

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF PAUL'S ARGUMENT IN 1CORINTHIANS 13

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A MINI-THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF THEOLOGY

at the

SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

in

JANAURY 2010

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DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purpose

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χάρτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰ ὃ εἰμι.

Knowledge is a virtue.

People do evil only

out of ignorance.

SOCRATES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Accomplishments in life are achieved in partnership with others. So, on completion of this study, I express tremendous gratitude to several role-players.

Firstly, to Almighty God. “Thank you for the gift of life and the countless bounties that inspires, nourishes and sustains me.”

To all the leadership and members of Christ Baptist Church Polokwane. “Thank you for paying my studies fees at SATS.”

My academic supervisor, Reverend Dr. Kevin Gary Smith was a beacon of light. “Your scholarly mentoring and caring ways most cordially guided and strengthened me throughout this journey. Thank you”.

To Josh and Caroline Smith, my adopted family. “Thank you for your unvalued financial support without which my family and I could have not lived in South Africa”.

Family support was unqualified and forthcoming. My wife Bertha ensured much needed time off on the home front. She literally edged me on when the going was tough. So did my daughters Anath (la Mercedes) and Elvira (la BMW). “All of you are very special. Thank you for giving me the space to grow”.

To Reverend Louis Matangila and the Peniel Church. “Thank you for allowing me and my family to come to South Africa”.

My fellow countrymen engineers Patrick Nyongani K.P. and Philip Muyanga Mphizi and Pastor Raphaël Kayamba Kizobo. Thank you for your interest compatriots. It meant a lot”

My dear colleague and brother Patrick Mutombo, the bottle whose I am the glass. “You helped to bring this project to fruition. I thank you most sincerely.”

A hearty thanks to the SATS library whose unstinting back up provided relevant literature, which made my task so much more manageable. “All of you helped to make this project attainable. Thank you very much.

ABSTRACT

Never a piece of writing has been so appreciated like 1 Corinthians 13. Biblical scholars of various backgrounds acknowledge it as the best master piece Paul ever wrote. In our days, it is read in memorable occasion such as the wedding whether for believer or not (Stott 1999). This thesis joins those who interested about its kind of literature have gone beyond simple enjoyment and sought to investigate what it is made up with.

Among the problems that endangered the welfare of the Corinthian church were the abuse of spiritual gifts and a special consideration of a certain category of gifts. The examination of spiritual gifts section revealed that in his attempt to correct the Corinthian believers' understanding of spirituality Paul shifted thematically and stylistically. Hence the research endeavoured to find out, how the use of rhetorical strategies in 1 Corinthians 13 was it helpful in persuading the Corinthians that a person is found spiritual on the basis of love rather than spiritual abilities.

For that purpose, the study has first of all examined the whole epistle for a full understanding of the situation within the church in order to know the purpose of the chapter under consideration. This led to establish the relationships between Corinthian Christians and Paul and with one another. Love was also explored at this level since the matter is the object of an entire chapter and is also found elsewhere in the epistle. Then the study moved to the textual criticism to see the kind of literature 1 Corinthians 13 is. Many procedures were used mainly the translation and the diagramming of the text followed by the examination of its literary features.

The study thus, aims to determine the literary genres of 1 Corinthians 13 by providing evidences from rhetorical perspectives. It showed that the chapter was also meant to touch the Corinthians' emotions. In so doing, the research purposed to establish a framework of rhetorical research of the N. T text.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASV	American Standard Version
BAGD	W. Bauer and F. W. Danker, A GREEK-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.
Cor.	Corinthians
ESV	English Standard Version
FDB	French Darby
FLS	French Louis Segond
GNB	Good News Bible (Today's English Version)
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
NA27	Novum Testamentum Graece, 27ed.
NASB	New American Standard Version
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NT	New Testament
REB	Revised English Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SRV	Spanish Reina Valera
TR	Textus Receptus
UBS4	The Greek New Testament 4 th rev. ed.

v Verse

vv Verses

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Among the innumerable books that have been written on 1 Corinthians 13, very few take the readers back to the writer's era and enable them to comprehend the prestigious literary style of his day. Cousar (1996) says that 1 Corinthians 13 presents an interesting case for rhetorical analysis; upon which opinions are divided as to whether the entire chapter is encomium or epideictic rhetoric. A commentator whom Cousar did not name sees the text as mixed (a sandwich) and divides it into two parts: 13: 1-3 and 13: 8-13 are persuasive whereas 13: 4-7 is praise. Before likening its rhetorical function to that of 1 Corinthians 9, Freedman (1996) first highly valued 1 Corinthians 13. He commented on its theme as follow: "This encomium on love serves to exemplify the greatest gift¹ by which the community will be reunified". Having defined the rhetoric as "the art of persuasion", Keck et al. (2002) conclude that the whole Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians is rhetorical.

MacArthur (1984) simply grazed the poetical aspect of the text. He said in passing that 1 Corinthians 13 interprets the strong emotion contained in the Sermon on the Mount and is a musical portion of the Beatitudes. Likewise, differentiating between hymn and other forms, Guthrie (1996) says that 1 Corinthians 13 is a poem rather than a hymn. Even though Paul has adopted a poetical style in some instances, Aristotle's description in Hedrick (1994) disqualifies him as a poet in the proper sense of the term. Aristotle portrays the poet as "a maker or a fashioner of plots, or a person who tells story in which people act or receive the action". On the other hand, quoted by Black and Dockery (1991), Deissmann advocated that Paul's correspondence were not epistles, but letters to solve specific problems, and were related to specific situations. He goes on saying that Paul did not write them with the intention that they be regarded as literary works. But Randolph (2004) disagrees with him, and Bartholomew et al. (2000:252) advise that we have to approach the Bible

¹ Paul never said of love a spiritual gift, rather fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

as a work of literary art because the word (logos) comes to us in the framework of *poiema*. I mean by this that the Bible is also to be explored like any literature.

Acknowledging the influence of rhetoric in Paul's day, Cousar (1996) saw his letters as highly rhetoric. Ben Witherrington III (1995) for instance wrote a socio-rhetoric commentary on the Corinthian conflict. Rhetoric was a primary subject taught in the secondary schools in the Greco-Roman world. If Paul had not studied the subject, he still possibly could have had access to rhetorical resources that were in common circulation in his day. Though in 1 Corinthians 2:1 Paul denies the use of rhetoric, chapter 13 suggests that in some occasions he adopted it as the suitable style to convey his message.

1.2. The main problem

The objective of the study is to determine how Paul uses rhetorical strategies in 1 Corinthians 13 to persuade the Corinthians that love is the canon of spirituality.

1.3. Key questions

To solve the main problem, the study will attempt to answer these key questions:

1. What was Paul's purpose for writing 1 Corinthians 13? Since the epistle is a reply to the Corinthians' enquiries, the question can be formulated as follows: "How did Paul understand their question about spiritual gifts?"
2. How did Paul use contemporary literary forms to achieve his purpose?
3. How did Paul use poetic artistry to achieve his purpose? Or, "How did Paul's use of the artistic and poetic style in 1 Corinthians help to achieve his purpose for the chapter?"

1.4. Hypothesis

Paul changed to a poetic style, using a form of epideictic argument to persuade the Corinthians that love is the canon of spirituality.

1. 5. Elucidation of the problem

1.5.1. Delimitation

1 Corinthians 13 contains a single theme, love. As we treat a biblical text, we have to bear in mind that the verse and chapter divisions, which play a very important role in our thinking today, were not part of the original text. The division of 1 Corinthians 13 is undoubtedly obscure. In this study, I would indulge in extending its text up and down without intentionally altering the message. Based on the content, the boundaries will be determined on semantic and pragmatic grounds. So, the study will include the last part of the closing verse of chapter 12 and the first part of the opening verse of chapter 14.

It also seems important at this level to let the reader know that this is a literary study focusing on the rhetorical aspects of 1 Corinthians 13. It will neither deal with theology nor discuss the spiritual gifts.

1.5.2. Definitions

Whether spoken or written, speeches are made of words. A word may confuse the reader or listener if he/she is not aware of the context, which it is used in. Even within the context, there are different aspects. All research involves particular key concepts around which they unfold and Mouton (2001:123) advised that clarification of such terminology should be defined as soon as possible. For this reason, in order to allow the reader to get acquainted with the key terms of this study, I have given myself the duty of defining them. The following five terms are keys:

1. *Rhetoric*. Literally, the term means the art of speaking (eloquence) or writing effectively; or the skill in effective use of the speech. Quoted by Hedrick (1994), Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian defined the rhetoric as “the art of persuasion, or the science of speaking well (*bene diciendi scientia*)”. According to Aristotle and his peers, the rhetoric intends to influence the behaviour of the audience. Cousar (1996) adds that the rhetoric did not consist only in the manner of exposing the topic, but also the memorizing of the speech with appropriate gestures.

2. *Rhetorical criticism*. According to Hayes and Holladay (2007), rhetorical criticism consists of examining the texture and the artistry of a text in the light of the rhetorical devices to determine its formal character and to find out the approach taken by the author to convey his message.
3. *Epideictic rhetoric*. One of the three species of rhetoric used in a public gathering. Cousar (1996) says that the epideictic rhetoric is employed by the speaker or the writer to blame or praise the audience for a certain value or vice.
4. *Encomium*. Freedmen (1996) as well as Hendricks (1991) define the term as a piece of writing or a speech that sings high praise of something, repeats in glowing terms the subject's origins, acts, attributes or superiority and exhorts the readers or hearers to imitate that thing in their own lives.
5. *Poetry style*. Writing or speaking style, which emphasizes on cadence and the sound of words, appealing to emotions. In poetry style, the words are chosen for their sounds and the images they suggest rather than their meanings (Hendricks 1991).

1. 6. Rationale for the study.

According to Mouton (2001:48) the first phase of any research project involves transforming an interesting research idea into a feasible, researchable research problem. Appropriate to this, the researcher intends to outline the research steps that were taken to transform his curiosity about the way Paul handled the problem concerning the Corinthian believers' view on spirituality. The chapter outlines the rationale or background for the study; preliminary reading that influenced the topic and the statement of the research problem. In particular, the phase referred to has been documented in the thesis in conformity with Mouton (2001:48) and Smith (2008:214), which related to the rationale for the study, the preliminary literature review and statement of the research problem.

To clarify further, the reason that led the researcher to select the topic were theoretical based (Mouton 2001:122), as Raimond (in Saunders et al. 2003:15) emphasises that for the most research topics, it was important that the issues within the research were capable of being linked to theory. The researcher conducted the study within the realm of literature and the information that was sought through the

study, was needed in order to solve the literary problem in 1 Corinthians 13. For this reason, the researcher wanted scholarly evidences of people of high insight in this field, in keeping in mind with Mouton's proposal of good research (2001:53).

1.6.1. The value of the study

The study of the literary form of 1 Corinthians 13 is not unpopular among the New Testament scholars. Smit (1991) produced a masterpiece which in our days can be regarded as the model on the subject. Howard and William Hendricks (1991) acknowledged the importance of the literary treatment of a biblical text, which they considered as crucial to interpretation. Therefore I cannot refrain from aligning with Cranfield (1959:5) who asserted that "every scholarship worthy of the name must at any time consider the literary aspect otherwise it would be to build on the sand".

In this age of curiosity and scepticism, where people critically question everything, one may ask, "How will this study enrich the reader's understanding of 1 Corinthians 13?" It is erroneous to say that Paul is accusing the Corinthian Christians of totally lacking love because he repeatedly urges them to pursue it (14; 1; 16: 14, 22). Otherwise he would have not recommended them to kiss one another with a holy kiss (16: 20). This study will show that 1 Corinthians 13 is a stimulus and a provocation rather than a reproof. So, Paul is seeking to boost their existing love to a higher level. He is endeavouring to let them understand that spirituality is not function of spiritual abilities but of spiritual quality (character). Hence for Paul, is spiritual, the one who possess God's communicable attribute, "love". Because God who is perfectly spiritual is love (1 John 4: 8).

1.7. Research Plan

1.7.1. Research design

The thesis will have five chapters:

1. Introduction
2. The purpose of 1 Corinthians 13. This chapter surveys the epistle, the occasion for Chapter 13, Paul's understanding of their question about the spiritual gifts, and the relationship of chapter 13 to 12 and 14.

3. The literary features of 1 Corinthians 13. In order to communicate, we have to clothe our thoughts in words. And words in their turn are moulded into a literary form. In this regard, this chapter address the following three natures of 1 Corinthians 13: encomium; epideictic rhetoric, and poetic. Since the purpose of writing determines the style, as the message was unpopular, Paul knew that the spiritually gifted proud hearers would not give attention to it. So, like a hidden hook in lure, Paul purposefully used the contemporary literary forms that the Corinthian believers were fond of.
4. The poetic artistry of 1 Corinthians 13. This is a line-by-line, clause by clause examination of the poetic style of the chapter from the original language. The most important thing in poetry is the artistic arrangement of story and the combination of words. In other words, the meaning and sense are not the criteria in the choice of words but their sounds or resonance and the image they project in people's minds. Thus in this chapter, I will reconstruct 1 Corinthians 13 in its original form and language in order to show how skilfully did Paul organize the text in order to draw the attention of his audience.
5. Conclusion.

