible studies* that are suggested in section 4.2 above could be used fruitfully to get an understanding on the matter of women in church offices.)
- Organise a workshop where experts on exegesis, church growth and experience on grass roots level are invited to take part. In this workshop there will have to be women who have been ministers or have taken part in other church offices, as well as people who have been involved in the management of change. These people can give introductions. Church members on both sides of the spectrum can be involved in order to expose everyone to the real issues of gender and gifts. Perhaps someone from a church where deacons have been accepted can tell how their congregation has been enriched by having women deal in compassion with elderly people, women who have had miscarriages, teenage pregnancies or have been abused by their husbands. These are instances where men (especially young men – who were traditionally deacons) could and would not show the love of Christ in a very special way.
- One can perhaps also have a “dream session” where everyone speaks out their “dream” on how it will be if everyone lives out their God-given gifts in love and in a self-sacrificing manner. Here one would refer to the one-another references but also the whole Christian ethic of serving the other rather than yourself – the very characteristic Jesus Christ portrayed when He washed his disciples’ feet (cf. John 13:1-17). The participants can express how they imagine this will change their local congregation. No limits should be set as to what everyone expresses. This is where everyone serves the other regardless of gender and other hindrances.
- A discussion may also be initiated about many churches where women are the only ones taking the lead. This is what happens in Africa for instance where there are many migrant workers away from home for long periods and women have to do everything. Would it be a sin for those women to do everything according to their gifts in order to keep things going in the church? In other areas, men are absent due to other reasons: drunkenness and laziness and a general state of *laissez-faire* (let go of everything). Also, women with their gifts (sometimes even without the gifts) take the lead in obedience to the Lord and in responsibility towards the church, their children and society.
- In the South African context white, middle-aged men are often stereotyped (albeit right or wrong). They have further been viewed with suspicion as being paternalistic and chauvinistic (the kind of people who created apartheid, still trying to keep it going). There is even a case in which an elderly grey, “grandma-like” woman has been accepted unconditionally as minister in a congregation of coloureds. As mother, grandma, sister

and nurse (for which she was originally trained) – more doors were open to her than a white man of her age.

4.6.1.3 Churches where women are allowed in the office of deacon only (cf. section 1.2.2)

- Women that serve as deacons should excel in what they do, without resenting the fact that they cannot be part of the elders or ministers. The process is only starting.
- The office of deacon is *par excellence* an office which women can do well. Women's greater tendency to have the touch of nurturing, empathy and mercy (cf. section 3.2.3.5) enables them to do the work of deacon even better than many men do it.
- Women that serve as deacons should not let their male fellow-deacons feel that they cannot do the work of a deacon. Each with his or her unique approach has a calling to fill the office of deacon.
- Even though this category of churches does not allow women in the office of elder, women can indeed fill the office of elder in the future. Many women are for example excellent teachers (cf. section 3.3.3.2). Patience is what is needed. When women become impatient, they cause even more resistance among the men who usually have to vote them into the offices of elder and minister. (The *Bible studies* that are suggested in section 4.2 above could be used fruitfully to gain an understanding on the matter of women in church offices.)
- Here a workshop can be held in the same vein (and same experts) as above (cf. section 4.6.1.2) with the difference that women (as many as possible) can tell their stories how they perceive their ministry as deacons. Men deacons can tell how their role has changed for the better when women (often as old as their own grandmothers) came into the diaconate. Other church members can tell of the enrichment these women with their gifts brought to the church as a whole.
- Continuing from there, a "dream session" (or even a planning session) can follow where everyone involved tells how it will be if women are allowed in all the offices. One should be specific and mention certain areas where women with their gifts will definitely have a great contribution to make: as elders on issues where men are focused on the issue and women tend to have a more personal touch and will be more sympathetic towards the person (*inter alia*, in cases of censure).
- In some cases women will be more creative and give attention to finishing touches where fund-raising is involved.
- Again: those against the acceptance of women in offices, will have to have free speech on this matter and not feel threatened, the positive side to women in office will have to be the guiding principle.

- A workshop can be held during which awareness for the falsehood of the "Aristotelian duality" regarding gender roles can be cultivated.
- Other points of the strategy: To deliberately appoint women on all committees in the church and keep notes on how a different approach is observed after one year.

4.7 PRACTICAL-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The following conclusions were reached in this chapter regarding a practical-theoretical model for the pastoral practice which can do justice to gender roles in church offices:

PRACTICAL-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

REGARDING A MODEL

FOR THE PASTORAL PRACTICE

- A set of nine Bible studies was worked out for persons interested in the subject of this research.
- Sermon outlines on the nine passages treated in this research are made. They are not at all complete, but only outlines as a suggestion for the line of thought in sermons.
- General gifts that both genders can exercise were discussed. The conclusion is indeed that men and women alike can actually exercise all the gifts the *Corpus Paulinum* names.
- The functioning of *gifts* and *gender* in church and society was taken into discussion by means of two diagrams. The first diagram indicated how the old "governing paradigm" do not work anymore. The second diagram pointed toward a much more equal way of treating male and female church members. Unity amidst the differences between the genders was highlighted.
- The next section treated the fact that there are gifts that tend to be found more in either male or female. It was stressed that there are gifts that men are more likely to exercise than women are and *vice versa*. However, the gifts can still be found in both genders.
- The gifts are exercised differently by the different genders.
- It was very briefly pointed out that there are guidelines for persons that wish to discover which gifts have been bestowed upon them.
- A strategy was set forth in a pastoral way for churches to give women the chance to become involved in the leadership of the church. The situation was discussed for churches that do allow women to be ordained as well as for churches that do not allow women to be ordained.
- It is clear that women ought to be allowed to be ordained, because they can add a dimension to the church that would enrich the functioning of the church. They can, for example, make the church members more aware of people "out there" that are in desperate

need of care, so that the Gospel can influence believers to do what Jesus Christ called his children to do.

