



The Role of Women in Ministry

A Cultural, Grammatical, and Practical Interpretation

A. Introduction:

1. An understanding of the role of women in ministry is an intensely important area to comprehend, especially in our day. As we move towards the culmination of all things, and the return of our Lord, I believe what we see in God raising up mighty women of God around the world, is an evidence of His timing for world cultures to change their thinking about the role of women in ministry. In a time of the greatest harvest the Church has ever known, more than ever we need every willing laborer and every gifting possible to be front and center with the Word of the Lord.
2. You will find that the traditional view is not upheld in this study, and as such what is shared here may be difficult to embrace, depending on your background and mind-set. Any time we approach custom and culture change is difficult. If this area weren't so important we might leave it untouched, but because of the critical need great care will be exercised in attempting to adjust our understanding in this area.
3. The Liberated Women's movement will not be supported in these teachings, but neither will a Repressionist Movement be supported either.
4. As we will discuss, the three biggest problems we face, in interpreting Paul's words on the role of the woman in ministry, revolve around preconceived ideas based on improper interpretation, failure to understand Paul's statements within the culture of his day, and an inaccurate Greek translation of much of Paul's teaching in this area.

Emotional biases, some of which may have roots in latent chauvinism and some genuine concern, will be faced in a study of this kind.

There has been a great deal of repressive teaching in this area, but not good solid exegesis to support it.

The early church lived within a time where its culture was vastly different from the 21st century's emerging culture. The culture of the period surrounding the early church was slowly, yet surely being modified by the Holy Spirit, while many aspects were left untouched.

As a result we have a hard time separating out what was cultural preference and dogma from what is eternal truth to be practiced in all cultures for all time.

5. Because this is a controversial and often highly emotional area, concepts will be shared with a clear bias, careful sensitivity, and short of a strong dogmatism.

6. We do not desire to offend any or to create problems for any particular pastor or church. Let each one consider the matter prayerfully and draw only those conclusions believed to be accurate.

B. The Question to be explored is: “What is the role of the women in ministry, in relation to the vocal gifts of prophecy, tongues, interpretation and teaching?”

1. A study of History & Culture is critical to determining the correct understanding of New Testament passages surrounding this theme.
 - a. It seems clear, in the Old Testament, that God, by His Spirit, made allowances for aspects of ancient culture, and directives within and to that culture which did not necessarily reflect His eternal preference, and He would one day radically alter that culture. These help us to understand that just because elements of culture are recorded, and even commanded in the Bible, it doesn't mean those elements of culture and those commands stand forever.

Consider some obvious examples of this:

- 1) We're a bit shocked to hear the Lord give instructions to not have "many" wives. We would have expected Him to say "only have one wife", but He doesn't say this.

Deut. 17:17 (NIV) 17He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

- 2) We're even more surprised by His directives to those who have more than one wife, rather than rebuking them for having several.

Deut. 21:15-17 15If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love, 16when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love. 17He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.

- 3) We note that God even commands the having of two wives.

Deut. 5:5-6 5If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. 6The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

What are we saying here? That God is in favor of husbands having more than one wife? Absolutely not! We have many Scriptures that would lead us to believe He does not favor this. But, and this is a very important distinction, He accommodates Himself to certain aspect of current culture, rather than

challenge it to full adjustment. We don't know why He chose this approach, but it is obvious He did. We can be confident that God's preference is one woman for one man for life.

- 4) What about slavery? Surely God won't regulate slavery instead of outright condemning it amongst His chosen people, but He does.

Lev. 25:44-46 44"Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. 45You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. 46You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.

- 5) Women weren't allowed to wear men's clothing.

Deut.22:5A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this.

- b. It seems clear that the Holy Spirit gave strong dogmatic teachings for the early church, which applied to the early church in terms of its present culture, but which when the culture changed over time the eternal principle was to be maintained while the cultural expression could be laid aside.