1.7.2. Research methodology

1.7.2.1. Resources

The bibliography consists of three categories of resources: The primary resources will consist of the original language texts. They are: The United Bible Society's Greek New Testament, 4th ed (USB4) 1997. The Trinitarian Bible Society 1967, London, England. The Textus Receptus (TR) Scrivener's (1881) edition. Electronic ed. The United Bible Society's Greek New Testament, 4th Corrected Edition 1993. The secondary sources comprise the major English, French and Spanish versions of 1 Corinthians 13, namely: ASV, DBY, ESV, GNB, KJV, NASB, NIV, NKJV, RSV, FLS, SRV. The tertiary sources consist of the scholarly works such as grammars and lexicons. Major commentaries on 1 Corinthians 13, some articles about rhetorical criticism, and articles on 1 Corinthians 13.

1.7.2.2. Procedure

Chapter 2. The survey of the purpose of 1 Corinthians 13 in chapter two will split in two:

1. *Examining the historical context.* The survey of the spiritual gifts section reveals that this portion is occasioned by some special circumstances from the Corinthian Christians' side (1 Cor. 12:1). As they couldn't solve the problem by themselves, they had no other alternative than to seek help from the Apostle, the founder of the church. Moreover, it is important to reconstruct the nature of the situation of the whole epistle. This will require several readings of the entire epistle with close attention to the details of the text. For this task, apart from the Bible, I will refer to Blomberg (1994), Bromley (2002), Bruce (1992), Dehaan (1995), Keck et al. (2002), Kistemaker (1993), and Morris (2000).

2. *Text delimitation.* Chapter 13 is sandwiched. *Ipsa facto*, it irreversibly has relationships with the preceding as well as with the following chapter. This step consists of establishing the opening and the closing the boundaries of the text. Thanks to the criteria set by Stephen (2000) and Young (1994), the text will be delimited in its entirety as a self-contained unit. The bounded field will become part of the whole exegetical process.

Chapter 3. In order to examine the literary genre of 1 Corinthians 13, Chapter three will consist of the following points:

1. *A provisional translation.* The purpose of this step is not to add a new version of the chapter to the existing ones, but to familiarize with the content of the text. Any decisions made due to difficulties in translation will include notes explaining the problem. At this stage I shall use the primary resources above mentioned and the following grammar books: Croy (1999), Mounce (1993), Nada and Montey (1955), Wallace (1996), and the following lexicons Abbott (1923), Thayer (1982), Perschbacher (1990) and BDAG (2000).

2. *Sentence structure analysis and syntactical relationships.* The analysis of the structures and their syntactical relationship will shed light on the flow of the argument. It basically facilitates recognition of the basic structures and syntax of

each sentence of the text. This task will be made possible by diagramming the sentences grouped by pericope. This method helps to recognize various structural patterns within the argument. The resources for this step are Fee (2002), Kantenwein (1979), Kaiser (1981), and Young (1994).

3. *Determining the formal character.* Though apart from the gospels, Acts and Revelation, all the rest of the New Testament canon are called Epistles, they differ in character. Some are totally circumstantial while others are ordinary letters. Based on the historical context, this step will consist of determining the category 1 Corinthians 13 belongs to. It will also consider the formal aspects of the ancient letters to determinate the part of the letter. Cousar (1996), Corley, Lemke and Lovejoy (2002), and Richards (2004) will be referred to at this stage.

4. *Examining the rhetorical features.* To some degree, epistles are made of various forms of rhetoric used in the Greco-Roman world. This literary writing style has both nature and significance. At this level, more attention will be given to moods and form of the argumentation. Is Paul engaged in a straight talk or is he using another form such as irony or hyperbole? Even if the rhetorical form of the entire epistle is disputable, chapter 13 assuredly follows the pattern of rhetorical argumentation. I will consult Aristotle (1952), Bullinger (1968), J. Smit (1991), Guthrie (1996) Freedman (1996) and Witherington J. (2005).

Chapter 4. The poetic artistry of 1 Corinthians 13 will be examined in two simple steps with reference to Aristotle (1952), Watts (1970), Smit (1991), Kuen (1991), Hedrick (1994), Hayes and Holladay (2007), and Zuck (1996):

1. *Examining assonance and consonance.* Dividing the text into appropriate periods (verses) and clauses, and examine its (a) assonance and (b) consonance. The purpose of this procedure is to determine the implication of the poetics of the text.

2. *Listing the repetitions.* In order to examine the assonance and consonance of the text, I will list all four or more repetitions in a given period. Nevertheless, "in its inflected forms, the Greek lends itself to assonance, consonance, rhyme and rhythm say Hedrick". This is a demanding task.

Chapter 2: Purpose of 1 Corinthians 13

There are three simple yet very important features a cautious Bible reader needs identify at the end of his reading. They are: “motive” (what caused the author to address the issue), “aim” (what did he want to achieve through his writings?), and “expectation” (what did he want the addressees do?). These are the basics without which he/she (the reader) has wasted his/her time. The purpose of 1 Corinthians 13 cannot be well explained without telling first its *raison d’être*.

No portion of Scripture can be fully and clearly understood if treated separately from the rest of the book. An author’s intention may be confined in a chapter or a pericope; but his thoughts are still disseminated throughout the book. This makes the chapters interdependent and complementary. The motive and the purpose of 1 Corinthians 13 should be examined in part outside the chapter. I mean, in the setting and the context of the spiritual gifts section where chapter 13 belongs on one part and within the setting and the context of the entire epistle because the issue of love is dealt throughout the epistle on the other part. Neglecting this aspect makes the chapter lose its meaning, said Stott (1993:226). Commenting on this chapter, MacArthur (1984:50-51) wrote:

This gem cannot properly be understood, however, apart from its setting. Its message is integral to what Paul says before and after it. The full impact and depth of its truths cannot be discovered in isolation. Much of the power and even much of the purpose and beauty is missed when the passage is studied or applied out of context.

Since the epistle depicts the state of the church, which to some degree is the image of the society within which it lives, it would seem necessary to consider all these aspects. Whoever notices that the epistle suggests that the Corinthian reputation, both as a city and as a church, was damaged, will surely seek to know in details about the city and its church. However, assuming that this information is common knowledge amongst New Testament scholars, I have preferred to discuss issues that are crucial for the analysis of 1 Corinthians 13.

The arrangement of the selected points does not consider the order of their importance.

2.1. Problems in the Corinthian church that occasioned the writing of 1 Corinthians

The writing of an epistle did not necessarily imply the existence of a certain situation that the Apostle had to deal with or a doctrinal issue to correct in a given church. As a founder and a pastor, Paul's primary motive in writing to a church was to edify the brethren and encourage them to persevere in their new way of life (cf. Acts 15:36; Rom. 1:11-12). Instead, Keck et al. (2002:789) noticed that all of Paul's letters are reactive. 1 Corinthians is likely one of them. Paul was exposed to the situation in the church, which surely in part was influenced by the life style of the environment. The city of Corinth being made up of a heterogeneous population as well as religious beliefs and other intellectual groups such as philosophers and other false teachers (Thiselton 1996:4; Keck et al. 2002:773), when converted to Christianity those people brought their pagan legacy into the newborn community. Blomberg (1994:20) for instance attributes the existence of problems such as the disorder at Lord's Supper, the reaction to Paul's refusal to receive pay, and perhaps including the increase of lawsuits and sexual immorality, to the presence of those wealthy people called *patrons* (providers of lands, jobs, money and legal protection for the well-off) in the church.

A glance at the epistle shows that the Corinthian problems seem to be of one cause. But a thorough survey suggests that the causes were multiple and the state of the church was alarming as a whole. Blomberg (1994:24) groups them in two categories, which he calls "outworking of dualistic thoughts": asceticism and hedonism. The latter naturally consists of those who indulge bodily appetites (sexual immorality, eating food offered to idols and drunkenness at the Lord's Supper). Others relating to the manifestations of freedom in Christ, the neglect of the head covering tradition, the chaos in the use of spiritual abilities and the disbelief in the resurrection belong to the earlier. Here are in short the major problems that endangered the church and compelled Paul to write the longest letter, which is known as the first epistle to the Corinthians:

1. *Factions within the church* (1:10-3:4:21). The Corinthian church was weakened by a severe fragmentation. Although believers still had corporate worship meetings, there was no harmony among them. Imbued with fanaticism, every member claimed to be a follower of a certain spiritual leader. Stating that after Paul's departure from Corinth, believers succumbed to various teachers and teachings, Brown (1970:289-301) sees the source of divisions in the rise of outstanding Christian leaders. Blomberg (1994:23) argues that the Corinthians' lack of unity was caused by their continual arrogance and immaturity. As for Fee (1995:51) and Schreiner (2001:340), the Corinthians were divided over estimation of church leaders in the name of wisdom. On top of that, Horsley (1998:42) adds the Corinthians' excitement over the *exalted spiritual status related to their possession of wisdom*.

2. *Tolerance of sexual immorality* (5:1-13). The church did not corinthianize in fact, but they condoned incest. One of them had his stepmother for a wife. Instead of being ashamed, Corinthian Christians were boasting in their cowardice to condemn evil and take it away from them. As a matter of fact, not only that the reputation of the whole church was spoiled, but also the church itself was in danger (5:6).

3. *Suing fellow Christians* (6:1-11). Christians in Corinth were unable to settle their differences within the confines of the church. They were taking one another to court to be judged by unbelievers. Commenting on such behaviour from the Jewish perspective, the contributors to the David and Alexander_(1983:591) say that Jews were not allowed to take cases before the corrupt Gentile courts. The Corinthians Christians had failed to reach the purpose of the church which, according to Kistemaker (1993:177), is "to permeate the world, to influence and change it according to the norms of the gospel".

4. *Issues of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and celibacy* (7:1-40). The Corinthians had dilemmas. They were asking questions such as:

- Should married couples still have sexual relations after their conversion (7:1-7)?
- Should single people marry (7:8-9)?
- Is divorce permissible whether for homogeneous or heterogeneous faith couples (7:10-16)?

- Should virgin marry (7: 25-38)?
- Should widows remarry (7:39-40)?

5. *Christian freedom abuse* (8:1-13; 10:14-33). Some Corinthian Christians became a stumbling block to their fellows. Believing that they were free to do anything God had not denied them, they had no scruple to hurt others' conscience by eating meals offered to idols to everyone's knowledge. Also, they were unable to free themselves from some pagan practices. This was surely a serious issue as it is noticeable that Paul came to it once again in chapter 10. And it seems that this practice was common in the Roman world (see Romans 14). Dowling and Dray (1995:93) state that as part of worship in ancient Greece, people were accustomed to eating meals in pagan temple. Devout Greeks thought that by doing so they had fellowship with those gods whom the meals were held in honour to.

6. *Questioning of Paul's apostleship* (9:1-23). Paul was criticized of having taken pay for his ministry in Corinth. His detractors who didn't acknowledge his apostleship saw him unworthy to be granted such a privilege. According to them, the apostolic title and the privileges related to it were given to those who were based in Jerusalem, the eyewitnesses of Jesus. Not being part of the twelve, Paul was excluded from that position and its privileges cut off.

7. *Disorder in worship* (11:2-34). The worship service in the church was untidy. The disorder was related to:

- *Indecorous dressing on the part of women*. Roman and Greek women were required to respect public opinion as to what was considered proper in feminine decorum. But in the name of the newfound freedom in Christ, women in the Church of Corinth neglected the covering of the head in public, a distinctive sign from prostitutes (Thiselton 2000:6). Thus, they were dishonouring their husbands and were rejecting their authority (Kistemaker 1993:369).
- *Abuse of the Lord's Supper*. Corinthian believers were gathering for the worst. Divisions were deeply rooted in the church. A general chaos reigned in the church services, even in the Lord's Supper. The meal, which was the way of nourishing real Christian fellowship, was not common. Each was eating in his

corner without caring for the brethren. Fleming (2005:510) says that in their greediness, rich ate their own food without waiting for everyone to arrive. Poor fasted while rich became drunk. It was perhaps in this way Blomberg (1994:21) wrote: “The few worthy members of the Corinthian congregation, however seemed to exercise an influence all out of proportion to their members”.

8. *Abuse of spiritual gifts* (12:1-14:40). In their ignorance, Corinthians didn't have a proper use of their abundant Spirit given abilities. The gifts were intended to be used in such a way they profit the whole church, but the Corinthians saw them as personal. The gift of tongues was regarded as superior to others and all wanted it. Perhaps it was due to their preference to the eloquence or the belief of it as the external sign of the Spirit baptism as it was with the Apostles on the day of Pentecost (Ac.2:8). Dehaan (1995:138) states that Paul, in this epistle deals specifically with this gift.