4.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter gifts and gender roles in the church were addressed by formulating a practical-theoretical model for the pastoral practice. This model was constructed by using insights gained from a set of Bible studies of relevant pericopes (section 4.2), which in turn served as guidelines for a set of proposed sermon outlines (section 4.3). General gifts used by both genders were identified (section 4.4). Based on the results of sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4, the functioning of gifts and gender in church and society was discussed in section 4.5. Finally, in section 4.6 guidelines towards a strategy for the church were stipulated. Thus having reached the objective of this study, the next chapter will present the conclusions of this research and will make certain recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This research investigated *gifts* and *gender roles* in the church and in society. A study was made of the passages in the *Corpus Paulinum* that deal with gifts as well as with gender. The first chapter put forth how the researcher was intending to go about studying the theme of gifts and gender roles in the church. The second chapter studied nine different passages on gifts and gender roles, whereas the third chapter discussed gender roles from the point of view of a number of disciplines, as well as from the point of view of a selected number of males and females involved in the ministry. The fourth chapter developed a practical-theoretical model for the pastoral practice and the functioning of gifts and gender in church and society was discussed. Guidelines towards a strategy for the church were stipulated in the fourth chapter as well.

The conclusions for this research are put forth below.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING GIFTS IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

5.2.1 The seven gifts according to Romans 12:6b-8

- **Prophecy / speaking God's word (profhteian)**

Prophecy is mainly the proclaiming of God's word with exposition and application, revealing something from God. It must edify the congregation, exhort the believers, and it must encourage them, making God's will known. Paul expected women to exercise the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 11:5).

- **Ministering / Service / Being a "deacon" (diakonia)**

The gift of service in Romans could have had many meanings. It could have been the description of the role that the deacon fulfilled as the church became institutionalised later on. Some want to see it as the service of the Word, to match the preceding gift of prophecy and the following gift of teacher. Paul also referred to his ministry as *diakoneu* or *diakono*-. If it was meant to be simply "service to others", it does not matter either, because this was ultimately the role which Jesus Christ modelled in his earthly mission.

- **Teacher (didaskwn)**

The person who has received the gift of teacher, takes the already available material from tradition, Old Testament Scriptures, the Gospels and moral instructions, communicating and explaining it to his hearers. Therefore the teacher differs from the prophet in that teaching is insight into existing revelation from God, while prophecy is new insight into the will of God. Teaching preserves continuity in the church. According to Romans 16:3, in conjunction with Acts 18:26, Prisca (a woman known to Paul) was an outstanding teacher, as she taught Apollos more about the "way of God".

- **Exhorter / one who encourages / comforter (parakalwn)**

The gift of parakalwn (exhorter, encourager, comforter) had more or less the function to help the believers realise their obedience to the gospel. What the teacher explains, the exhorter applies. The function can also be described as directed towards the heart, conscience and will, while it cultivates virtues such as patience and perseverance. The exhorter / one who encourages / comforter, in modern terms, does the pastoral and practical theological dimension of church work.

- **Giver (metadidou~)**

The person performing this gift of *giver* could have been doing it in Paul's time by sharing his own resources with less privileged people. It could also have been that this person was distributing the resources that belonged to the church as a whole among the poor. It was to be done in singleness of mind, without ulterior motives and ungrudgingly. The work Phoebe did, resembled much of this gift.

- **Leader (proistameno~)**

The role of proistameno~ could either have been that of leading or ruling over the work in a congregation, or it could have been something similar to what the social worker does nowadays, providing support to those in some kind of need. When Phoebe is described as prostati~ in Romans 16:2, prostati~ is directly related to the word proistameno~, and therefore Phoebe's work could have been either that of a church leader or as that of supporting people in need.

- **The compassionate (elewn)**

This gift could have the function of providing in the needs of the poor, but it could also include any act of mercy towards others, for example visiting the sick, old-age care, care for widows and orphans, care for the disabled or even providing for those in prison. This work should be done cheerfully, and if it is done with remorse, it would be offending to the receiver.

5.2.2 Conclusions regarding gifts according to 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

All gifts in the church (the body of Christ) have a divine origin. The Triune God gives a variety of gifts, and the believers in Corinth had to know that "speaking in tongues" was not the one and only gift that there was to receive. Gifts are not reserved for an elite group, but all believers receive gifts, and certainly each believer does not receive the same gift. Because one God bestows the gifts upon the believers, the believers cannot be divided. They must be one, as God is one. When the Spirit administers the gifts to the believers, He knows what gift is best for each believer and He also knows, what gifts are best for each congregation's needs. When the Spirit knows which believer should receive what gift, no believer can think that he *achieves* some honour, because it is the Spirit that *ascribes* the gifts. So there is neither place for being boastful about one's gifts, nor for feeling inferior about one's gifts. If one or more members lead, the others do not need to wish they were leaders, because all cannot be leaders. The gift or gifts of each member in the body of Christ are needed and therefore all the members in the whole body function as one interdependent "organism".

5.2.3 Conclusions regarding gifts according to Ephesians 4:4-16

Stemming from the fact that the body is one, Paul points out that there is diversity. Christ determines by grace what size of gift he wants to give, and what the nature of the gift would be. No one is skipped when Christ gives gifts by grace. Believers receive gifts so that they can serve in the body of Christ for the benefit of the body, and not for the believer's glory. According to verse 11 the *gifts* are the people themselves. These *gifts* as people are "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers", all given undeservedly. The *gifts* are given to the church to equip and build up the body. All believers have the priestly task to equip the others and edifying the church. There is no way of reserving the gifts in Ephesians 4 to men only. The fact that the gifts listed in verse 11 are primarily verbally orientated – not pertaining to non-verbal gifts like loving care – could have implications for women. It would mean that if women also received these gifts, they must have fitted into roles in the church that today are traditionally associated with the tasks of to the male stereotype.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING GENDER ROLES IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

5.3.1 Conclusions regarding headship and submission according to 1 Corinthians 11:3-16

The idea of a new social equality in Christ forms the *indicative* of the gospel, proclaiming that the salvation which Jesus Christ brought about by rising after his crucifixion and death, is what counts for gender roles in the church. By the new creation *in Christ*, men and women are re-created to stand as equals before God (*the imperative of the gospel*), despite their distinctive gender differences. These distinctive gender differences will and should never change, this is how God intended it for humanity. The genders are mutually interdependent, as Paul explains it in verses 11-12: "*Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God.*" All this would also not change as culture changes either, because in this passage the remarks about covering or not covering of heads had to do with culture. However, Paul stressed their new re-created social equality *in Christ*.

5.3.2 Conclusions regarding headship and submission according to Ephesians 5:21-33

After all that has been said about wives' submission to their husbands, the standard is set by the first verse of the passage (verse 21). Paul clearly exhorts Christians *in general* to "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ". The Son of God, Jesus Christ, took on the ultimate subordinate role, and he called men and women to follow his serving model. This means that the life of Jesus Christ offers a model of mutuality that ought to exist between women and men. From this passage it becomes clear that male and female were fundamentally created different from each other and Paul exhorts his readers (as in the other male-female passages) not to disturb the difference. However, marriage makes these two different sexes one, complementing each other in marriage. This difference in the genders has a fundamental effect on church and society, but does not change the fact that they are created equal before God and are redeemed by Christ to be equal once again.