Some will disagree with this initial premise, but please try to maintain at least somewhat of an open mind while you consider the following.

Consider some obvious examples of this:

- 1) Even in the New Testament, where so much is new, and love prevails, slavery is still not forbidden.

Philemon 1-4 1Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, 2to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home:3Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.4I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.

Philemon 12-16 12I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. 13I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. 14But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. 15Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good—16no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother.

- 2) Remaining single due to present sociological pressures. 1 Cor.7:25-28

Eternal truths can be noted in this passage, without adhering to the apostolic preference.

- 3) Total control by the father, in the area of decision of when and who a daughter could marry. 1 Cor.7:36-38

Jewish tradition and culture prevailed in the timing and choice of a mate for the daughter, as controlled by the father alone.

"The Authority of the Father & the Husband, as seen from the Mishnah, Ketuboth 4. The father has control over his daughter as touching her betrothal whether it is effected by money, by writ, or by intercourse; and he has the right to aught found by her and to the work of her hands, and the right to set aside her vows, and he receives her bill of divorce; but he has not the use of her property during her lifetime. When she is married the husband exceeds the father in that he has the use of her property during her lifetime; and he is liable for her maintenance and for her ransom and for her burial. R. Judah says: Even the poorest in Israel should hire not less than two flutes and one wailing woman. She continues within the control of the father until she enters into the control of the husband at marriage. If the father delivered her to the agents of the husband, she is deemed within the control of the husband; but if the father went with the agents of the husband or if the agents of the father went with the agents of the husband, she is deemed within the control of the father; but if the agents of the father delivered her to the agents of the husband, she is deemed within the control of the husband."

- 4) Eating of meat offered to idols. 1 Cor. 8

Cultural / religious tension existed over meats offered to idols and then resold at a low price. Culture can be laid aside and the principles extracted.

- 5) Women wearing long hair. 1 Cor.11:15

Cultural value on long hair in women, disdaining of men who wore long hair. Note, by doing careful historical analysis one will discover that long hair in males, in the day Paul was speaking, equaled hair longer than shoulder length. Both heathen & Jewish culture highly valued women having long hair.

- 6) Culture labeled short hair in women either:

- a) A sign of a conquered race - Dt.21:12

Or,

- b) A sign of a prostitute - 1 Cor.11:5,6

Where culture no longer dictates such custom the issue of long or short hair ceases to be an issue. There is nothing inherently divine about 1st century Jewish culture, or secular culture. If it were, then we should all study each aspect of 1st century Christian Jewish culture, as respects clothing styles, make up, music and food, and strictly adhere to it.

- 7) Culture demanded the noble woman wear a two tiered veil, when going out into society. 1 Cor.11:5

Paul reasoned and dogmatized that if a woman should grow and wear her hair long, and that she was more glorious this way, then the extra linen veil was also mandated as further covering and symbolism to submission.

Joachim Jeremias, in his work "Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus", pp. 359-376,

says the following:

"Jewish women were always veiled in public in Jesus' day. When the Jewess of Jerusalem left her house, her face was hidden by an arrangement of two head veils, a head-band on the forehead with bands to the chin, and a hairnet with ribbons and knots, so that her features could not be recognized.... For a Jewish woman to go out without a veil, her husband was advised to divorce her, and pay no alimony.... Some very devout Jewish women would not even take it off in the house."

Sir William Ramsay, in his work "The Cities of Paul", pp.202-205, says the following:

"Paul grew up in Tarsus, a Graeco-Roman society which was heavily influenced by Jewish culture. All women in Tarsus were deeply veiled when they went outside.... Their entire clothing was extremely modest.... This greatly framed Paul's thinking about women.... This influence spread to the major portion of the Graeco-Roman empire, to the point where most would agree that this was the most orderly and thoughtful mode of dress for women.... In these lands the veil is the "Power and Honor and Dignity" of the woman. (1 Cor.11:10).... The word "Exousia" = authority or power that belongs to the wearer, such power as the magistrate possesses in virtue of his office.... With the veil on, a woman can go anywhere with security and profound respect. She is supreme in the crowd. She passes at her own free choice, and a space must be left for her. Any man who bothered a veiled woman was in danger of losing his life by the magistrates. Her veil had authority. A woman's authority and dignity vanish along with the all-covering veil that she discards."