9. *Denial of the bodily resurrection* (15:1-58). Some Corinthian Christians were denying the bodily resurrection of believers (15:12). Fleming (2005:513) affirms that the Corinthians didn't deny Christ's resurrection, but some of them didn't believe in the bodily resurrection. Since the church was made up of Greeks and Jews, their background influenced their belief. As for the Jews, the Sadducees denied the bodily resurrection (Matt. 22:23; Ac. 23:8), although it is not proved that they influenced the members of the Diaspora. Among the Greeks, Epicureans and Stoic philosophers also believed the same (Ac.17:18). Blomberg (1994:24) attributes the origin of denial of the bodily resurrection to the dualism between the material and the spiritual worlds, a belief spread by the Greek philosophers who saw the body as evil and the spirit good and asserted that at death, the spirit is freed from the body where it was imprisoned. The spirit goes to the creator, whereas the body return to the dust. When Scroggie (1940:129) looked at the Corinthian situation, he was led to quote Pierson who said,

The nuptial union between Christ and the church is the key to the main division of 1 Corinthians. Factions in the church dishonour it. Impurity is destructive of it. Marriage illustrates it, and is hallowed by it. Identification with idols profanes it. The Lord's Supper expresses and

emblemises it. Disorderly Assemblies disgrace it. The Resurrection consummates and crowns it.

The Corinthian problems were of spiritual status discrimination, lack of unity and disrespect for others, especially whose contribution to the church was considered of the less value (Alan 2004:216). That is the picture the epistle draws concerning the Corinthian church, a blended mixture of positive and negative developments. On one side the church was spiritually blessed, on the other side it was fractioned. It is noticed that the main cause of the Corinthian problems was the infancy of the members. Therefore since the situation was tumultuous, with crucial issues, such as divisions and denial of Paul's apostleship, one may be concerned about the state of the relation between the two parties.

2.2. Relationship between Paul and the Corinthians

1 Corinthians provides a lot of evidences with regard to the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians. Due to the numerous problems that need to be considered, Guthrie (1996:438) saw difficult the certitude of the apostle's relationship with the Corinthian church after his eighteen-month ministry. Keck et al. (2002:780) affirm that Paul and the Corinthians were virtually in strong disagreement where the epistle seems to show that everything is fine between both parties. Chapters such as 4, 5, 6 and 9 suggest that Paul was under pressure while writing this epistle.

Despite their failures, Corinthians remained special to Paul. Their assessment of him didn't affect his love for them (2 Cor. 7:3). He didn't feel like rejected by those for whom he risked his life from his unbelieving fellow countrymen (Ac. 18:12-13). Holding them in esteem, Paul interestingly acknowledged them as sanctified ones or saints.

Throughout the epistle, Paul used two special terms to show his relationship with them. Once he identified himself as their only spiritual father (4:15) and 21 times, he called them "brethren" (1:10, 11, 26; 2:1; 3:1; 4:6; 7:24, 29; 10:1; 11:2, 33; 12:1; 14:6, 20, 26, 39; 15:1, 50, 58; 16:15, 20). Both terms point out the affinity that existed between him and his converts. He even admired them, as he said that they were eagerly waiting for the day of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:2-9).

From the Corinthians' standpoint, the epistle suggests an attachment to Paul. They didn't hide their difficulties or try to solve them by themselves. They sought advice to the one they thought to be the right person. But in the light of point 2.3 and 2.6, it may be said that such attitude was a semblance of friendship on the behalf of the Corinthians. The fact that they wrote a correspondence to the apostle didn't automatically mean that the relations between them and Paul were extremely good. Corinthians didn't need a tutor since they considered themselves rich and kings. The apostle even sorrowfully reacted to their attitude as he wrote, "How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you (4:8; NIV)". Quoted by Blomberg (1994:23), Barclay said that the Corinthians had a wrong understanding of their maturity. They simply considered themselves having reached the top of human qualities. Dowling and Dray (1995:57) asserted that the Corinthians believed that they had arrived already. Viewed from a worldly perspective, they saw Paul as a failure.

Surprisingly, in the midst of the Corinthians' ungodliness, 11:2, raises two qualities that highlight the state of relationship between them and their spiritual progenitor: Firstly, the verse says that they were grateful. In other words, they acknowledged Paul as the instrument through which God offered them salvation by remembering him in all things. Secondly, they were known as scrupulous observers of the traditions Paul had entrusted to them. They didn't take the apostolic teachings for granted, but they valued them as the unleashed word of God. Paul was so impressed by them that he was compelled to praise them.

Though not excellent, the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians still existed. The problems didn't destroy it. But this didn't imply that Paul was fully accepted by the entire congregation in Corinth.

2.3. Corinthian opposition to Paul

1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21, 9:1-27, and 15:8-11 suggest a lack of unanimity amongst the members in their recognition of Paul as the founder of the church. This situation seems to be at the centre of all troubles. For Fee (1995:8), the most serious cause of division in the church is between the majority of the community and Paul himself. Fee goes on to assert that Paul's language throughout the letter seems to be

combative and the references to his apostleship have apologetic connotations. Betz and Mitchell (1996:1141) argue that Paul's claim of holding the same position with the Jerusalem apostles (9:1-2; 15:3-11) and his appeal to be imitated (4:16; 11:1) may have caused the Corinthians to oppose him. To this accusation, Betz and Mitchell advocate that nowhere in the epistle does Paul claim his own authority as an apostle *per se*.

Brown (1970:291) said that Bultmann, Schmithals and Wilckens saw Paul's opponents to be those Jews who were familiar with the Hellenistic world and espoused Sophist values and rhetorical techniques on the one hand, and relied on their own spiritual heritage as Jews on the other hand. Guthrie (1996:433) quotes Baur, who spoke of Paul's opponents as representative of Jewish Christianity, was based on his presupposition of a fundamental clash between the Jewish and the Gentiles sections of the church. Later on, he said that those opponents were those who didn't accept the full gospel preached by Paul. They may have believed in Christ crucified, but not in Christ resurrected (Guthrie 1996:435). Based on 1:17, 22; 2:1, and 15:12, Kistemaker (1993:15) says that Paul's opponents were from various groups with individual concerns: Jews were demanding miracles while Greeks were seeking wisdom. Grath and Paker (1995:xv) state that since the epistle reveals an intimacy between Paul and Apollos, the difference between their followers didn't have a doctrinal ground. The only fact was that Paul's preaching was out of human wisdom; so, his opponents were those who were attracted by Apollos' eloquence. The latter arguments are sustainable because they are internally verifiable. Guthrie (1996:48) advises that unless compelled by the evidence, one should not postulate more than one opponent nor identify certain phrases or words as slogans or sayings of the opponents.

Assuredly in Corinth, Paul had opponents inside as well as outside the church. The unbelieving Jews' opposition to Paul in the Lucan account (Acts 18:4-6) may be assumed as doctrinally based. In his ministry Paul was promoting salvation by grace through faith to the detriment of the works of the law (Rom. 3:28-30; Eph. 2:8-9) and he was despising the fleshly circumcision (Acts 15:1-2; Rom. 2:25-29; 3:1; 4:10-12; 1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6, 11; 6:15; Eph. 2:11; Col. 2:11). He himself asserted that his preaching (the message of the cross) was a stumbling block to the Jews (1Cor.

2:23). So, he was unpleasant to them. Concerning the ground of the church opposition, the epistle is not explicit. Therefore, I identify Paul's internal opposition with various groups consisting of eloquence enthusiasts, and those who were denying Paul's spiritual authority and the bodily resurrection.

2.4. The love issue in the Corinthian church

The fact that Paul had devoted a whole chapter to one subject clearly shows how important is the matter of love as part of the theme of the epistle. The topic is not only dealt in the spiritual gifts section, there are portions throughout the whole epistle where the idea of love occurs whether as absent (a need) or present.

Anyone who is asked about the Corinthian church will surely echo with admiration Paul's earlier words of praise (1:4-7) and will say, it was the most blessed church the apostle had ever planted. Members had everything necessary for their spiritual walk. He may go further to say, this is the kind of local church we wish to belong to. But if it someone else goes to the other extreme and says, that the Corinthian church was a pitiable one, a thorn in the body of Christ, he will certainly find opposition. Yes, the Corinthian church was a moribund patient. The epistle is made of a series of treatments Paul is administrating to the believers hoping that they will all recover their spiritual health. Love is the ultimate home remedy to their numerous illnesses. Thiselton (2000:13) wrote: "In Paul's time many in Corinth were already suffering from a self-made-person-escapes-humble-origins syndrome".

This section intends to investigate whether or not there was love in the Corinthian church. If yes, how was it practiced so that Paul had given so much attention to it? The problems that occasioned the writing of the epistle are the best indices to consider in determining the amount of love present or needed. The result will help to answer the question on the purpose of 1 Corinthians 13. In addition, the definition of ἀγάπη will greatly influence the assessment. Based on this, let it be said that Corinthians are innocent until found guilty.

Since Strong (nd. 155; 622), Young (nd. 181; 638) and the Wigram (1982:3) translate ἀγάπη in 1 Corinthians, twice by love (4:21; 16:24) and 11 times by charity (8:1; 13:1, 2, 3, 4², 8, 13²; 14:1; 16:14), and although most of our modern English

versions (ASV, GNB, NASB, NIV, NKJV) have preferred love, it seems necessary to explore both terms to see how does ἀγάπη apply to the Corinthians. Bromiley (1985:5-10) says that love is used in the secular as well as in the religious concept. In the latter, love is the very essence of God. Whether the love of God or for others, love has its source in God. *Archer* (1961:128) states that the Synodale and Second Versions purposefully translate ἀγάπη love when it is about God's love for us to avoid confusion, and they use charity for sanctified relations between men. Tenney (1963:152) says, "Charity represents Latin *caritas*. Charity in the Bible never means giving to the poor, but always a God-inspired love which includes respect for, and the concern for the welfare of the loved one".

Undoubtedly, the Corinthians loved God. Paul attests the confirmation of Christ in them (1Cor. 1:9). But the fact that they didn't care for their fellow Christians calls into question their love for God (1 Jn. 3:19; 4:21). The truth is that the Corinthians didn't hate nor exclude the brethren from the community. Nevertheless, Christianity requires a vertical as well as a horizontal bond of love, which implies good works. The lack of consideration for brethren proves to be the main cause of all the multitude of problems the church had. The crisis reaches a higher level as the epistle goes on, starting with the divisions, lawsuits, offending others by eating meals offered to idols, the dissensions at the Lord's Supper, and selfishness in the use of spiritual gifts.

The neglect of love shows that the Corinthian church gave more attention to another aspect of Christianity. A look at the use of spiritual gifts gives hint to an exaggerated, perhaps even abnormal, view of spirituality by the members.

2.5. Overemphasis of spirituality

Human nature is inclined to be praised (Matt. 6:5). Even a nobody makes every effort to make himself valued by impressing people around him. The Corinthian Christians didn't escape this snare. In order to draw the attention of the audience, and to be admired, they chose the exhibitionism. Paul used the word πνευματικός 14 times in this epistle (2:13, 15; 3:1; 9:11; 10:3, 4, 4; 12:1; 14:1, 37; 15:44, 44; 46, 46) out of 23 times it appears in other of his letters (Rom. 1:11; 7:14; 15:27; Gal. 6:1;

Eph. 1:3; 5: 19; 6:12; Col. 1:9; 3:16) to demonstrate how Corinthians were prone to intellectual pride, highly valuing their knowledge and spiritual experiences.

In their euphoria of spirituality, Corinthian Christians placed an exaggerated estimate on the more spectacular and ecstatic 'spiritual gifts', especially glossolalia (Bruce 1992:21). Everybody wanted to possess it (chaps 12-14) believing that this gift demonstrated the Spirit's presence in a more remarkable way than the other gifts did. So the Corinthians became envious of the gift of tongues and other striking manifestation of God's presence in the church (Schreiner 2001:352-55). It was and is still taken to be the only visible sign of the Spirit baptism as it was in the Pentecost era (Acts 2:4, cp. Acts 19:6). They were looking down upon those who couldn't speak in tongues as having spiritually failed while the tongue speakers saw themselves at the zenith of Christian life. Moreover Corinthians thought that different gifts and different types of ministries indicate different levels of spirituality (Keck et al. 2002:950). Although Paul didn't prohibit glossolalia, he eagerly persuaded them that there were other spiritual gifts which, while not so impressive, were much more helpful in building up the community.