5.3.3 Conclusions regarding the command to keep silent according to 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35

The command for women to keep silent during worship may be seen strictly in the context of glossolalia and all sorts of ecstatic experiences. The command for silence should rather not be seen that much as a reinforcement of gender differences (and gender hierarchy). It should rather be seen to keep the order intact, and to keep the Christian community from being repulsive (against the background of "honour" and "shame"). It should be attractive, with a missionary character.

5.3.4 Conclusions regarding the command to keep silent according to 1 Timothy 2:8-15

Undoubtedly, there is no indication in this passage that Paul assigns leadership roles to women in the ministry of the church. In this passage women were only permitted to learn from someone teaching them (something not allowed in surrounding Judaism). There are some clear reasons why nothing can be found about women being allowed to take part in public ministry. The false teaching that was prevalent in Ephesus made it important for women rather to learn in silence and in full submission to God. Paul may have had (some unknown) good reason to expect that false teachers could get a hold on the women in the congregation. The false teachers getting a hold on some of the women and the women subsequently teaching would have put the "missionary" example towards outsiders in jeopardy. It may also have been that women overplayed their authority, and Paul was correcting this behaviour, because there were many other instances where women took part in ministry (and were acknowledged by Paul) in the church.

5.3.5 Conclusions regarding equality according to Galatians 3:28

In seeing male and female as one *in Christ*, the salvation work of Christ is the crucial factor for bringing unity as well as equality between men and women. This is solely a deed of grace from God that manifests in the lives of human beings and it is not a "right". There ought not to be any pressure from the outside world on the church to attend to gender equality, as this equality can only truly be *in Christ*. The equality between male and female is a status which believers have due to the fact that they belong to Jesus Christ. According to Galatians 3:28 it is *in Christ* that the vertical lineage of Abraham from father to son has been diminished in order to re-centre females in an inclusive and mutual community of believers.

5.3.6 Conclusions regarding the women mentioned in Romans 16:1-16

- Although the common custom in the society surrounding the early church was far more patriarchal, Paul brought the gospel of Jesus Christ, proclaiming that in Christ men and women have been redeemed to be equal. Their status due to the fall into sin (Genesis 3) has been restored by the risen Lord to make man and woman equal before God (cf. Galatians 3:28 and John 17:11,21)
- Paul acknowledges the fact that women toiled, as it were, shoulder against shoulder with him in spreading the gospel among those that have not yet heard it. It is remarkable, and surely not sheer coincidence, that Paul used the phrase "worked hard" in connection with women, while other descriptions go with men.
- The three women that are highlighted as prominent people in the passage, Phoebe, Prisca and Junia, all had some or other type of influence that they exercised in the spheres they were working in. Phoebe made a significant difference by being extraordinarily helpful to those in the church at Cenchreae. Based on this Phoebe was highly recommended as bearer of the letter to the Romans. Prisca's work together with her husband Aquila as missionary was noteworthy because they worked independently. The fact that Prisca's name is mentioned first, could indicate that she was more gifted than her husband, which implies that there is nothing wrong if women exceed their husbands. Junia's case points to the fact that women also belonged to the wider circle of apostles, and she and her husband were exemplary missionaries.
- There is no doubt that this passage indicates how women were already part and parcel of the church's public ministry in a society where society was patriarchal.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING METATHEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The metatheoretical study consisted of two parts, firstly other relevant disciplines were researched, followed by a qualitative data analysis.

5.4.1 Firstly, Psychology, Sociology, Law, and Feminism / Feminist Theology were researched:

- **Psychology:**

From the feminist focus on psychology, various viewpoints have been developed. Some stress the differences between the genders, while others stress the similarities between the genders. Despite attempts to develop the idea of an *androgynous human being*, most psychologists have come to the conclusion that the idea is not that viable. Rather, men and women are equal in value before God, but different as far as gender and role are

concerned. Recent studies in different parts of the world, in the West as well as in Asia, have found that there are possible indications of trends toward **gender-specific** traits among the genders. The implication is that the use of women in church offices could only enrich the church, because those gifts or traits that tend to be found more in women bring a different dimension to church offices. It has been found in studies that, among other traits, women tend to be more inclined to serve, to care, to nurture, to speak, to remember and to persist with routine-like patience-demanding problems. Men are more likely than women to fit in tasks that are in the public sphere, tasks that are less nurturing.

Jungian and many other psychologists tend to categorise men and women into a dualistic division of mind and body. This type of thinking results in men fearing women (gynophobia), because their bodily seduction could be perceived as dangerous to men, very much as sometimes depicted in the book of Proverbs.

Research in psychology, however, points toward the fact that traits often found more in women can enrich the church as body of Christ.

- **Sociology:**

In sociology, words such as *trait*, *skills*, *talent* and even *character*, tend to be associated with the field of sociology more than the word *gifts* itself. Talents, then, are skills that appear to be given. Individuals do not have to exert themselves to exercise their talents. When it is found that character and certain aspects of behaviour are tied up with one another, character tends to be neutral and independent of gender. This would mean that talents, and therefore **gifts**, **would not be gender-specific**. Seeing gifts as being non-gender-specific, as well as gender-specific (which was pointed out in the above studies in psychology), points to ambivalence, but not to impossibility.

Women, however, were excluded from public and official church life, because of the perception that they would not have the gifts and skills to perform certain duties. The result was that women were overlooked in studies of *talent* development. Subsequently, there still remains a so-called "glass ceiling", keeping women from top positions in church and society.

Sociological studies have thus pointed out that women are still kept back by society on the one hand, and frequently by their own perceptions on the other hand.

- **Law (i.e. Human rights or Women's rights)**

The "harshness" of patriarchal society has "softened up" during the past few decades, due to the attention women's rights has received in laws that focus on human rights. The *human*

rights movement emerged, because of power being misused in patriarchal society. Laws enforcing equal pay for equal work were passed and gender biases had to be removed from all areas of life. This world-wide trend was also manifested in South African legislation in 1996.