Colin Brown, in his work "Theological Dictionary of the New Testament", pp.159-162 says the following:

"Veil = covering which conceals the whole head, including face and hair. Men do not wear a covering because it abdicates the sovereignty and dignity given to him by God. Man still precedes woman in terms of order. Paul's argument has two premises in 1 Cor.11:4-6 (1) The propriety of women covering the head in the presence of a superior. (2) Man has certain divine priority or order above women. However, where a culture neither recognizes nor understands the first premise, the necessity of wearing a veil is removed, and the second premise remains in tact. Two more premises are to be considered from 1 Cor.11:7-9,12 (1) The glory of God should not be veiled in His presence. Thus the man, who is the glory of God, should not be veiled. (2) Woman is the glory of man (woman was made from man, vs.9), thus the glory of man should be veiled in God's presence. Again, these premises only apply to a community that understands and recognizes these customs of expression. 1 Cor.11:13-15 - a woman's natural hair, in Paul's reasoning, is evidence that God desires a veil to be worn, thus she is both to have long hair which acts as a natural veil; and in addition, to have an extra material covering. Thus the principle of the veil hold true, only where a culture maintains the regular use of such."

Note the inconsistency among those who maintain the mandate for the veil but discard its cultural form and style. In a book written by a Mennonite teacher, they strongly maintain the importance of a covering for the woman, but reason that a small cloth doilie is sufficient. In so doing they deny the original purpose of modesty through hiding all facial features.

One needs only visit current Islamic cultures to experience the power of such coverings in their cultures.

8) Watch out for expensive jewelry and clothing. 1 Tim. 2:9

9) Call your husband lord and master. 1 Pet.3:5-6

c. **Culture, in general, relegated the woman to a very silent and subservient role.**

Consider Jeremias again:

"Men (except a woman's husband) were not ever to be alone with a woman. Men were not to look at a married woman or greet her. Women who did so talk were worthy of divorce without alimony. Women were usually kept indoors. Exceptions were allowed for certain occasions. Women of lower class generally did not live so strict a life. Until the age of 12½, a girl was totally under the control of her father (marriage, work, slavery, possessions, wages, all were dictated by the father).

When it came to marriage, at the age of 12½ the girl had as much say in the matter as a Gentile slave (i.e. none). This slave relationship in marriage passed from her father to her husband. Duties included grinding meal, baking, washing, cooking, nursing, preparing her husband's bed, as repayment for her keep, to work with wool by spinning and weaving, prepare his cup, wash his face, hands and feet. She was to obey her husband as she would a slave master. Children were to respect the father above the mother. In case of danger, the husband was to be saved first.

The right of divorce was exclusively the husband's. There were very few exceptions. Divorce, however, brought a stigma on both the husband and wife. Divorce was seldom entered into due to this stigma.

Women were almost totally excluded from any study of the Word of God. A quote by a rabbi illustrates this point, "If a man gives his daughter a knowledge of the Law, It is as though he taught her lechery." Schools were solely for boys. The Synagogue service had two parts, (1) The Sabbateion - liturgical service; women welcome. (2) Andron (men) - scribal teaching; men and boys only. Barriers of lattice separated the men from the women in the Synagogue services. At various times in history they were more often allowed to read the Torah during Synagogue, but usually not and were usually expected to refuse when asked. Women were forbidden to teach. Women, it was believed, could not be allowed to bear witness, since they are liars, by nature, according to Genesis 18:15.

¹³Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son."¹⁵Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh."

A popular phrase for describing women, in religious affairs was : "Women, Gentile slaves, and children," i.e. all have the same basic rights, i.e. none. A common prayer for a man's daily use was "Blessed be God that hath not made me a woman."