The overemphasis on spirituality was not a problem in fact. The problem lay in how spirituality was understood and lived. The apostle's view is categorical; spirituality is not based on what a person has, but on who he/she is. The fruit of the Spirit, of which love is the umbrella, characterizes a spiritual man. Bruce (1992:124) said that the fruit of the Spirit is more valuable than the gifts, bringing up the Christian character into maturity; therefore, it provides conclusive evidence of the Spirit-dwelling presence.

The overemphasis on spirituality was one of the causes of the crisis that threatened the very existence of the Corinthian church and compelled Paul to write the epistle. The next point will examine Paul's attitude toward the Corinthians' behaviour.

2.6. Polemical nature of 1 Corinthians

The nature of 1 Corinthians is determined by its content. Kistemaker (1993:25) says that 1 Corinthians is a pastoral care that can be applied by any congregation in crisis. If so, Paul was at the same time convincing, rebuking, and exhorting the

Corinthians (2 Tim. 4: 2). Guthrie (1996:32-38) sees 1 Corinthians as a kind of parenthesis (exhortation) because the addressees were facing a specific situation. There is no doubt that the epistle is a situational document, as Long et al. (2002:789) have noticed, but they also say that from the start to the finishing, 1 Corinthians is an argument. In fact, Guthrie and Long don't disagree with one another, but the latter seems to be more implicit. So, I have preferred to review the epistle.

The survey of the epistle suggests that Paul was neither giving advice nor warning the church, but he was giving reasons against the Corinthians' behaviour, he was contending, disagreeing with them. Therefore 1 Corinthians is corrective or argumentative rather than exhortative. Only chapter 7 (marriage issues) seems to be exhortative while chapter 16 (famine relief) is informative. Viewed from the writer's perspective, the following sections prove the point.

1:10-4:21. Paul openly disapproves the divisions within the church. They attempted to oppose him to Apollos; surprisingly he told them that he and Appolos were not rivals but partners in the work of building the church of God. Knowing that one of the reasons of their attachment to Apollos was the eloquence, he reminded them that his preaching style was not based on human wisdom or any kind human form of speech. Since they were inclined to fanaticism, Paul told them this was an expression of carnality.

Concerning the knowledge they pretended to have and which they were boasting about, Paul disappointedly replied that he only taught them the rudiments of the Christian doctrine. They were mere infants because their spirituality was a divisive one. To reject this attitude, he used six times in this epistle and only once in the rest of his writings the verb φυσιώω (4: 6, 18, 19; 5: 2; 8: 1; 13: 4; Col. 2:18), telling them that they were "puffed up", or inflated with conceit, and his argument in 8:1 is that love is better than knowledge. In this regard, Betz and Mitchell (in the Anchor Bible Dictionary 1996:1146) commented that Paul didn't deny their claim of eloquence and knowledge but he argued that spiritual riches were not synonymous of spiritual maturity. In comparison to the gospel, the Corinthians' belief was anachronistic. Calling them men of the Spirit, Bruce (1992:21) says that they were evaluating their wisdom and knowledge by the secular standards, whereas the message of the cross had already overthrown those units of measurement and they have become foolish.

5:1-13. Concerning the incest in the church, Paul severely rebuked them. Instead of disciplining the fornicator, they tolerated his presence amongst them. He first proposed them to mourn rather than to keep on puffing up. Then he exercised his spiritual authority, charging them to excommunicate such a one and to deliver him over to Satan. As he likens the fornicator to the leaven, Paul sees the whole church impure.

6:1-8. Having heard that the Corinthians were taking one another to pagan court to be judged, Paul strongly opposed such a practice. He told them to consider their spiritual status and try to settle their matters by themselves. It is inadmissible for Christians to be judged presently by those they will judge in the time to come. Paul challenged them by asking them if none among them is wise and able to judge his fellow Christians.

6:9-20. When the Corinthians thought that their spiritual freedom allowed them to do whatever they wanted with their bodies, Paul replied by stressing how important their bodies really were. He told them that libertinage was dangerous and such freedom could lead to bondage.

7:1-40. Though prominently listed among the Corinthians' concerns, the questions about marriage seem to have an exceptional aspect in the epistle. Paul didn't take them as a debatable issue. Having understood that the Corinthians were in awkwardness, he simply gave a series of propositions to help them make judicious choices. Brown (1970:328) asserts that Paul's response to the Corinthians' concerns on marriage was based in part on the moral situation at the immoral city of Corinth. That is why he favoured a life without overt sexual expression for single people, and he recommended normal sexual relations to those who were married. Kistemaker (1993:222) sees in this chapter Paul strongly opposing divorce. He disallows the one who divorces not to remarry. Guthrie (1996:461) said that here Paul explained his understanding of the Christian approach to sexuality. He carefully distinguished the Lord's prescription from his own opinion, which in fact relates to his times.

8:1-13; 10:14-33. Paul severely rebuked the Corinthians for their disregard of others and their boasting about knowing that there are no idols. Not denying their freedom,

to eat meals and attend parties, he insisted that no one should exercise personal freedom at the expense of another person's conscience. As he noticed that Paul also dealt with this issue in Romans 14, Schreiner (2001:344) says that the problem of food was a test for the church in Paul's day.

9:1-27. Paul reasoned here with those who questioned his apostleship and accused him to be unworthy to receive any ministerial supports. In these 27 defensive verses, he asked his opponents 19 rhetorical questions then he provided them with the following irrefutable proofs:

- First, Paul told the Corinthians that if they don't believe that he saw the risen Lord and has been commissioned by Him, then let them deny their own conversion, which is the work of the Lord in them through his teaching. Otherwise, he deserved pay like any others ministers of the gospel (vv 1-6);
- Second, Paul referred to human custom, illustrated by the military service, the farmer and a shepherd (v 7)
- Third, his argument was grounded on the Old Testament law. Here Paul quoted Deuteronomy 25:4 that forbade muzzling an ox while treading out the grain, and Numbers 18:8-31 which permit the one who works at the altar to eat from it.
- Fourth, then he quoted Matthew 10:10. The Lord Jesus Himself has commanded it.

But he willingly refused that privilege so that the gospel might not be entangled.

11:3-34. Paul disapproved of the Corinthians' conduct at worship. First he reminded the women how they should dress in public in honour to the Lord and in submission to their husbands. The use of veil he said was suitable not only to the world, but to the church also. Paul was strict; women had to respect the social customs (Guthrie 1996:461). Finally he told the whole church how to celebrate the Lord's Supper. He energetically condemned the selfishness of some members who were eating their food without waiting for others. As he saw this as the result of divisions in the church, he fired them off with a series of indignant questions in verse 22 and urged them proper self-examination.

12:1-14:40. Realizing that the spiritual gifts were used in an improper manner, Paul took a stand against their abuse. The Corinthians considered themselves to be spiritual because they had been given numerous spiritual gifts. Paul told them that true spirituality exalts Christ (12:3), and to consider others since we belong to one another (12:14-23). Therefore we need one another and affect one another. He illustrated the point by likening the church to the human body where all members are equally important. He told them that the same Spirit gifted them all, but differently according to His will. The abilities have been granted to them for common good and not for individual usage, and they are valuable only when used with love; being designed for building one another up. And the controversial spectacular gift of tongues speaking was utile when interpreted. Alan (2004:239) has even noticed that in chapter 12 Paul was arguing against their coveting of the so-called higher gift. He recommended them in public worship to pray or sing in a way which is understood.

15:1-58. Paul dealt in this chapter with a doctrinal topic: the bodily resurrection. He refuted the wide spread teachings that denied the resurrection of believers from the dead. Here like elsewhere, he based his argument on the following facts:

1. Historical proof. Paul started his argument with Jesus' resurrection that the Corinthians had already accepted and couldn't deny. It is a well-known historical event proven by the preaching of the gospel, the testimony witnesses and Paul's own conversion (vv 1-11)
2. Paul pointed to their own experience. Their faith in the message of the gospel had transformed their lives (6:11). Then Paul used a logical reasoning, if there is no resurrection, then Christ is dead, and that the gospel is a lie, your faith is vain. As result, you are still in your sins (vv 12-19).
3. Here Paul gave two doctrinal proofs. First, he told them about the two Adams. The first Adam brought death, but Jesus, the last Adam conquered death. He said that Jesus is the first-born, referring to the OT time where the first fruit guaranteed the full harvest. So, to deny the bodily resurrection of the believers is to deny Christ's premiership. Second, he picked up the sacramental issue, of the baptism for the dead. Then he asked them, "If there is no resurrection why did you accept such a baptism?" (vv 20-34)

4. Since there is no more argument against the believers' resurrection, he showed them how it will take place and its program. He closed with a shout of triumph (vv 45-58)

I have demonstrated how Paul disapproved the Corinthians' behaviours, calling them to order. In other words, the epistle depicts Paul's discontentment of the Corinthians, as Keck et al. (2002:780) saw Paul and the Corinthians in strong disagreement.

After all, the question remains, "Did Paul write a so long epistle only to rebuke the Corinthian believers or is there is something else he wanted to achieve?"

2.7. Purpose of 1 Corinthians

The line of demarcation between the polemical nature and the purpose of this epistle is very thin, but distinguishable. The latter makes the epistle informative whereas the former makes it corrective. Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid (1997:274) said that Paul's primary intention in writing 1 Corinthians was to pen a didactic rather than an apologetic letter.

Paul's purpose in writing first Corinthians was twofold:

First, reacting to the personal report received from Chloe's household (chapters 1-6), he rebuked them for their factionalism and appealed to them to bring unity out of division (1:10-4:21). In this portion, Paul requested the Corinthians to honour distinctiveness and diversity (Keck et al. 2002:789). Then he wrote to discipline *in absentia* the fornicator, and ask them to stay away from anyone who claims to be brother but fails to reach Christian standard (5:1-13). Paul also tried to prevent disgruntled church members from taking one another civil court to solve their disagreements (6:1-8). To those who have been sexually immoral, he recommended them to pursue holiness (6:9-20).

Second, he answered the questions raised in the letter from the church. This is the immediate purpose of the epistle, but it was not primarily in mind until chapter 7 (Bromiley 2002:777). With that letter before him, Paul gradually moved from one issue to another with the key introductory word "Now about" (περὶ δὲ) (7:1,25; 8:1; 11:2, 17; 12:1; 15:12; 16:1). Their questions included among other things marriage,

which was complicated by the conversion of one of the partners. Should such union remain? Some eventually were wandering about the status of virgins and widows, and Paul wrote to help them on those points (7:1-40). Some questions pertained to the Christian liberty concerning the eating of meat sacrificed to idols (8-11:1). Some concerned Christian public worship, especially the conduct of women and the order of the communion service (11:2-34). Some related to the spiritual gifts. Having noticed that divisions over spiritual gifts were creating havoc (Schreiner 2001:335), Paul attempted to provide perspectives without quenching their use in the church (12:1-14:40). There was also a question about the bodily resurrection. Paul offered them his excellent knowledge concerning the subject and he exhorted them to be steadfast in the work of God (15:1-58). Finally the Corinthians wanted to know about the collection Paul was making for the poor in the Jerusalem church; here too, he gave them guidelines (16:1-4). Lastly, he wrote to announce his plan to visit Corinth after a tour of the Macedonian churches, and to convey greetings from the Asian churches (16:4-18).

In this letter Paul was demanding the Corinthians to manifest a quality of life that will differentiate them from the unbelieving world. It is something, which only those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit can exhibit. A person with such a quality honours God and seeks the good of others.

Paul had clearly made his expectations known. But if the epistle were a unit, it would be too long to be read and understood in a single session. Also, the listeners might lose concentration due to the diversity of themes even though Paul had disposed them fascinatingly. Hence the necessity to answer the questions, “How many correspondences did Paul write to the Corinthians?” “Is our actual grouping identical with that of the writer?”

2.8. Literary form of 1 Corinthians

Like any literature, 1 Corinthians is liable to literary examination. Concerning the form of 1 Corinthians, scholars used two criteria for assessment:

2.8.1. *Literary composition*

The literary composition is divided in two categories:

2.8.1.1. *Division Theories*

The compilation of 1 Corinthians has given room to a divergence of views with regard to the partition theories also called “division hypotheses”. Research has been done to find out the number of letters contained in the Corinthian correspondence according to their literary integrity. Keck et al. (2002:778) acknowledges the difficulty caused by the diversity of issues dealt in this epistle for scholars to discern the links and patterns between them. He personally assumes the literary integrity of the epistle despite its several fragments.