However, a dichotomy arose when church laws remained unequal in many cases. Therefore the church as institution cannot remain untouched. Among others the dichotomy caused the development of a new paradigm which started challenging the "governing paradigm" on the status and role of women in the church in general.

This is where women and men in the church as light bearers are witnessing to the world by actually going to the roots and realising what the Gospel says about the command "love your neighbour", also with regard to more equal gender roles in the church and society.

- **Feminism / Feminist theology**

Feminism started in a very similar way as the liberation struggle and Liberation Theology started. In 1833 the oppression of slaves had much common ground with the subordination of women. There were **three waves** in the development of feminism since the early mid-1800s until the 1970s when the differences in race and social class of women were addressed. A great deal was done by Feminist Theology to focus attention on women in South Africa. Therefore theology should take cognisance of feminist authors.

Postmodern thought also had an influence on the development of feminism and vice versa, in that existing hierarchies were challenged.

Three broad groupings exist within feminist theology: 1.) revolutionary, 2.) reformist, and 3.) reconstructionist. A view that is challenged by many feminists is that of the Aristotelian **dualistic analysis**, in which the soul governs the body and male governs female, in which case the first is seen as superior and the second inferior. The dualistic way of thinking causes a devaluing of the body and the feminine, thereby subordinating women. As long as people see the spiritual as separated from the physical world, emancipation of women is inhibited.

Attempts are made to break down the above duality, for example by describing male and female as equal but different. Another way of coping with duality is by ending domination, but not by ending gender, differences or the feminine. The problem seems to lie in the abuse of power, and in the ending of this abuse.

Reformed theologians may struggle with Feminist Theology because Feminist Theology has been situated in an entirely new context. It becomes a matter of a new paradigm challenging a present "governing paradigm". When the "governing paradigm" causes more and more enigmas that cannot be solved, a scientific revolution moves people into the direction of letting go of, for example, an *androcentric* understanding of reality.

Much of the good that came with the Christian faith gradually became obliterated by politics. When Constantine the Great married state and church, racism, classism and sexism became institutionalised. Before that happened, writers point out, women were apostles, prophets and teachers, holding the full range of church offices.

It is important to note that Jesus Christ refused to view women as occupying a lower status in the social order.

5.4.2 Secondly, a qualitative analysis was performed (empirical study)

A questionnaire was given to six respondents (4 female and 2 male). Four females and two males responded, all from different sections mostly in the reformed world. The questionnaire contained eight questions about aspects of gifts and gender. Below are the findings from the questionnaire.

Findings from the questionnaire

- There was a relationship between the length of time women had been allowed as ordained ministers in a particular church denomination and the female respondents' degree of outspokenness. The respondents' responses range from moderately outspoken, where one of the females is in a church where women have been allowed to be ordained for 36 years, to very outspoken where the period is 13 years, and to much less outspoken where women are restricted.
- The trend was similar amongst the men. The longer the gender barriers had been lifted, the more outspoken the respondent is. Where the restrictions are still in place, there is less enthusiasm.
- Slight differences in nuances exist as to which gifts are bestowed upon women and which upon men. The softer, more empathetic, caring and compassionate gifts are acknowledged among the female respondents. However, there is an overlapping among the genders. Teaching, encouraging, leadership and administration tend not to be as gender sensitive as the former softer, empathetic, caring and compassionate group.

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- Slight differences in nuances exist as to which gifts are bestowed upon women and which upon men. The softer, more empathetic, caring and compassionate gifts are acknowledged among the female respondents. However, there is an overlapping among the genders. Teaching, encouraging, leadership and administration tend not to be as gender sensitive as the former softer, empathetic, caring and compassionate group.

- Gender barriers have a small effect on the male respondents, whereas three of the four female respondents experience some or other type of stumbling block with which they have to cope.
- A concern is that the church struggles to function as body of Christ.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING A PRACTICE-THEORETICAL MODEL FOR THE PASTORAL PRACTICE

- A set of nine Bible Studies was worked out for persons interested in the subject of this research.
- Sermon outlines on the nine passages treated in this research are made. They are not at all complete, but only outlines as a suggestion for the line of thought in sermons.
- General gifts that both genders can exercise were discussed. The conclusion is indeed that men and women alike can actually exercise all the gifts which the *Corpus Paulinum* names.
- The functioning of *gifts* and *gender* in church and society was taken into discussion by means of two diagrams. The first diagram indicated that the old "governing paradigm" did not work anymore. The second diagram pointed toward a much more equal way of treating male and female church members. Unity amidst the differences between the genders was highlighted.
- The next section addressed the fact that there are gifts that tend to be found more in either male or female. It was stressed that there are gifts that men are more likely to exercise than women, and *vice versa*. However, the gifts can still be found in both genders.
- The gifts are exercised differently by the different genders.
- It was very briefly pointed out that there are guidelines for persons that wish to discover which gifts have been bestowed upon them.
- A strategy was set forth in a pastoral way for churches to give women the chance to become involved in the leadership of the church. Churches that allow women to be ordained as well as churches that do not allow women to be ordained were included in this strategy.
- It is clear that women ought to be allowed to be ordained, because they can add a dimension to the church that would enrich the functioning of the church. They can for example make the church members more aware of people "out there" that are in desperate need of care, so that the Gospel can influence believers to do what Jesus Christ called his children to do.

5.6 FINAL CONCLUSION

This research indicates that women and men have the same access to all the gifts that Paul mentions according to Romans 12:3-8. There are churches in which women are restricted in their participation in church offices. In many cases there are patriarchal structures which exclude women from realising their distinct God-given gifts in the offices of the church. The result is that women cannot live as equals "in Christ Jesus" with their male counterparts as is implied by Paul in Galatians 3:28.

While women are able to exercise their gifts within the body of Christ in the laity, the same should apply in all the church offices too. There are instances where women exercise gifts that are traditionally seen as predominantly male. These women tend to exercise these gifts as distinct gifts that they have received from God. When women exercise their gifts in church, and specifically church offices, together with men, church and society will be enriched.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER POSSIBLE RESEARCH

It was not possible to fully investigate the following issues within the scope of this research. There are, however, important issues which should be investigated further in more detail.

- The decreasing role of males in church life in the face of women's participation in church offices.
- The implications of female over-involvement in church for marital life.
- A study of the distinct gifts that men can offer in promoting congregational life.
- A study of the distinct gifts that women can offer in promoting congregational life.
- A psychological evaluation of women's feelings of inadequacy regarding public participation in church life.
- An empirical comparison between churches where women are in church offices, and churches where women are not in church offices.
- Galatians 3:28 as a paradigm for "women's rights" in the church.