Against the background of all of these points, notice Jesus' perspective on women - Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:41; Mt.20:20. He was unique in His lovely treatment of women. Jesus knowingly overthrew traditions when He allowed women to follow Him. He could do this because of His teaching - Mt.5:20. The answer isn't to shut them in, or cover them with many layers of clothing and veils. The answer is for men to watch their eyes and minds. He goes the furthest limit when He makes them on equal footing with men before God - Luke 7:36-50; Mt.21:31-32. Jesus threw out Rabbinic divorce concepts of His day and completely forbade divorce, except in the most extreme of situations - Mt.19:6. By Jesus' statements we see that the whole concept of women began to be dramatically changed. Paul reflects the change in such passages as Ephesians 5:21. However, passages such as 1 Cor.11; 1 Cor.14:34-35; 1 Tim.2:11-15, etc. let us see that to completely throw out old, archaic and repressive customs was not so quickly or easily done. It doesn't even appear that Holy Spirit intended to accomplish this within the first century.

Colin Brown adds:

"There were undoubtedly Jewish women in the Corinthian Church. Paul desires (1 Cor.10:32) that no offense be given to Jews, the Greeks or to the Church. The problem was now "Freedom" in light of an equal standing of sexes before God. How far should it be taken? Paul's freedom always serves others. The Corinthian's were selfish. For Paul to continue to uphold current cultural norms and standards of modesty and propriety had more to do with not wanting to crush the consciences of the weak than to uphold any particular divine mandates for these roles. Paul wrestled with the role and relationships of the sexes, which are determined by creation and are not abolished by salvation. It was his belief that somehow this should be reflected in the public worship. But such expression would only be valid as long as culture mandated it. Angels are mentioned due to being guardians of the created order. Angels transmit prayers to God - Rev.8:3, so the highest level of propriety is incumbent when they are present in worship. They are a sign of divine presence."

It is unrealistic to conclude, in light of this cultural view of women, that Paul is making statements apart from essentially cultural reasonings.

- d. It seems clear that Paul is writing with a view to the culture of his day.

Add to these cultural elements the immense affect of the secular cult religions of the day, such as the worship of Artemis, Diana, Aphrodite, etc. and even more support is obtainable. Each of these religions were encouraging female dominance and arrogance; a sort of historical form of feminism. They were characterized by encouraging women to assert their own independence from male authority. They encouraged women to express their opinions and ideas in opposition to men, as much for any other reason as to declare their independence and personal authority. These cult religions were dramatically affecting the Churches especially of Asia Minor and Greece where Paul writes and ministers to. Wherever he turned their impact was felt. His converts were those who had come out of these religions and had been affected by their thinking. The problems of the Corinthian and Asia Minor churches perfectly reflect the thinking of female cult worship. The problem wasn't really with women ministering or teaching, as much as it was the need to adjust the arrogance and self will expressed in it. For Paul, the present distress moved him to put careful controls on their expression. As culture changed, and at times when he deemed it appropriate, he would modify his positions.

In this we note that Paul need not be understood to truly censure women in ministry, near as much as he is censuring the disorderly and arrogant manner in which it tended to come forth among the new Gentile converts. If you will read his admonitions, with this view in mind, it will open a new perspective to his words.

- e. Paul's ultimate commitment was to eternal unchanging principles, and only secondarily to their cultural expression in his day.