Betz and Mitchell (1996:1142) attribute the origin of the questions concerning the number of Paul’s letters to the Corinthians and their literary integrity to J. S. Semler (1725-91) and his students. Among the contemporary promoters of the partition theories, Guthrie (1996:439) cites J. Weiss, J. Hering, M. Goguel, and J.T. Dean. But Freedman’s (1996:1142) quotation of Weiss shows two following parts: letter A, written in Ephesus, is the part mentioned in 5:9 consisted of 2 Corinthians 6: 14-7:1 and then 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; 9: 24-27; 10:1-23; 11:2-34; 16:7b-9, 15-20. Letter B written in Macedonia, contained 1 Corinthians 1:1-6:11; 7; 8; 13; 10: 24-11:1; 12; 14; 15:1-16: 7a, 10-14, 21-22. Weiss saw 1:2; 4:17; 7:17; 11:16; 14:34-35; 10:29-30; 11:1-12 as “redational glosses and interpolations”. It seems that the place of writing influenced Weiss in this partition. Betz and Mitchell went on to say that years later, Weiss revised his theory, speaking about three letters: the first letter is a strong exhortation to depart from paganism, includes 1 Corinthians 10:1-23; 6:12-20; 11:2-34; 16:7(?), 8-9, 20-21 (?); 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. The second letter (B1) is an answer to the Corinthians’ questions, contained 1 Corinthians 7-9; 10:24-11:1; 12-15; 16:1-6, 7(?), 15-19(?). The third letter (B2) is an anxious reaction to the news from Corinth. It consisted of 1 Corinthians 1:1-6:11; 16:10-14, 22-24(?). Mare and Harris (1995:9) confirmed this partition based on the development in Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians.

Dividing 1 Corinthians in a simple way, Hering saw two parts. Part A comprises 1-8; 10:23-11:1; 16:1-4, 10-14, and part B the remaining of the sections. Taking both Paul’s correspondences to the Corinthians altogether, Goguel saw six parts (Guthrie 1996:454). Schmithals (1971:90-95), who revived the debate after World War II made important publications, also kept on changing his theories.

The division theories are based on:

1. Discrepancies

These scholars saw discrepancies or contradictions between 4:17-21 and 16:5-11. In 4:17 Paul says that he sent Timothy to remind and teach them the ways of the Lord, but in 16:10, he speaks of Timothy's conditional visit, with a request to welcome him, which is not in 4:17-21. In 4:19 Paul announces his imminent visit, but in 16:8 he says that he will prefer to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost. The section 4:16-21 is seen as a letter-closing formula rather than a part of the body-letter. Having gone far, Weiss noticed an abnormality in 15:32, referring to a precedent persecution that occurred in Ephesus, the city from which the epistle is said to be sent as 16:8 indicate Betz and Mitchell (1996:1143).

2. Epistolary occasions

Concerning the epistolary occasions, 1 Corinthians speaks of two delegations that came to Paul from Corinth and a letter sent to him by the Corinthians. He was visited first by the Chloe's household that reported to him the divisions in the church (1:11), then by the trio Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:17), the object of whose visit Paul didn't reveal. Paul might follow whether the chronology of the information or their importance. As reported by Chloe's household, the state of affairs in the church was so alarming that it required Paul's immediate intervention. He even urged them to bring back unity (1:10). He would tell them to do it without delay. So, prioritising the unity of the church, since the disorders were more harmful than the difficulties, Paul surely reacted promptly to the personal report and responded to the letter later on. Kistemaker (1993:24) says that Paul was too busy that whether with the help of a scribe or not, he could not write a letter in one continuous segment of time.

3. Literary breaks

It has been advocated that all the sections of 1 Corinthians beginning with *περὶ δὲ...* (Now concerning...) (7:1; 25; 8:1, 4; 12:1; 16:1; 12) respond to the Corinthians' correspondence mentioned in 7:1, are therefore part of the same, the so-called *Antwortbrief* ("letter of response") (Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid 1997:470). Betz and

Mitchell (1996:1143) adds that since Paul was supposed to keep on answering the letter without break, all sections in chapters 7-16 that are not introduced by *περι δε* (9:1-11:1; 13:1-15:58; 16:13-24) must belong to another letter or letters.

In general, the supporters of partition theories have encountered difficulties with hard transitions throughout the epistle, which call the unity of 1 Corinthians into question. The interposition of chapter 9 between chapters 8 and 10 on one hand, and 13 between chapters 12 and 14 on the other hand made the task more complicated.

2.8.1.2. Unity Theories

As noted above, the unity of 1 Corinthians was not questioned until the rise of division theories. Among the defenders of the unity theories, Betz and Mitchell (1996:1143) names Marxsen, Bornkamm, Hurd, Barrett, and Conzelmann. They say that Barrett saw the harsh transitions as a result of pauses in dictation or of fresh news received by Paul. Quoted in Betz and Mitchell (1996:1144), Hurd explained that the change in tone and content was due to the different types of information Paul received. He differentiated three stages of oral and written conversation Paul had with the Corinthians before he wrote the epistle:

1. His first preaching in Corinth, at the founding of the church;
2. His previous letter to the Corinthians (5:9-10);
3. The report from the visitors and the letter.

Hurd went on to say that in the section answering to the oral report (1:11-6:11, 5:9-13a excluded) the tone is aroused, even angry, whereas the sections answering the Corinthians' letter, the tone is calm and balanced. Mitchell and Alan (1993:163) argue with certitude that 1 Corinthians is a unified deliberative. Thiselton (2000:33) gives two possible opposite misreadings of the occasion of writing that leads to deny the unity of the epistle.

1. First, the fact that it must be admitted that the Corinthians problems were various and complex and required an urgent intervention of Paul, should lead interpreters neither to ignore the coherence and the unity in the epistle nor to suggest theories advocating that 1 Corinthians is made up of several letters.

2. Second, on the other hand, what Paul does is more an address of a series of issues, which arise in the church as result of divisions and discord. Even though the occasion of writing plays an important role, it doesn't influence much in the unity of the letter. Thiselton went on to say that in order to expound the underlying theory of those issues, Paul wanted to advance the Corinthians' level of understanding. For that reason, Thiselton said, "All are placed in the light of the cross, of the divine grace, of the Lordship of Christ, and of the respect for other that builds the whole community in mutuality and love".

2.8.2. Compositional Analysis

The argument for the unity of 1 Corinthians is founded on this brief analysis done by Betz and Mitchell (1996:1144) in which the epistle is seen as a deliberative letter convincing the Corinthians to be reconciled and to end their divisionism. Here is the outline of the argument:

1:1-3	Epistolary Prescript
1:4-9	Epistolary thanksgiving
1:10-17	Statement of facts or narratio
1:18-15:57	Proof or probation in four sections
1:18-4:21	First proof section
5:1-11:1	Second proof section
11:2-14:40	Third proof section
15:1-57	Fourth proof section
16:1-24	Epistolary closing.

1 Corinthians is a unit. Paul progressed harmoniously from the greetings to the discussions. He gradually dealt with issues starting from the disorders to the difficulties. No section of this epistle is susceptible of mixture with another section of 2 Corinthians. Such a mixture is not suitable to Paul's way of dealing with the Corinthians' problems.

The above amount of information about the Corinthian church and its epistle will not profit until 1 Corinthians 13 is explored as a particular case study. So, the following task consists of determining the boundaries of the chapter and then its purpose.

2.9. Delimitation of 1 Corinthians 13

When written by Paul and sent to Corinth, the epistle was not fragmented. The text was divided into chapters in the Middle Ages and later on, chapters were subdivided into verses (Kuhrt 1991:18; Keck et al. 2002:790). Without questioning the scholarly work already done concerning the delimitation of the text, it seemed necessary to review the spiritual gifts section and re-establish the boundaries of chapter 13 for study sake.

Levinsohn (2000:271) has importantly made the point when it comes to define the boundaries of a section on semantic grounds, a paragraph or section must have a single theme. Semantically, there are two features in 12:31b and one in 14:1a that drew my attention:

First, the presence of the conjunction *καί*, which is one of the potential supporting evidences for boundaries of a text proposed by Beekman and Callow (quoted by Levinsohn 2000:272). In 12:31b, *καί* functions as a connecting conjunction also called continuative or coordinative conjunction. It connects the new element or idea (I will show you an excellent way) to the existing discussion or train of thought (the whole chapter 12). So, *καί* is translated “and” (BDAG 2000:494, Dana and Montey 1955:249-50; Thayer 1982:315-17; Wallace 1996:670-71).

Second, the excellent way that Paul was about to show the Corinthians is explained throughout chapter 13, and never appeared before. Morris (2000:176) noticed that grammatically, love is that excellent way to the gifts.

Third, love which is the object of Paul’s command in 14:1a has been developed in chapter 13.

Virkley (1981:98) said that the first sentence of a paragraph serves either as a transition from one concept to the next or as a thesis that is elaborated in the sentences that follow. Since love, the excellent way stated in 12:31b is largely developed in chapter 13; 12:31 is undisputedly part of it. As for Mare and Harris (1995:108) as well as Bruce (1992:124), Horsley (1998:175), Soards (1999:271) Alan (2004:239) and Malina and Pilch (2006:116) 12:31 is an introductory part of chapter 13. The UBS4 has simply connected it to chapter 13 under the title love. And

Long et al. (2002:955) see 14:1a as a conclusion of chapter 13. Based on the above argument, I consider 12:31b² and 14:1a as integral part of chapter 13. Any study that rejects this delimitation cripples the text. Noticing that the link was perfectly established, Paul left the better way and smoothly went back to the spiritual gifts.

The setting of the boundaries of 1 Corinthians 13 gives the way to the examination of Paul's purpose of writing this chapter. But if the epistle has been already surveyed and its purpose revealed, what then was Paul's particular aim in writing chapter 13?

2.10. Purpose of 1 Corinthians 13

1 Corinthians 13 is a single-theme chapter, which originates in chapter 12 where it is highly exalted, and runs up to chapter 14 where it is brought to its climax. It wonderfully unites the spiritual gifts section to the point of contradicting the proponents of Paul inserting the chapter here later after he wrote the epistle (Bruce 1992:124). Scott (1993:226) for instance says, "Because of the grandeur of its language, because it is acknowledged to be 'great literature', this chapter needs to be linked immediately with Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts in chapter 12". Without naming those proponents, Keck et al. (2002:951) state that in their denial of Paul's authorship of chapter 13, some scholars say that he knew it from elsewhere and made it part of his argument. While others take the whole spiritual gifts section as another writer's work that Paul pasted here. Fee (1998:124) asserts that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 13 separately but incorporated it here because of its relevance to the circumstances in the church. Malina and Pilch (2006:117) doubt of the authenticity of the chapter. On the other part Horsley (1998:174) says that those who attribute the authorship of 1 Corinthians 13 to another writer than Paul see the chapter as not connected with the spiritual gifts section or as an interruption of it. And Brown (1970:368) poses a question whose answer is surely no. It asks, "does 12:31b indicate that chapter 13 has been placed here by an editor rather than by Paul himself?" Even Richards (2004:109) who said that Paul used to insert preformed material did not give a concrete example apart from the quotations, a well-known material in the entire New Testament.

² By doing so, I agree with the UBS 4, Mare and Harris, Bruce Horsley, Alan, Malina and Pilch on the one hand and with Long et al. on the other hand.

The spiritual gifts section utters Paul's aim in writing chapter 13. In chapter 12, after ranging the spiritual gifts, he told the Corinthians that each of them was gifted, and no one was left out. The same Spirit distributes many gifts (12:4-11) so that the members can serve the body (12:12-31). In 12:17-19, he told them the importance of the diversity through the human body illustration. He urged them to keep on striving for those spectacular gifts, but he promised to show them a way, an excellent one, which is the way of love. Ellsworth (1995:209) says that "the excellent way" should be a crushing word for the Corinthians because of their concern for spiritual gifts, which was their basis to define spirituality. Most importantly in this chapter, Paul told them that spiritual manifestations are granted for the benefit of the whole church (12:7).

His task in chapter 14 consisted of putting order in the use of the gifts of tongues and prophecy. He wanted them to know that prophecy is superior to tongues unless interpreted because the one who prophesies edifies the church. Kistemaker (1993:452) interestingly commented that as far as Paul is concerned; only prophecies and tongues that are spoken in the frame of love edify and strengthen the church. Love enables Christians to share the benefits of the spiritual gifts.

In chapter 13, Paul states that love is not opposed to the gifts, but to the manner the Corinthians used them, which is a selfish way (Houghton 1996:344). Love gives a meaning to the gifts (13:1-7). Love is the setting, which he wanted them to use their Spirit given abilities in. And throughout this chapter, he ceaselessly demonstrated how love is better than the spiritual gifts. That justified the use of the adjective "excellent" to specify the quality of his proposed way. Alan (2004:217) says that the purpose of the Spirit's manifestations is to express the love of God in Christ in order to build the believers in a community of love.

Quoting Stott, who asked, "What are we made for?" and answered, "As fish are made for water, humans are made for love", Alan (2004:240) said that the general purpose of 1 Corinthians 13 is to point to love as the very general essence of life. Paul used love to specify the problems the Corinthian church was facing. He wanted them to know that love is the prominent sign that the Spirit of God is present and operational in a Christian community. Love is preoccupied with the interests of others, and identifies with others.