ANNEXURE A

DID PAUL WRITE A LETTER OR AN EPISTLE?

When an exegesis is performed on Romans 12, it is also important to briefly look into the question of Paul writing a *letter* or an *epistle*. McKim (1996:91) describes the term *epistle* as a "term for one of the group of 'letters' found in the New Testament". Does Romans belong to that group?

In the early part of the 20th century, Adolph Deissmann (1912:9) made a distinction between a "letter" and an "epistle". At that point (in 1912) he interpreted a *letter* on the one hand as meant for

the purposes of conversation between two persons separated from one another. It is an 'I' speaking to a 'you'. Individual and personal, intended only for the addressee or addressees, it is not calculated for publicity ... A real letter is non-literary ... It concerns only the one who has written it and the one who is to open it, ...

On the other hand he sees an *epistle* as follows:

An epistle is different. It is a literary artistic form, like the drama, the epigram, the dialogue. The epistle shares with the letter only the external form of a letter; for the rest it is the opposite of a real letter. It aims at interesting and influencing some public or other, if not the public.

Fitzmyer (1993:68-69), as a recent scholar on this issue, in discussing the occasion and purpose of Romans, points out something remarkable. Fitzmyer (1993:68-69) says that, although the Pauline writings form a corpus today which have often been given the title "epistles", it is not all that clear-cut that they were originally intended as "epistles" by their author. This title of "epistle" for Romans in particular has often been questioned, Fitzmyer (1993:68) continues. Deissmann's distinction has recently been considered too rigid. In the case of Romans the relation of the occasion to the purpose of the writing is precisely why modern commentators think that it is difficult to decide whether it should be called a "letter" or and "epistle" (Fitzmyer, 1993:68).

Fitzmyer (1993:79) summarises his finding by pointing out that Paul's letter "is not an abstract, dogmatic treatise or a dialogue with Jews who do not accept his gospel". It is rather a didactic and hortatory letter, intended for discussion by the Jewish and Gentile Christians of Rome, for their understanding and for their conduct.

Silva (1994:122) wonders whether it is really accurate to suggest that Paul's letters should be described in the same terms as modern personal letters. The fact that we sometimes

refer to them as *epistles*, which suggests that they are relatively long and formal documents, is an indication of the difference. The idea that they are carefully composed documents intended to be read as published works of literature has been generally abandoned. Silva concludes that we have no good reason to think that Paul had any literary pretensions while writing these documents (Silva, 1994:122).

In dealing with letter writing, Jones (2001:188-189) says Paul specifically chose to write letters and not books or anything else. Even though people wrote books in Paul's time, Paul specifically chose to write letters. They were provoked by specific events in the congregations he was addressing (Jones, 2001:189; cf. Theissen, 2003:82).

It may perhaps then be fitting for the researcher to conclude that Paul wrote a *letter* rather than an epistle to the Romans. Although it was written personally to specific readers or hearers in his time, today it could also be applied personally to modern-day issues. For the purposes of this research, it could be quite fair to say that Romans 12:3-8 can be applied to the division between the genders, and not only as a static work of literature (as would have been the case with an *epistle*.)

ANNEXURE B

ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS IN ROMANS 12:3-8

Because of the uniqueness of Greek-English Lexicon of Louw and Nida (1988) in dealing with semantic domains, the researcher makes use of the abovementioned lexicon. The fact that the lexicon is based on semantic domains makes it extremely helpful in getting as close as possible to the precise meanings of the passage. The eight-step method for the use of the Greek-English Lexicon of Louw and Nida (1988) that is suggested by Botha (1989:36) is refined, so that the precise meaning of all the important concepts can be grasped. For a constant reference, the translation given here is that of the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), even though there are many other translations that could be equally or even more helpful.

Verse 3: For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

Concepts in Romans 12:3, which deserve closer attention, are:

- *by the grace*
- *given to me*
- *think of yourself more highly*
- *sober judgement*

The word *grace* (carito~):

By means of elimination, the subdomain that is chosen describes the word as “that which is given freely and generously”. In the Louw and Nida Lexicon (1988, 1:558) the semantic domain in which this word is classified is described as *Possess, Transfer, Exchange*. When this domain is brought under scrutiny, and cari-, -ito~ is described, which is in subdomain *H. Give*, its true meaning is brought out by contrasting it against its surrounding subdomains. The directly surrounding subdomains are *G. Take, Obtain, Gain, Lose* and *I. Receive*. It becomes all the more clear that this *grace* can be described as a possession that is ‘transferred’ from the one Person (God’s Spirit) to another person (Paul).

The word *given* (doqheisei~ – from didwmi) to me.

The likelihood that – within the context of the closely linked carito~ being in domain 57 – didwmi would not be in domain 57, is very small. The meaning is described as “to give object, usually implying value” (Louw & Nida, 1988, 1:566). Therefore, *give* could have the meaning of something (spiritual) being handed over from God to the believer, for free.

The word *think (of yourself more) highly*, upefronein.

The domain in which upefronein is, has to do with *Arrogance, Haughtiness, Pride*. The entry describing the word under discussion, upefronein and even the verse in Romans 12, verse 3), says it very clearly. The following description is found here: "to have and unwarranted pride in oneself or in one's accomplishments – 'to be conceited, to be arrogant, to be proud, to think highly of oneself.'" For Romans 12:3 the following translations are suggested: "do not think of yourselves more highly than you ought to think" or "do not have an exaggerated opinion of your importance" (Louw & Nida, 1988, I:765).

***Sober judgement* (swfronein)**

The Lexicon (Louw & Nida, 1988, I:384) explains it this way: "to have sound judgement, to be sensible, to use good sense, sound judgement". For Romans 12:3 the suggested translation is: "be sensible in your thinking".

***Faith that God has assigned* (emerisen- from merizw)**

The phrase "to distribute, to give to each in turn" (entry 57.89) (Louw & Nida, 1988, I:568) would be the appropriate translation to describe how "God has assigned (given to each in turn) a measure of faith". In addition, it is not "received as a rightful possession" as in entry 57.88, the faith is given (by grace), just as Paul received the grace in the beginning of verse 3.