1 Cor.14:34 Paul knows the Law in Gen.3 references to a woman to being ruled by her husband. Even though Genesis 3:16, when properly interpreted does not indicate this as being a command of God, but rather an outcome that would follow the fall. Literally Genesis 3:16 should be translated "...Your desire as a woman will be to rule over your husband, and as such conflicts will arise over this, but in the end he will rule over you, due to his personal physical power and the nature of things." It is important to note that the Hebrew verbal structure for "and he will rule over you" is not in the Imperative mood. This is not a command from God, but simply a recognition of what the Fall would bring about in the relationship between men and women. As time went by the Jews simply accepted this reality and created additional laws to govern this principle of life. It is important to note that the many

laws they created within their Mishnah are not based on “any” clear teachings of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is virtually silent regarding the subservience of women. This was a Jewish thing, and as such became highly developed. Paul is simply acknowledging the facts of reality, and adds his own personal application due to the culture and needs of his day. He preferred to not have women teach, since in his day there were self-willed, unsubmitive women, in a disorganized church, domineering (authentico - exerting dominating authority over) men.

Apparently Paul frequently made personal authoritative applications of his opinion. 1 Cor.7:25 is a classic example, as regards his opinion of the value of single life. But we don't live by that today.

It would not be illegitimate to disagree with Paul's opinion being applied to today since our day is vastly different, yet respecting his concern for orderly transitions of culture, and avoidance of anything that has the appearance of arrogance and self-will. Women are not to exercise dominating authority over man. This should be just as true as that men are not to exercise dominating authority over women, or anybody for that matter. The statement in Genesis 3 has much more to do with stopping a tendency of the sin nature in woman to exercise domineering authority over man, than it does in teaching forced submission. Paul, in Ephesians, will teach about proper roles of submission, but taking all of his writings combined we understand he was not teaching a repressive role to women. Men were not allowed to think of themselves as slave masters over their wives any longer. Rather they were to encourage submission by proper love. This was a major change in cultural thinking as regards the role of men and women.

- f. The Corinthian Church culturally needed 1 Cor.14:34-38. The largest temple to Aphrodite, in the entire Roman empire, was probably 2 miles from the Corinthian Church.

The Ephesian Church needed this teaching - 1 Tim.2:11-15. The largest temple to Diana was in the city of Ephesus.

All the Churches of Asia Minor were affected, thus God gave specific commands applicable to their present culture which had to be followed - 1 Cor.14:36-37.

Along with the new liberty and giftings of the Holy Spirit tended to come disorder and confusion. Women's ministries were seriously out of order and needed balance and correction. The women were self-assertive and out from under proper covering. Many of these teachings are simply reflections of the necessity of the moment. The Corinthian Church was in chaos. Paul has already indicated "Present Distressful" situations were prevailing and requiring temporary commandments. 1 Cor.7:26

- g. To misapply 1 Cor.14:37, would demand the reader to apply, to this day, all the cultural teachings exactly as given in 1 Cor., especially 1 Cor.11, on women and veils. This alone would leave 98% of all Christians worldwide out of order.

It would require 1 Tim.2:9, women wearing no braids in their hair, no gold, no pearls, and no clothes that could be considered expensive.

To apply the cultural difficulties of Paul's day in his local churches to our day

would require 1 Cor.14:35 be reapplied and women would have to cease asking Bible related questions of their husbands until they got home. Again, probably 98% of all Churches don't apply this one.

No voting by women in the local Church could possibly be allowed. This strikes almost all Christian churches.

It would require that no women teach any male children other than their own in Sunday School. Placing probably 98% of all Christian churches in violation.

Ultimately it would have prohibited women from receiving teaching of the Word, much less allowing them to teach.

Further application of ancient culture, by implication from this wholesale acceptance of ancient culture as taught by Paul, would forbid women from talking to men in public, wearing anything resembling pants, and being out in public for any reason other than to purchase items for her family and quickly return home.

- h. 1 Cor.14:34 "They are not permitted to speak" = A present tense, in the Greek, meaning "not presently permitted." This is not necessarily a command for all time. It was for that time.

It's possible it is what is referred to in Greek Grammar, as a "Customary Present." This could either mean that it represents what is currently custom, or it could mean that it is an enduring custom. Only the custom itself and content can determine this.

- i. 1 Tim.2:12 "I do not permit a woman to teach" = another present tense in the Greek.