1 Corinthians 13 is Paul's dynamite to demolish the Corinthians' strongholds, a help for self-examination for Christians in all ages. Fifteen verses (12:31-14:1) were sufficient for Paul to determine the sphere within which the spiritual gifts have to operate for the welfare of the whole community and to tell believers that apart from love man's oratory skill, the abundance of his knowledge and his sacrificial giving are futile; even the highest gifts are worthless and life unmanageable.

If 1 Corinthians can be compared to a lunch box, the spiritual gifts section is the sandwich whose chapters 12 and 14 are the two slices of bread and chapter 13, the piece of meat.

The role of this chapter was to lay the foundation of the literal analysis of 1 Corinthians 13 and to pave the way for the next chapter, which will consist of examining the literary features of 1 Corinthians 13.

Chapter 3: Literary Features of 1 Corinthians 13

As person who dives into a swimming pool to cool off but does not bathe gains little, so it is with he/she who spends time before a book with the only goal to become saturated with the thought of the writer, without caring about the elements that shape that thought, or reflecting on how the ideas have been woven into the text. Reading Paul's letters without paying a particular attention to his style may lead to misinterpretation or missing of point the message. Richards (2004:9) prefaced his book with a similar concern. He said that reading Paul's letters without any thought as to how they came to be, exposes us to the risk of reading our culture, customs, values and ideas back into Paul.

Scholarly writings are appreciated for various reasons, according to the needs of the readers. Some appreciate the theological and doctrinal insights of Paul's letters, others the practicality of his message, others the niceties of his arguments, and still others his writing style. He is very likely a hero for scholars even in the literary domain. He wrote many letters preserved and compiled for us in the New Testament. He wrote them not only because of hindrances to meet physically with the addressees, but also because God wanted Paul to record His revelations for the benefits of the Christian future generations, which we have the grace to belong to. And most of us have never come across any other ancient letter apart from the New Testament epistles.

Anyone who has attentively read 1 Corinthians has surely noticed the uniqueness of chapter 13, and didn't depart from it without being fascinated. One may ask, "How special is 1 Corinthians 13?" "What differentiates this chapter from the other fifteen?" As far as I am concerned, not only the excellence of its message, but also the standard of its literary style distinctively marks 1 Corinthians 13. This might be the reason Malina and Pilch (2006:117) doubt of Paul's authorship of the chapter.³

³ Fee (1995:124) asserted also that some scholars refuse to ascribe Paul the authorship of this chapter

In this chapter I am going to examine the literary artistry of Paul's argument by questioning how ingenious is the literary style of 1 Corinthians 13 through the study of its literary features. But before I get there, I have preferred first of all to make a personal translation of the chapter.

3.1. A Translation of 1 Corinthians 13

Stuart (1996:683) is right to judge an exegete's correct understanding of a passage by the degree to which he/she can convincingly translate it into a modern language because translation is the basis and pivot of the exegetical process. And both go hand in hand.

Concerning the philosophy of translation, I have adopted the one that focuses most attention on the original text or the source of translation, commonly called the literal or formal equivalent method of translation or simply "literal translation"⁴ because it meets the research need by seeking a word-for-word equivalency and trying to keep the grammatical structure of the original text.

The following does not pretend to be an ideal translation of 1 Corinthians 13. It is neither corrective nor competitive to the works already done by eminent scholars. It does not primarily aim to reconcile their differences, even though it will discuss some of them in order to justify my choice. This translation is a simple tool for the purpose of the study. Its text will consider the boundaries set in 2. 9. I have tried to do my best to convey the same message than that of the original text.

12

31b. Yet, I will still show you a way which surpasses all others.

13

1. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but I have no love, I am a noisy brass or a clanging cymbal.

⁴ For more insight on translation see J. P. Lewis, *The English Bible from KJV to NIV* Grand Rapids: Baker 1981, p. 279 or F. F. Bruce, *The history of the English Bible*, New York: Oxford, 1978, p.233.

2. And if I have the gift of prophecy⁵ and know all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but I have no love, I am nothing.

3. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned⁶, but I have no love, I gain nothing.

4. Love is patient⁷, love is kind, it does not envy, love does not boast, and does not puff up.

5. Love does not act unbecomingly, it does not pursue things for itself, it is not provoked, it keeps no record of evil,

6. It does not rejoice in evil, but rejoice in the truth.

⁵ προφητείαν is the accusative of προφητεία meaning prophecy, the gift of prophecy (Abbott 1922:350), means here the gift of interpreting divine will or purpose, gift of prophesying (BDAG 2000:889). The rendering the gift of prophecy is preferable although the Darby and SRV have translated I have prophecy, which is narrowed to the ability alone.

⁶ The verb translated “to be burned”, is καυχῆσθαι in some manuscripts, καυθήσομαι in others and καυθήσωμαι in some others. The first, adopted by the USB4 and its corrected edition, is supported by P⁴⁶, S, A, B, 048, 0150, 33, 1739*, and Church fathers such as Origen, Didymus and Jerome. The second, adopted by Han (1971:331), is supported by C, D, F, G, L, 81, 104, 263, 436, 459, 1175, 1881*, 1912, was accepted by Macarius/Simeon, Flavian Antioch and Cyril. The third, approved by Thayer (1982:319), is adopted by the TR and the TSB is supported by ψ, 6, 256, 365, 424, 1319, 1573, 1739c, 1852, 1881c, 1962, 2200, 2464, Byz, was accepted by some Church fathers and other earlier believers such as Origen, Tertullian, Augustine, Chrisostom, Basil, Gregory-Nyssa, Macarius/Symeon, Cyprian, and even Pelagius. The GNT-V contains both καυθήσομαι and καυθήσωμαι. The latter is a grammatical monstrosity, said Metzger (1975:564).

⁷ μακροθυμεῖ is 3rd person singular present active indicative of μακροθυμέω, meaning to bear up under provocation without complaint (BDAG 2000:612) or to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles (verb of action). It also means to be patient in bearing the offences and injuries of others; to be mild and slow in avenging; to be long-suffering, slow to anger, slow to punish (verb of state). This chain of meanings is absolutely applicable here (Thayer 1982:387). Quoting Ps. 103:8 Barnett (2004:246) asserts that μακροθυμεῖ is a quality of God and is used here metaphorically. The word literally “long burning”, “as of a decent log burning for long hours in an open fire...”

7. Love covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
8. Love never fails⁸, but if there are prophecies, they will be abolished, if there are tongues, they will cease, if there is knowledge, it will be abolished.
9. For we know in part and we prophesy in part
10. But when the mature comes, the partial will be abolished.
11. When I was an infant, I used to speak like an infant, think like an infant, reason like an infant; but when I became a man, I did away with the things of the infant.
12. For now we see through a mirror in an obscure image, but then we will see face-to-face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I have been known.
13. And now endures this trio: faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love.
- 14a. Pursue love.

The next stage will discuss only those items where exegetical decision is important or makes a difference in the meaning of a passage. It will also examine any ambiguity that makes the interpretation difficult.

3.1.1. Translation alternatives

Translation inevitably influences theology. But the selection of the following debatable features is related to the nature of the study, which is literary. Thus, the exegetical aspect will be textually based and grammatically oriented.

12:31b. δείκνυμι is the present active indicative of δείκνυμι (I show). According to the context, this is certainly a special use of the present. It is neither an historical present because there is no historical event that Paul is describing in a vivid way, nor the perfective present because Paul is not emphasizing the results of a past event. It can be the conative present, but the context still favours the futuristic present because

⁸ Thiselton (2000:1060-61) says, "The Western reading ἐκπίπτει retains the vividness of falling off, like a leaf which has decayed and lost its life (cf. Job 13:25; Jas.1:2; 1Pet.1:24). The established reading πίπτει means falls to the ground in a literal and metaphorical sense, often with the added force of collapsing or falling apart".

even though the showing of the way started soon after the claim, there is no evidence that Paul has made an attempt (I am about to show). Rather it is proved that the action of showing the way is wholly subsequent to the time of speaking (I will show) (Wallace 1996:516-36)

12:31b. While the phrase “an excellent way” for ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν emphasizes only the qualitative aspect of love in comparison to other gifts, the rendering “a way that surpasses all others” goes beyond that. It includes the variety of the riches of love. Love for instance gives a meaning to gifts (13:1-3). Spiritual gifts will cease to perform and to exist, but to love has been granted eternity.

13:1. γέγονα is the perfect active indicative of γίνομαι. This is the Intensive Perfect. Its use indicates that the emphasis is on the present results of a past action (Dana and Mantey 1955:202). Moreover, γίνομαι is a stative verb (Wallace 1996:574-75). Based on this argument, I think that the rendering “I am” (NIV, ESV, RSV) is better than “I have become” (NASB, NKJV).

13:1- 2. The combination ἐάν μὴ suggests that λαλῶ and ἔχω are subjunctive rather than indicative (Wallace 1996:689). Except the GNB, other modern versions (ESB, NASB, NIV, NKJV, and RSV) have correctly translated them. Having noticed the nature of the hypothesis, Thiselton (2000:1032) said that the best translation would be, “If I were to speak in tongues... but if I had not love, I would have become...” However, like in 12:29-30, Paul’s argument in these first three verses can be formulated in form of rhetorical questions in the following way, “What do you liken me to if I speak...but...?” or “How much value do I have if I prophesy and understand... but...?” or else, “What do I profit if I give my possession...?” And the answer to those questions is definitely negative.

ἤχων is a present active participle nominative masculine singular of ἤξέω, meaning to sound, to make noise, or to roar (Thayer 1982:281; Young n.d.: 919 and BDAG 2000:441). It occurs only here and in Luke 21:25 where it is used for the sea and is translated to roar (ASV, DBY, FLS, NASB, NIV, and NKJV). The LXX also uses it twice (Is. 16:11; Jer. 48:36). Ἠχών is an anarthrous adjectival participle. It functions like an adjective and modifies χαλκός. Some modern versions (NIV and NKJV) have translated it “sounding”. Such a rendering does not reflect exactly what Paul really

meant. Because by nature, χαλκὸς (gong or cymbal) is a resonant instrument, consisting of two brass bowls, which could be struck against one another not for accompaniment, but to beat the rhythm (Deursen 1958:52). As an instrument of worship in the temple (2 Sam. 6:5; 1Chron. 15:16; Ps. 150:5), and the Hellenistic worship (Brown 1970:370), its sound (not the cymbal) is undesirable when the beat is not rhythmic and melodious. So, when the sound is unpleasant because of the beat, then the gong or cymbal becomes noisy (ESV, GNB, NASB). It is inadmissible that Ellsworth (1995:210) has said that cymbals and gongs can only produce one tiring and monotonous sound. If they can't make melody, how can they as musical instruments arouse the sentiments of the worshippers?

13:2. Μεθιστάναι preceded by the consecutive particle ὥστε is an infinitive of result (Wallace 1996:593). It indicates the outcome produced by the ἔχω. Used adverbially, the subject of μεθιστάναι is faith and not the rhetorical I as translated in the NKJV.

13:10. Abbott (1922:442), Hickie (1936:191), Perschbacher (1990:404) and Thayer (1982:618) render τέλειον “perfect”, “complete”, and “mature”. Before such a dilemma, the translator has the responsibility to choose the correct word so that he may not mislead his readers. I agree with Blomberg (1994:260) who, based on the metaphor in verse 11, says that the main biblical meaning of τελείος is maturity. This view is also supported by Houghton (1996:348) who saw in this verse Paul contrasting τέλειον with ἐκ μέρους. I have preferred to render τέλειον “mature” instead of “perfect” or “complete” because mature aligns also with νήπιος (infant), the point in the context being the full- knowledge.

13:13. There seems not to be a grammatical cohesion in this verse. Μένει (3rd singular) does not agree with its set of subjects (πίστις, ἐλπίς, and ἀγάπη). Such a violation can be interpreted as a mistake of Paul's secretary or of a copyist. However, in the present case, μένει relates to the explanatory phrase (τὰ τρία ταῦτα), a neuter nominative plural which according to Robertson (1934:704), Nada and Mantey (1955:165), and Wallace (1996:399) regularly takes a singular verb. Also, Kistemaker (1993:472) says that the neuter plural ταῦτα is an appositive subject which demands a verb in the singular. Even so, I have preferred to translate τὰ τρία ταῦτα by the collective noun, “trio”.

Having justified my translation, I am going now to examine how Paul set his argument.

3.2. Literary structure of 1 Corinthians 13

As a component of the literary criticism, the literary structure calls attention to the organization or arrangement of the text as part of the process of identifying its form. However, the literary structure of 1 Corinthians 13 consists of understanding not only how the chapter is organized as a whole, but also how its component parts relate to one another, and how they interact. It also intends to find out how the language is used. Hayes and Holladay (2007:96) propose eight clues to look for in order to ascertain the literary structure of a biblical writing. They are “(1) changes in literary style, (2) shifts in vocabulary, (3) breaks in continuity of thoughts, (4) connecting statements that suggest secondary linking, (5) change in theological viewpoint, (6) duplication or repetition of material, (7) clearly defined and isolated subunits, and (8) chronological or factual inconsistencies”.