Verse 4 and 5: For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

Concepts in Romans 12:4-5 which deserve closer attention, are:

- *For as*
- *one body*
- *function*
- *one body*
- *members*

***For as* (kaqhaper)**

The relevant entry is described as follows: "emphatic markers of similarity in events and states" – 'just as, precisely as' " (Louw & Nida, 1988, I:619). This is quite a clear indication that the path for a metaphor is being prepared. Something literal is to be put figuratively.

one body (swmati)

The context indicates that this fourth verse is being stated in a literal sense, preparing the reader or hearer for a comparison (see kaqaper above) or a figurative extension. Entry 8.1 is therefore the appropriate meaning describing swma in this context as “the physical body of persons, animals, or plants, either dead or alive” – ‘body’ “ (Louw & Nida, 1988, I:94). The literal use of this word prepares the reader for a metaphor, starting with the most familiar object to any reader or hearer, his own human body.

function (praxin)

The description for this lexical item is “a function, implying sustained activity and / or responsibility” “function, task”. The translation suggested for Romans 12:4 is as follows: “... and all these parts have different functions” (Louw & Nida, 1988, I:511). The implication would thus literally be that each member in the (human) body sticks to performing a certain function, task or responsibility.

one (en)

The meaning given in the relevant entry is “one, in contrast to more than one”. This entry provides a possible translation for Romans 12:5: “... though many, we form one body ...” (Louw & Nida, 1988, I:605). By stating this, it becomes clear that, despite the *many members* in the human body, there is only *one* body. It cannot have any division if it is one.

body (swma)

The context indicates that verse 5 has moved over to a figurative sense, forming a comparison with the literal sense mentioned in verse 4. The entry (11.34) is chosen by means of elimination and is described as “believers in Christ who are joined together as a group with the implication of each having a distinctive function within the group” – “congregation, Christian group, church” (Louw & Nida, 1988, I:127). The word swma, -to- indicates a further aspect of Paul’s metaphor or comparison. The parallelism between verse 4 and 5 becomes very clear. This brings forth a striking image of the church of Christ.

members (melh)

Seen against the context, the more figurative meaning is to be chosen, because the metaphor or comparison is completed in verse 5. The entry concerned describes the meaning as “a part as a member of a unit – ‘member’ ” (based on the figure of the relationship of parts to the body). The translation suggested by the Lexicon for Romans 12:5 is: “members in relationship to one another” (Louw & Nida, 1988, I:615). Seen within the context of the surrounding meanings, it may be concluded that there is something special or unique about each member’s position in the greater *body of Christ*.

Verses 6-8: We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Concepts in Romans 12:6-8 which deserve closer attention, are:

- gifts
- according to the grace
- given to us
- that differ
- in proportion to faith

gifts (carismata)

This word can clearly be compared to cari~, -ito~ in verse 3. In the Lexicon, carisma, -to~ has only one entry, but it is in the same domain as cari~, -ito~. The word carisma, -to~ is described as "that which is given freely and generously" (Louw & Nida, 1988, 1:569). The implication arises that the *gifts* that believers receive have a nuance of a transaction and of ownership. The surrounding entries, entry 57.101 ("that which is readily shared"), entry 57.102 ("to give or grant graciously and generously") and entry 57.104 ("to give generously of one's wealth") are of assistance to form a sharper idea of what is meant in entry 57.103.

A vital aspect in the passage becomes clear: The description "that which is given freely and generously" therefore could mean that the *gifts* each and every believer receives, are not deserved, and are not something to boast about, but rather to be thankful for.

according to the grace (carin)

It is quite clear that Paul is "heaping up" a good deal of words pertaining to the same semantic field. Furthermore, the beginning of this 8th verse turns out to be very much parallel to verse 3.

Here, the context leads us to see that cari~, -ito~ is close to the meaning intended in this instance. The meaning in subdomain 88.66 (Louw & Nida, 1988, 1:749) is described as "to show kindness to someone, with the implication of graciousness on the part of the one showing such kindness". Subdomain 25.89 (Louw & Nida, 1988, 1:299) describes "favorable attitude toward someone or something, 'favor, goodwill'" and is an *event*. At this point, it is hard to choose between the two meanings. The first is a "fuller" meaning and the second focuses on the deed only, meaning that the first (88.66) implies that God shows grace, while the second (25.89) implies that it is only a "transaction". However, a closer look at verse 6 indicates that God's grace is implied, which is clear in the broader context, too. Therefore,

the first entry can be chosen. The surrounding subdomains are *H (Gentleness)* and *J (Mercy, Merciless)*, while the subdomain itself is *I (Kindness, Harshness)*. The entry from the previous subdomain, before the chosen one, has the description "to be gentle in one's attitude toward someone", while the one after it, says "to provide something beneficial for someone as an act of kindness". Now it becomes even clearer that when *carĩ-*, *-it0-* has the meaning "to show kindness to someone, with the implication of graciousness on the part of the one showing such kindness – 'to show kindness, to manifest graciousness toward, kindness, graciousness, grace' " (Louw & Nida, 1988, 1:749), such *grace given to us ...* has the dimension of undeserved goodness from God, without any reason for anyone to think he is better than the other, or less valuable.

given (doqeian) to us

Once again, the words used here by Paul overlap with verse 3. (See verse 3 above, on *didwmi*. No discussion is needed here, as everything that is said about *didwmi* (entry 57.71 in Louw & Nida, 1988, 1:566) is essentially the same.)

The only difference here is that the apostle Paul was the receiver in verse 3, while now, in verse 6 'us / (we)', the readers or hearers, are the receivers. This implies something of a comparison, in order for Paul to be able to exhort his readers, as they are in a similar position as the one he was in.

that differ (diafora)

At the entry for this word, the description of this meaning is "pertaining to that which is different – 'different, varied' ". This could imply that, out of a whole range of possible *gifts*, every believer receives one out of a great variety. Applied to the context, the meaning could be essentially that *differ* has the meaning of "not the same" and "each differing". Therefore, when this entry suggests the following translation for Romans 12:6, "having differing gifts according to the grace which has been given to us" (Louw & Nida, 1988, 1:590), it is clear that the list of gifts that follows in the rest of the pericope, is a mere sample to start with.

in proportion (analogian) to faith

According to the Lexicon and seen in comparison to its surrounding meanings, *analogia*, *-a-* could be used to compare *prophecy* with *faith*. While *faith* does not remain static, the ability to *prophecy* does not remain static either. It too grows in relation to the way a believer's faith grows. Louw and Nida (1988, 1:788) suggest the following translation: "if prophecy, then in accordance with the proportion of faith".