I don't believe Paul would ever (nor should we today) encourage women to exercise independent authority over men, as relates to spiritual matters, but then where would we derive biblical support that men were allowed to exercise "independent" authority over women, or men for that matter? The only valid authority in the New Testament is reflective authority. In spiritual matters those who carry authority are only allowed to speak authoritatively according to the revelation they receive from Christ, rather than as an inherent attribute of their gender or position or title. While Scripture's general teaching is for men to hold positions of leadership in the local Church, this does not mean they hold power in themselves. They merely represent the power and authority of Christ.

For those who think this is a misrepresentation of "permit" (i.e. applying it short term to teach & exercise domineering authority, but long term to "exercise domineering authority" only), notice that Paul uses a present tense for the verb of being "Einai" - "to be" in silence.

If we are going to say this is a custom that Paul is establishing for all time then these present tenses must be applied equally to all three areas, (1) teaching, (2) exercising authority, and (3) maintaining silence while the Word is being taught.

Comparing 1 Cor.14:34,35 and 1 Tim.2:11, 12 this means that women must not ask

any questions during a sermon, or a bible class. They are to be totally silent during those sessions. (However, it wouldn't mean they could never talk while at church, just not during a message.) To apply this at Bible College would mean they could ask no questions during class.

While some churches would attempt to apply #1 & #2, I seriously doubt more than 1% of churches who apply 1 & 2 apply #3. This is selective application of Paul's present tenses! Of course it is, because with the passage of time and change in situation and culture the application must change to accommodate need and God's progressive work in the local church.

- j. 1 Cor.14:34 "Keep Silent" could carry an additional meaning = Settle down, don't talk during a message, and listen more than you tend to. It does not have to mean total absolute silence from the moment they enter church until the time they leave. If so then over 98% of all churches are out of order.

Acts 12:17 Silence = stop shouting and allow me to say something.

Acts 15:5,12 Silence = The Pharisees stopped their self assertions and human viewpoint and listened to Peter.

1 Cor.14:28 Silent = hold a tongue message, not total silence while in church.

It is a limited silence, not total silence. This explains "silence" in 1 Tim.2:12, a different Greek word but essentially the same meaning.

- k. 1 Cor.14:34 & 1 Tim.2:12 "Not to speak (1 Cor. lalein) or teach (1 Tim. didaskein)" = a limited meaning of not allowed to "didaskein" to teach, or "lalein" speak "on biblical matters."
- l. 1 Cor.14:34 "As the Law says" appears to refer to Gen.3:16, which references to submission, on the part of the women, and says nothing about teaching. The eternal reality that God will establish among husbands and wives is that wives will submit to their husbands, due to the Fall, so submission is the eternal truth, silence is a present application due to things being out of order. In Paul's day the specific area of submission applied to women in the local church and vocal Word ministry.
 - 1) Prophecy was okay, if it was submitted to God via the woman's husband. 1 Cor.11:3-5 . Prophecy teaches things but doesn't focus on authoritative teaching. 1 Cor.11 indicates this is relating to the local church. Paul recognizes female prophetic ministry as valid thus silence doesn't apply to prophetic ministry.

Those try to say that 1 Cor. 11 does not apply to activity in the gathering of the local Church do so on very scant evidence. The broader context of 1 Cor.7 onwards, seems to imply that Paul is addressing questions as relate to the congregation of believer's and how they are to relate to one another.
 - 2) Generally speaking all teaching, in the presence of men, by women, was forbidden to the early church woman.1 Cor.14:34; 1 Tim.2:12 (due to women being too self willed in his day)

- 3) The broader and more eternal issue was that woman, in whatever she did was to be in submission to her husband or elder, in the absence of her husband, as regards vocal Word ministry in the assembly.

It is important to recognize that even Paul, at times, allowed women to teach men, but we can know it was in submission. What he is teaching in the passages we are looking at are not cast in eternal stone, regarding women's ministries. Where he observes right attitudes and maturity he encourages women to minister the Word:

Phil.4:2,3 Euodia & Syntyche taught - "in the gospel" . Literally, they fought at my side in the presentation of the New Testament truths.