1 Corinthians 13 reflects the genius of the literary craftiness. It is made up of meaningful thoughts containing striking structural pattern that is unique. In writing this chapter, Paul used various compositional techniques and link-words in order to connect the units and other smaller parts of the text. The literary structure of 1 Corinthians 13 will be analysed by dividing the text into major parts or paragraphs. With regard to the sections division of 1 Corinthians 13, commentators such as Fee (1987:628-51), Kistemaker (1993:452-72), Blomberg (1994:258), Dowling and Dray (1995:150-58), Thiselton (2000:1032-74), Alan (2004:243), and Malina and Pilch (2006:116) have divided the text into three parts (1-3; 4-7 and 8-13). As for me, referring to my delimitation of the text, I consider 1 Corinthians 12:31b as an introduction to chapter 13, and 13:13-14:1a as a conclusion. Each extremity will constitute a unit and the rest of the text will be divided into three sections:

Section 1 (12:31a). Paul explicitly inserted a comparison in this part. The phrase ὑπερβολὴν ὁδὸν (“a way which surpasses all others”) to mean ἀγάπη (love), places love far above all the gifts, even the spectacular ones, considered great by the Corinthians. Such a confrontation is in view in all the divisions. It originates in the closing of chapter 12 with μείζων (12:31a), where he compares the spiritual gifts

among themselves. In the introduction of chapter 13 (12:31b), comparing love with the spiritual gifts, Paul shifts to ὑπερβολὴν and finally in 13:13, he goes back to μείζων to compare love with the other endless virtues.

Section 2 (13:1-3). This section is marked by a threefold repetition of contrasted protasis and a threefold use of a rhetorical I as the subject in the three periods (verses) of which Smit (1991:197) said form a parallelism in structure and content. They can therefore be arranged as follows:

1. I may speak in the tongues of men and of angels,
but if I have no love,
(then) I am a noisy brass or a clanging cymbal
2. And I may have the gift of prophecy and know all the mysteries and all
the knowledge and even if I have all faith so as to remove mountains,
but if I have no love,
(then) I am nothing.
3. And I may give all my possessions to feed the poor, and even if I deliver
my body to be burned,
but if I have no love,
(then) I gain nothing.

In all the three occurrences, ἀγάπη functions as a direct object and is anarthrous.

Section 3 (13:4-7). Here, love is the subject of a series of fifteen verbs all in present indicative of which two are in the middle, three in passive, and the others active. They can basically be divided in three groups: the first two express what love is. The following eight tell what love is not and does not do. And the eighth is the counterpart the seventh, a striking antithesis. Then, used transitively the last four have each as object all (things), which can also be used adverbially to signify always (Kistemaker 1993:463), the NIV reads, "It (love) always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always preserves".

A careful reading shows how on one side Paul alternatively uses the conjunction ὅταν (v 10), a compound of ὅτε and ἄν, "a particle indicating that something can or could occur on certain conditions, or by the combination of certain fortuitous causes" (Thayer 1982:88) and the adverb ὅτε (twice in v 11), both meaning when

(Perschbacher 1990:299; Thayer 1982:458, BDAG 2000:730). On the other side, he repeatedly uses the combination τότε δὲ (but then) in verse 12, speaking of the series of results of the coming of the mature (τέλειον). Such a use gives to the unit a conditional aspect of which ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον functions as the protasis and the outcomes as the apotases.

Section 4 (13:8-12). This is a very interesting section with πίπτω as the key verb. There is here a mixture of personal pronouns. Paul navigates from an inclusive “we” to a rhetorical “I”, first separately in verses 9 and 11, then conjointly in verse 12. In this section, features are antitheses and events are chronologically described: partial (ἐκ μέρους) ... mature (τέλειον), infant (νήπιος) ... man (ἄνθρωπος).

Section 5 (13:13-14:1a). The conjunction δὲ undoubtedly indicates a new boundary (Young 1994:253-54; Levinsohn 2000:272). The conclusive form of this section is portrayed by the adverb (now) νυνὶ, the emphatic form of νυν. Like 12:31a, 13:13 contains also a comparison, μείζων. It does not mean that what began in 12:31a effectively ends in 13:13, because the thought runs up until 14:1a. The section closes with a command (διώκετε) in which Paul admonishes the Corinthians to be driven by love.

The above description tends to suggest that 1 Corinthians 13 is purely an argument. Having the Corinthian audience before him through their correspondence, Paul puts love and the spiritual gifts on a scale and love is found to weigh more than the gifts. He therefore urges them to embrace the excellence. In fact, chapter 13 presents the inner motivation of the spiritual gifts section.

The literary structure of 1 Corinthians 13 is well understood through a structural analysis, a disposition that shows the relationship between the propositions in each of the above sections. Kantenwein (1979:4) sees diagramming as a non-negotiable procedure in the exegetical process especially in studying Paul’s writings. Due to his constant deviation, only the diagram keeps the reader from the danger of missing the main point of the passage under consideration. It enables the exegete to observe the thought pattern of a biblical writer. Schreiner (1990:97) finds it difficult for someone to trace the argument of the Pauline text if he is unable to diagram the text.

3.2.1. Diagramming and explanation

Diagramming is one of the methods used in the analysis of the structure of a text. It allows visualizing the flow of the argument and the relationship of individual words within sentences as well as the relationship of the clauses (Robinson 2001:71). Also called grammatical analysis, the diagram consists of dissecting a text (sentence or paragraph) involving a classification of terms according to their function. It is a mechanical layout that depicts syntactical relationships (Demoss 2001:46). This step intends to visualize the structure of 1 Corinthians 13 by examining the connections between Paul's thoughts. There are various methods of diagramming. The following four are widely used:

1. The word-by-word line diagramming. Consisting of analyzing the grammatical relationship of each word in a sentence. This method is designed for sentence-based grammar and is not therefore suitable for a large portion of a text. The failure to provide a semantic perspective to the text makes the line diagram inadequate for exegetical purposes. Kantenwein (2007:10-60) is one of the promoters of this method.
2. Thought-flow diagramming, also called block diagramming or sentence-flow diagramming, consists of treating a group of sentences (span) rather than individual words. It focuses on surface structure form and relations, and is able to overcome the tendency not to specify the type of relation between elements. This method visually displays the progression and development of the author's thoughts. Independent clauses (presumably the author's main points) are arranged at the left (the margin) while the supporting elements (subordinates) are indented to the right. Consisting of six basic steps, block diagramming offers the exegete a reasonable understanding of the passage, and provides a sure structure for expository preaching. Among the supporters of this methods are Fee (2002:41-58) and Kaiser (1981:149-81)
3. Colon diagramming. The colon diagramming is a correction of the first two methods. It is deeply sensitive to the structure relations. This method considers simple and complex sentences as single cola, and compound sentences of two or more independent clauses as multiple cola. A colon is equivalent to an independent

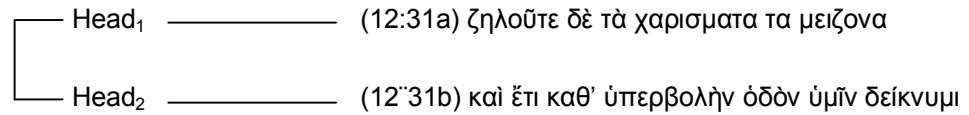
(main) clause with subordinates. Subordinates within a colon are directed by lines pointing to the element they modify. Related cola are grouped together as the paragraph is laid out. The weakness of colon diagramming is that it cannot specify the relationship between the parts and its prominent units (Young 1994:268).

4. Semantic structure analysis (SSA). Concerning this method, Young goes on to say that it is the most suitable one when it comes to diagramming a paragraph with the aim of understanding its meaning. The advantage of the semantic structure analysis is that it rigorously diagrams semantic units and interrelates them at the deep-structure level. This type was developed by members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. In semantic structure analysis, the paragraph is regarded as the unit of analysis because it (a paragraph) is the smallest recognizable and cohesive whole that develops a single theme. It is therefore considered as the basic building block of the discourse and the most practical unit of discourse to diagram (Young 1994:269). This is also the method adopted by Smith (2000:143-217)

The panoramas of these four methods of the literary structure of a biblical text called diagrammatical analysis served to justify the choice of the Semantic structure analysis diagramming as the method in the study of literary structure of 1 Corinthians 13. It shows a broad picture of Paul's thoughts and their relationships, and makes the interpretation of the text easy. 1 Corinthians is organized as follow:

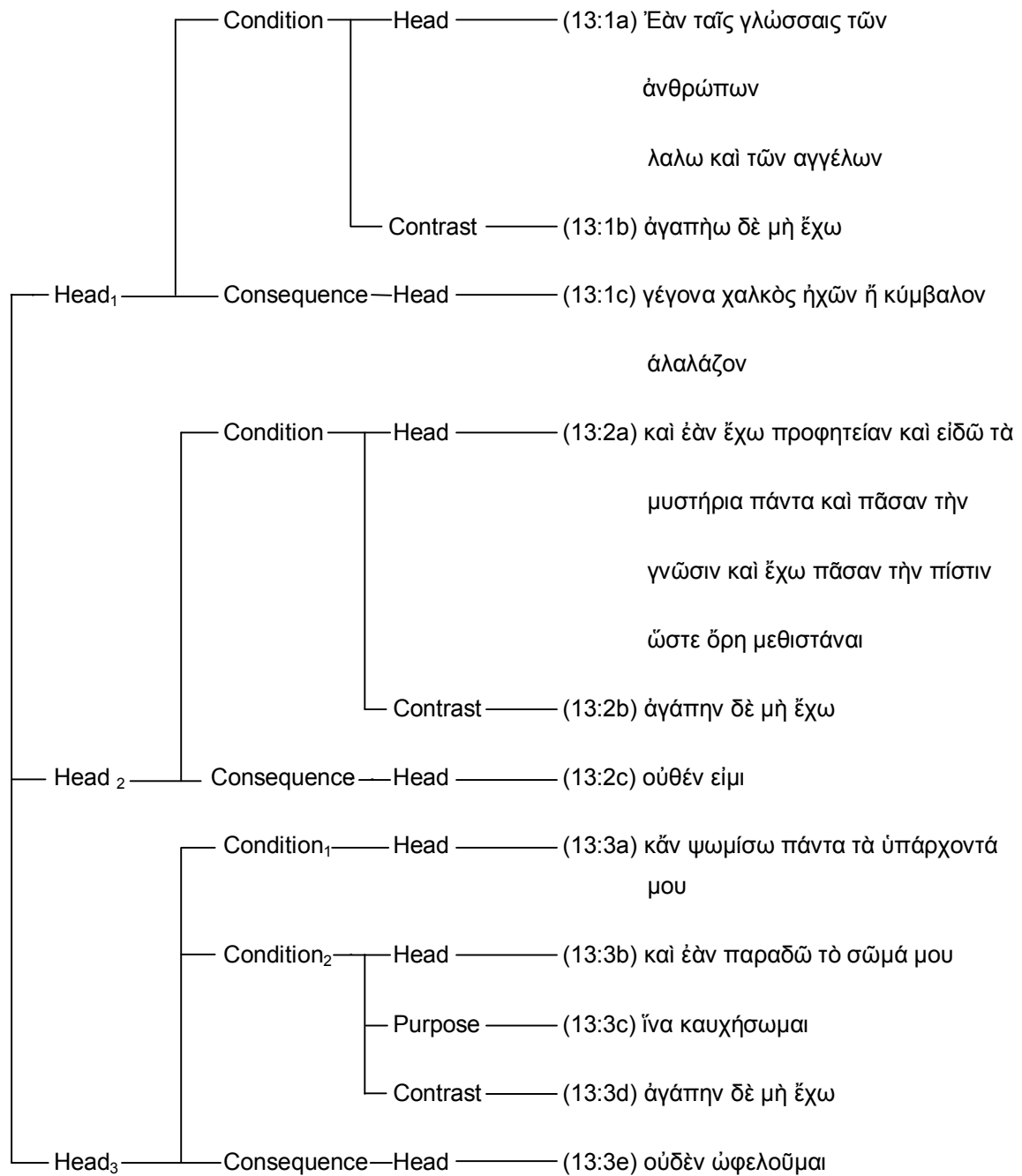
3.2.1.1 Discourse Unit of 1 Corinthians 12:31b

This sentence combines grammatical and semantic considerations. Grammatically, it is a second subordinate of a series of questions Paul asked (vv 29-30). It is linked to the precedent subordinate by the connecting conjunction καὶ. Paul shifted from the imperative to the present (futurist). Semantically, it is marked by a very important feature (a promise) that enhances the statement to draw the auditors' attention to the argument.