The researcher suspects that all the remaining gifts mentioned up to the end of verse 8, are also by implication linked by the same or similar word as *analogia*, as. Each *gift* could then by implication be described as follows:

- "ministry, then in accordance with the proportion of ministering.
- the teacher, then in accordance with the proportion of teaching;
- the exhorter, then in accordance with the proportion of exhortation;
- the giver, then in accordance with the proportion of generosity;
- the leader, then in accordance with the proportion of diligence;
- the compassionate, then in accordance with the proportion of cheerfulness.

See section 2.3 for a further discussion on this matter.

ANNEXURE C

Objectives of this questionnaire: The researcher is currently doing a Ph.D. with the title: *“Implications of gifts in Romans 12:3-8 for gender roles in the church: a pastoral study”*. The following questions intend to establish how *gifts* within the “body of Christ” function among believers and whether the difference in gender is a hindrance in exercising one’s gifts as an individual.

1. Do you feel that you are able to fully express your gifts in the church?
2. Do you see certain gifts that you can exercise better than other gifts in the church? Name them. (Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and 27-31 as well as Ephesians 4:11 will be discussed in the study.)
3. Do you get the opportunity to apply your gifts fully as a believer within the congregation of which you are part? Describe the ways in which you do.
4. How do you see your role in the church as a male / female?
5. Are there certain roles that you can fulfill specifically as a woman / man in the church?
6. Do you experience any gender-connected stumbling blocks in the exercising of your gifts in the congregation of which you are part? Name examples of such stumbling blocks.
7. Do you think Christians' gifts are fully employed in churches? If “no”, in what areas is there a need for improvement? If “yes”, in what areas are things running smoothly with regard to the deployment of gifts?
8. Do you have any other comments regarding gifts in relation to gender in the church?

ANNEXURE D

A SYNOPSIS OF ALL THE RESPONDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE AS IN "ANNEXURE C"

Respondent	Answers to question # 1 <i>"Do you feel that you are able to fully express your gifts in the church?"</i>
A	<i>Yes, in the number of years that I have actively participated in the church, I have not experienced any frustrations that I cannot live myself out in any particular area. As I have been growing in faith, there have always been ample opportunities to use and develop my gifts. Even in the instances where I wasn't convinced about a certain gift, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ has always accommodated me to move forward so that I could find full clarity.</i>
B	Yes, I experience no restrictions.
C	Yes.
D	I feel that I am fully able to express my gifts in my present situation. The limitation is where there is not a need for the gift, i.e. I feel one of my gifts is teaching and there is not the occasion to do teaching in a Bible Study situation because the people are not interested in attending a Bible Study at this time.
E	<i>As it is stated in Romans 12:3-8 with regard to various gifts I can execute in the church, I can mention two, which I perform successfully as a woman, i.e. teaching and exhorting. Evidence of this: The church assigned me to lecture at a theological seminary, also to charge of a circuit as a pastor.</i>
F	No

Respondent	Answers to question # 2 <i>"Do you see certain gifts that you can exercise better than other gifts in the church? Name them. (Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 and 27-31 as well as Ephesians 4:11 will be discussed in the study.)"</i>
A	<i>Yes, because I believe that I, as is the case with every other believer, have received certain gifts to edify and build out the church. Seen in the light of the passages and using it as guideline, I can say the following: To proclaim the word, leadership, encouraging and teaching.</i>
B	Leadership, teaching and encouraging.
C	Yes, prophesying, teaching, encouraging, message of wisdom, distinguishing between spirits, administration.
D	The results from questionnaires on spiritual gifts, done at a couple of different times, showed my gifts as "pastor, service, evangelism and administration" at another time it was "pastor, exhortation, mercy and service." "teaching, helps and showing mercy" were to a lesser extent.
E	In some way most of the gifts of a pastor in the church are interrelated with each other. As a pastor I see myself more teaching and counselling. Every announcement made in the church ends up being a lesson.
F	Yes, teaching and leading.

Respondent	Answers to question # 3 <i>"Do you get the opportunity to apply your gifts fully as a believer within the congregation of which you are part? Describe the ways in which you do."</i>
A	<i>Yes, as minister in our congregation I have every possible opportunity to live out my gifts. Sharing the word in church services, but also at every other opportunity in the congregation. Usually then, it is done by employing other gifts. It is done together with teaching in Bible study groups and youth activities as well as with encouraging during visits.</i>
B	<i>Yes, I have the full opportunity to apply my gifts. Not so much in my own congregation, but in many others where I am asked to conduct seminars and retreats. I also have the opportunity of teaching, both on scholarly level and on Bible study group level.</i>
C	Yes. Being a minister, I practice it when preaching, pastoral visits, catechism, church meetings.
D	In the position I am in now there are no limits for myself or others to use their gifts if the opportunity presents itself for the gift to be used. All of the gifts mentioned above are ones which can be used in the ministry.
E	I organise workshops for my congregation and also I give educational papers to various ancillaries in the church. I also offer Biblical Studies to the pastors and to other Christian congregations of other denominations.
F	No, I am teaching in small groups, counselling and I am part of an outreach team of our church.

Respondent	Answers to question # 4 <i>“How do you see your role in the church as a male / female?”</i>
A	<p>Here I wish to distinguish between the gifts of the woman and the role of the woman.</p> <p>Women have received their gifts from God as believers. They should use their gifts to the glory of God.</p> <p>As child of God, I believe that he has called me as a woman to use my gifts in a certain way. Since the time I became convinced that I should serve in full-time ministry, I can only testify that he has always led me in a very special manner. He has always opened up the path for me clearly.</p> <p>I don't see my gifts in the church in another way than the way other believers should see it. When I want to be obedient by living out the gifts that I have received, I must be faithful to that calling, and I should follow the path he has laid out for me.</p> <p>The role of women in the church had a historic way of developing. It is the way people interpreted things through the ages.</p> <p>At the moment, my role is to be available at the point where the Lord wants to use me. I am at peace with the fact that at the moment it is as minister of our congregation. The Lord has gone such a special way with me; he has opened up doors for me in such a way that I cannot ignore it. I am tremendously thankful to him that I can live myself out in this way.</p>
B	<p>I see my role as a facilitator to persuade believers that gender should not be a barrier for any person to use their gifts. As for myself, I do not view my role as defined in any way by my gender.</p>
C	<p>I accept “leadership” as a natural and scriptural instruction to the male, and taking responsibility before God as shared instruction to both male and female. The natural ability of the male (most of them!) to protect can strengthen this role.</p>
D	<p>In the present situation it matters not whether you are male or female your gifts are appreciated and used. There are two of my lay women who preach for me when I am on vacation.</p>

	In the church where I worked as a lay person, there was more distinction of the male and female roles. They were a lot more hesitant to have woman exercise their gifts in certain areas. For example it was very seldom that a woman preached in that church, even if that was her gift.
E	My role as a female pastor is very vital as I can understand and relate well with various levels of people, i.e. from children, youth and adults – also with different levels of education.
F	In Christ we are one. I see no difference between the role of male and female in the church. Both should be able to live out their gifts.