Rom.16:3 Pricilla - "fellow worker". The same word was used to describe Timothy in Rom.16:21.

Acts 18:24-26 Pricilla taught Apollos. Vs.26 explained = elthami, notice how it is used in Acts 28:23

- m. The eternal principles are submission & divine order.

Submission - 1 Cor.14:34 & 1 Tim.2:12 & Eph.5:22

Divine Order - 1 Cor.11:3 & Eph.6:1 Christ, man, wife, children.

- n. Equality of standing and value before Christ. 1 Cor.7:3,4; 11:11,12; Eph.5:21

Order of authority - chain of command. 1 Cor.11:3 & Eph.6:1

These two must be kept in balance as eternal principles.

- o. Practical eternal applications:

1) Drop the culture. Maintain the eternal truths.

2) Wives submit to husbands & local leadership as regards vocal Word ministries.

3) Women may teach as they do so in submission to their headship coverings, since the cultural hindrances of the 1st century do not apply to the 20th century.

4) Before a woman moves out in these areas she must have a clear conscience about it - Rom.14

5) If a woman's husband or Church Leadership opposes this she is in violation to move out in vocal Word ministries in the presence of men.

6) Much prayer and study should precede moving out in these areas.

7) For the woman called to a teaching ministry she must be extremely careful to handle herself and her ministry sensitively and with extreme humility, yet not without boldness, when speaking with men in the audience who are still coming to grips with these difficult passages.

2. A possible interpretation of 1 Tim.2:11-15 and esp.13-15.

It needs to be said at the outset, this is an extremely complicated passage of Scripture, and the conclusions represented below are only a few among other equally viable understandings, not presented in this study.

a. Notice the emphasis on submission again, vs.11.

Submission is the eternal changeless truth. Order is the key - 1 Cor.11:3

In every passage where Paul deals with male & female relationship and order, he places the woman under the male. But, in terms of access to God and standing with Him, they are equal (1 Cor.7:3,4; 11:11,12; Eph.5:21)

"The Issues" with Paul are *Submission* and *Order*, not superiority and inferiority. The present cultural application of these eternal truths in Paul's day was the requiring of women to refrain from Word ministry directed towards men. However we noted some exceptions.

b. God does give Word ministries to women. Titus 2:3-5

Some say that because of Titus 2:3-5 and 1 Tim.2:15, the only acceptable role for women is at home, tending to their children. But, they can do both!

What does Paul mean by 1 Tim.2:15 "Saved in childbearing"? This could better and more accurately be translated "but she shall be saved through the bearing of the child". There is a definite article "The", in this phrase.

"The child" may be a reference to Gen.3:15 - bearing the Messiah - Jesus.

Notice in vs.15 "She" (singular) and "They" (plural). Paul may be making a double reference to "Eve", and "Womankind" in connection with Eve.

I.e. Women in their God given child bearing ability, had a major role in providing salvation by bearing the Messiah. More specifically by women being of the female sex and connected as such to "the woman" Mary, who is the offspring of Eve, thus connecting all women to Mary & Eve, as the sex whom God chose to bring salvation to mankind.

When Eve was deceived and fell, all womankind was indicted. So also when Eve through genetic connection to Mary, and all women ultimately biologically connected to Mary and Eve, had Jesus who became the Savior, in this biological function of having a child all women are connected with Mary and Eve and share in the glory of bringing forth the Messiah and thus share in the salvation of womankind as well as men. And in Paul's thinking, as women share in this it is their way of righting their wrong committed by Eve.

As Adam & Joseph and all men are biologically connected to Christ, so Eve & Mary and all women are biologically connected to Christ. Thus each has their role in the redemptive process.

For Paul, in his day and in his thinking, this role of womankind in the Messiah is

sufficient to connect women to the redemptive process. Teaching by women is not necessary and in fact is a cultural dilemma unsolvable in Paul's day.

This is typical Jewish theological thinking, as we have seen before. Jewish thinking lumps all women into one category and can either do so positively - 1 Tim.2:15, or negatively - 1 Tim.2:13,14.

We saw this before, where Jewish mentality would not allow any women to bear witness in legal matters because they felt all women couldn't be trusted to tell the truth since Sarah lied about laughing at the angel's promise in Gen.18:15.

Therefore, for Paul in his day, where the Holy Spirit is taking eternal principles of female submission and applying it to the cultural problem of women teaching and taking independent unsubmissive authority over men, he forbids their involvement in teaching and leading men.

While it is touchy to apply eternal principles in dogmatic ways to one's culture, Paul did it freely. Each age of the church has had to do it. We accept coffee, and in many instances moderate drinking of alcohol, but we are adamantly opposed to cigarettes, Marijuana, LSD, amphetamines, etc. To many this is compromise and double in standard. To most it is an acceptable application of eternal principles to cultural issues of the day. Do we for a moment think Paul would have accepted two piece or even one piece bathing suits on our women, while swimming? It is hard to imagine him approving of such a clothing style, yet within our culture it is accepted. We must be careful about maintaining some ancient cultural standards and rejecting others. We should be suspect that we tend to do so for reasons other than simply a commitment to biblical accuracy. At times, if we would be more honest we will admit that we apply these no teaching and leading rules, more because we seek to dominate women, than to maintain godly standards of life and practice.

There are always going to be excesses in culture which will demand the application of eternal principles, which application remains valid only as long as the cultural problem remains.

3. Summaries.

For those who still desire to have the women in their churches adhere exactly to what Paul has said here, the following is a list of biblical teachings that one would want to adhere to, rather than picking and choosing whichever ones personally suit their private likes and dislikes:

a. Those taken from clear teaching in the New Testament:

- 1) Strongly encourage remaining single. 1 Cor.7:25-28
- 2) The father should first decide if he will allow his daughter to marry or if he desires her to remain single for her whole life. 1 Cor.7:36-38
- 3) All women must wear their hair long. According to Greek culture that would be anywhere from two to four feet in length. 1 Cor.11:15
- 4) Any woman with short hair should be viewed either as morally destitute, not in

submission, in rebellion against God, having no respect for angelic dignitaries passing through or identifying with those vanquished in war. 1 Cor.11

- 5) Women are not allowed to braid their hair, wear any gold or pearls or costly clothing, and by implication couldn't wear a wedding ring made of gold and having a diamond. 1 Tim.2:9
 - 6) They must not be allowed to teach any boys over the age of 13 since that is the age when a boy becomes a man. 1 Tim.2;12
 - 7) They can not teach in any way within the church, since they are required to remain silent while at church, as relates to teaching or discussing biblical material. 1 Cor.14:34
 - 8) All women must wear a two tiered veil fully covering their hair and facial features, since this is the kind of veil that Paul refers to in 1 Cor.11:5
 - 9) The veil must definitely be worn while prophesying or praying. 1 Cor.15:5
- b. Since we have, in the above, essentially canonized Middle-Eastern culture, we would probably be fairly safe in requiring of the woman all of the other restrictions that the synagogue would have required:
- 1) No woman could vote on any matter relating to the local church.
 - 2) No woman would be allowed to testify regarding any issue being disputed.
 - 3) No woman would be allowed to wear pants, but only full length dresses.
 - 4) No woman would be allowed to talk to any other man, other than her husband unless it was involving a purchase of a needed item.
 - 5) Women would not be allowed to attend Bible College where other men were attending, as it would be improper to allow a woman to learn the matters of the Law in the presence of men.

As can be seen this area is a very challenging one to sort out. Common spiritual / grace sense seems to be sufficient to solve almost 95% of it. The rest requires careful consideration of the original word meanings and applications.