Respondent	Answer to question # 5 <i>“Are there certain roles that you can fulfil specifically as a woman / man in the church?”</i>
A	<p>It depends on who it is. Even the practical circumstances, in which one lives, must be taken into account. In certain areas women may perhaps have another way of doing things, another approach; and speaking gift-wise, a much stronger role to fulfil.</p> <p>Practical circumstances, for example, may make it impossible for me to mediate in problems the mission church is experiencing. But another woman may receive the calling to go there and evangelise them.</p> <p>No, I would not want to lift out some or other gift and say there are gifts that only women can exercise.</p>
B	<i>The moment I do experience that my gender becomes the defining factor for the specific role, I will protest.</i>
C	Yes, when it's critically necessary to take a VERY strong point of view, the potential aggression within a male can make a difference in certain circles, while the natural softness of a female can do the same under perhaps less aggressive circumstances. In my view, females tend to be more lenient and compromising towards principles, as their empathy reacts stronger in emotional circumstances.
D	I don't believe there are gifts which are specific to women or men but there are some gifts which women seem to be more gifted with, i.e. the helping, mercy, and compassion gifts.
E	As a woman in the church, there are vital roles I can fulfil such as: The secretarial positions, leadership roles that are usually for men, military chaplain, hospital visitor, stewardship and discipleship positions. I can play a significant role in all these positions.
F	Certain counselling situations would be easier for a woman or for that instance other situations for a man to facilitate. Sometimes in equipping men or woman groups, the same sex facilitator may be more effective, sometimes women can relate to small children easier.

Respondent	Answer to question # 6 <i>“Do you experience any gender-connected stumbling blocks in the exercising of your gifts in the congregation of which you are part? Name examples of such stumbling blocks.”</i>
A	<p>In more than 10 years, I have never personally had any resistance. Our previous congregation was a small rural town and there I have at times preached at at least three of the neighbouring congregations. The response was always positive.</p> <p>Here, in our current congregation, I can't say that I have experienced direct resistance. The few I can mention are not due to male / female issues, because it was rather new colleague and old colleague. But in the two years that I have been serving as full-time minister, the congregation has only grown. One realises that it was an adjustment for all the parties, especially because I first was only wife-in-the-manse. But as time goes by, roles are laid down, and by doing and by attitude the small things are solved.</p> <p>As woman there are certainly other practical stumbling blocks. In a sense because I am mother too, and my associate-minister is my spouse too. But these tiny irritations only demand that we be better organised. It is a given fact that also changes. Children grow up and circumstances change.</p> <p>I can't say that any of the above mentioned have really bothered me in my living out of my gifts.</p>
B	None.
C	No.
D	<p>I wouldn't say there are any stumbling blocks within the congregation I am in now. In the congregation where I worked as a lay associate there were stumbling blocks to woman. I felt some of them were on the part of the minister who was very conservative but he also felt that the people were not as open to a woman.</p> <p>I think the conservative, evangelicalism were stumbling blocks within that congregation.</p>
E	The Lord has blessed me and has assigned me to a congregation in which I have no stumbling blocks connected with gender.
F	Yes, I am not able to teach to the congregation or be part of the leadership.

Respondent	Answer to question # 7 <i>“Do you think Christians’ gifts are fully employed in churches? If “no”, in what areas is there a need for improvement? If “yes”, in what areas are things running smoothly with regard to the deployment of gifts?”</i>
A	<p>Yes, as far as our own congregation is concerned, I think that each believer can live him- or herself out.</p> <p>Obviously, there must be an open communication between the congregation and the leaders in the congregation. If people can't live out their gifts, then possibilities have to be investigated.</p>
B	<p>There are two restrictions generally speaking: (1) many congregations are still pastor-churches. If the pastor or at least the elders is not active, nothing happens. (2) In many congregations gender remains as an inhibiting factor in believers fully utilising their gifts. However, many congregations have shown that these two stumbling blocks can be surpassed.</p>
C	<p>The lack of interest in the root-issues of the Christian faith brings a lot of spectators together in the church. They're not interested in employing their gifts.</p> <p>Firm believers, on the other hand, have yet to discover their (best) gifts.</p> <p>“Tradition” has (conveniently?) deprived believers of the opportunity to participate with their gifts.</p> <p>On the other hand, it is a matter of debate whether all the gifts mentioned in Scripture should be present in every congregation, even if it have to be instated artificially.</p>
D	<p>No. In many ways because of a lack of people we are attempting to fill positions rather than looking at people's gifts and utilising them by giving them leadership where their gifts are. A block would be a lack of people willing to work within the church.</p>
E	<p>Not all the gifts are employed in the church. The church has still to go out and establish more Christian congregations, and to develop the gifts of caring and giving to the needy.</p>
F	<p>No, in our church our structure of elders and deacons do not function well. It makes the other believers passive. Everyone has gifts and it is the task of the leaders to see that everyone has the opportunity to live out their gifts.</p>

Respondent	Answers to question # 8 <i>"Do you have any other comments regarding gifts in relation to gender in the church?"</i>
A	No.
B	<i>Gifts should not be gender related, but personality related.</i>
C	I tend not to think of the functioning of the church as a matter of gender. Rather the natural flow of balance between the individual needs, gifts and the instructions to the church found in Scripture.
D	I believe we have come a long ways here in Canada in the use of spiritual gifts but there are still pockets, places where the people would not be as open to the use of all gifts. Some of that comes from the ministers who themselves have reservations and thus do not encourage it and do not teach the congregation in accepting women. The main hold back is in the area of leadership.
E	The church must empower and assign more women in leadership positions of the church, so as to strive for gender equality.
F	Male and female Christians are part of the body of Christ. Each believer receives gifts, which is to be used to edify the whole body. There should not be gender issues in the church. We should work together to fulfil our task as church in this world.

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