3.2.1.3. Discourse Unit of 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

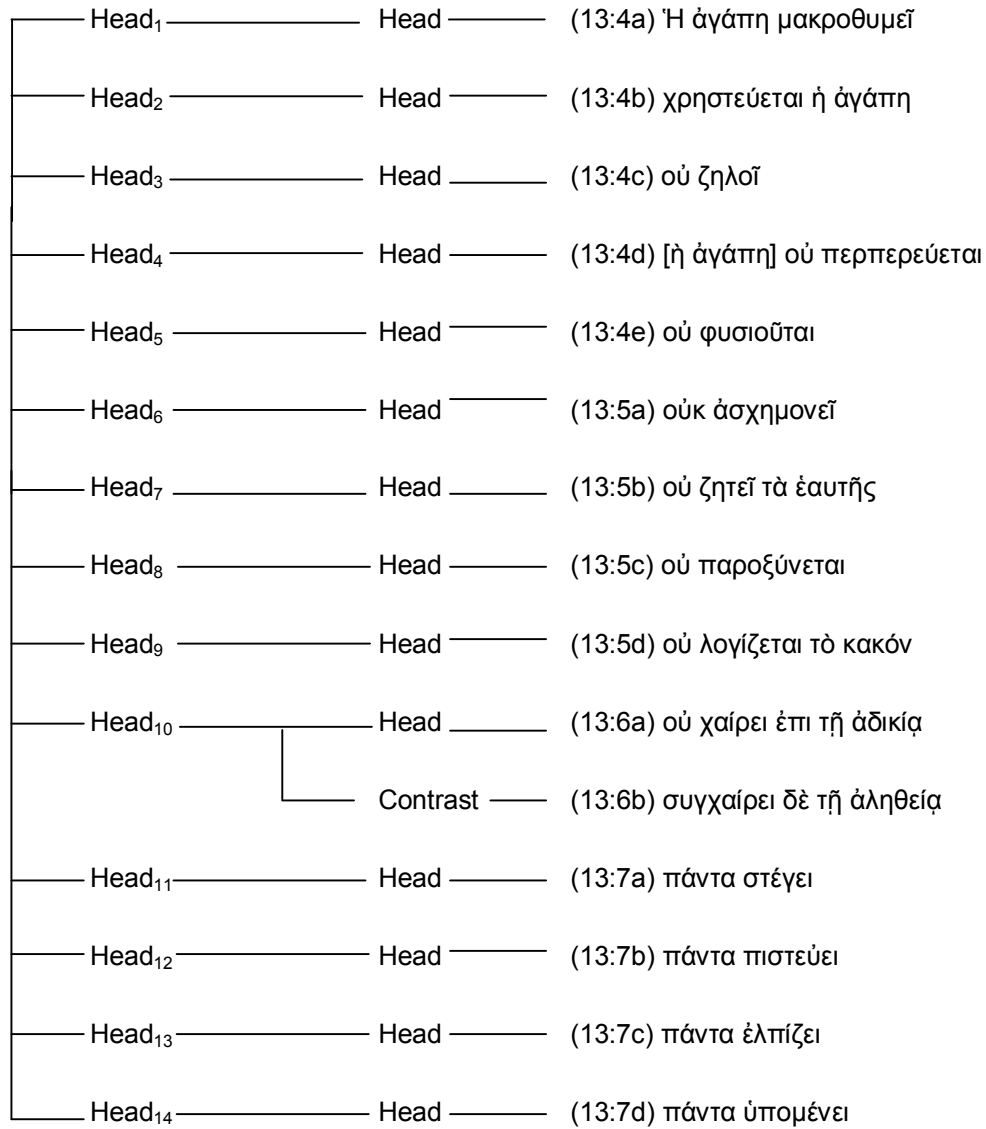
The contradictory statements associated with the rhetorical “I” suggests that the three verses are hypotheses. They show the consequences of having spiritual abilities without love. Grammatically, they are the fifth-class conditions (ἐάν + subjunctive mood any time in the protasis with the present indicative in the apodosis), a class which conditions the fulfillment of what is realized presently. For the most part, there is no indication concerning the chance of the fulfillment of the condition (Wallace 1996:689-97). Contrary to the protases, the apodoses are grammatically independent, but semantically dependent. The key verb in all the verses is to have, used positively or negatively (if I have ... but have not love). The threefold ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω is pivotal in the nullification of gifts. Semantically, with regard to the meaning of the construction (the relation of the protases to the apodosis), the relation is cause-effect.



3.2.1.5. Discourse Unit of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The fifteen verbs form fourteen independent clauses and one subordinate in verse 6. They are a mixture of attributes and actions that characterize love and place it above the spiritual gifts. The use of the negative particle οὐ/ οὐκ means that love is denied envy, pride, arrogance, rudeness, egocentrism or selfishness, provocation, keeping record of wrong and rejoicing in unrighteousness. μακροθυμέω (the first) and ὑπομένω (the last verb) are close in meaning. The idea is to have a positive attitude in supporting others' weaknesses.

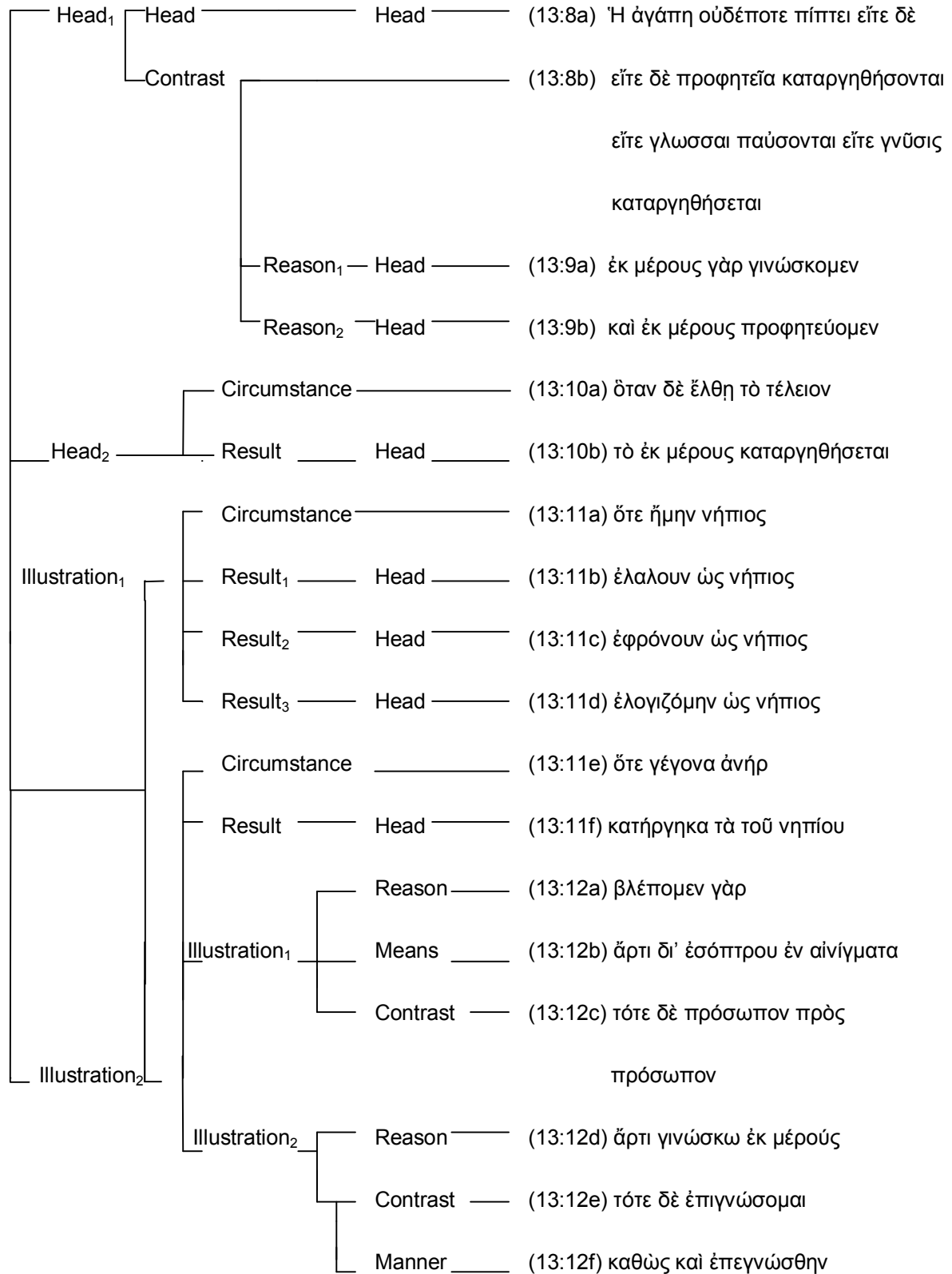
3. 2. 1. 5. *Semantic Structure Analysis of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7*



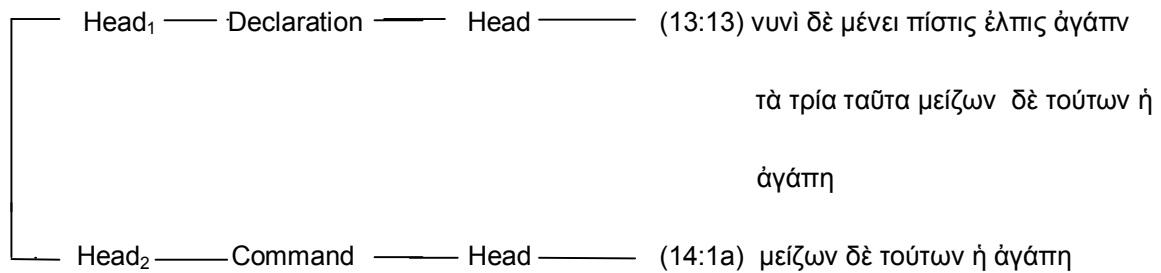
3.2.1.6. *Discourse Unit of 1 Corinthians 13:8-12*

Love appears only once in this section, right in the beginning of the opening verse (v 8) where it functions as the subject of the main clause (ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει). All the clauses that follow are informative. Verses 9, 11 and 12 tell why the gifts are to cease, and not love while verse 10 illustrates the point. Paul describes the state of spiritual gifts by the threefold use of phrase ἐκ μέρους of which is once preceded by the definite article. Concerning their happening, the events described in verses 8, 10 and 12 are expectations.

3. 2. 1. 7. Semantic Structure Analysis of 1 Corinthians 13:8-14:1a



3. 2. 1. 8. *Semantic Structure Analysis of 1 Corinthians 13:8-14:1a*



Verse 13 is a subordinate. It first brings love to its climax, and then introduces it to its end result. Grammatically, the phrase νυνὶ δὲ denotes a conclusion. The semantic uniqueness of chapter 13 is found in this section: 14:1a, an independent and main clause is the only appeal Paul made concerning love in this chapter. Long (2002:956) says that an encomium usually ends with a call to the listeners to act according to what has been said.

1 Corinthians 13 is a masterpiece in which Paul is seen as an artist, a poet and a preacher. Under this threefold role, the author is generally a messenger. More than once throughout his writings, Paul identified himself as an apostle (ἀπόστολος), one sent forth (ἀποστέλω) and a preacher (κήρυξ). Hence the question, “What is the message he conveyed to the Corinthians under the famous theme of love?”

3.2.2. Explanation of the argument

The above diagrams signal how far Paul went his way and the amount of effort he made to set love on such a high level that none of the spiritual gifts can match. The demonstration of the canon of spirituality cannot be well perceived unless its message is expounded. In chapter two I told the reason Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 13, and now, I am going to explain its content.

Though being part and parcel of the spiritual gifts section, chapter 13 is a self-contained unit, which to some extent, deserves to be treated separately. Commonly, under any form and circumstance, a message consists of an introduction, a development, and a conclusion. Above all, one has first to bear in mind that Paul’s concern in the spiritual gifts section was the Corinthians’ ignorance that led to the

abuse. And Dehaan (1995:139) sees 12:1 to be the key to the section, which closes with the very same word (14:38)

Attempting to reform the Corinthians' understanding of spirituality and to correct their use of spiritual abilities in public worship, Paul introduced his message with an exalting interlude (12:31b). He told them that what he was coming to show them was legitimately more desirable than what they were priding themselves with. The statement in 12:31b suggests that Paul places the way (love) above the spiritual gifts (Fee 1987:625). Interestingly, he presents it not as a spiritual gift, but simply as a way. This incites the reader to ask, "What does Paul mean by the way and how is it related to the spiritual gifts?" Love is the way of life, while Brown (1970:368) defines it as "the fundamental way of living in God's design for man". When it comes to the question concerning the relationship between love and the spiritual gifts, Johnson (2004:216-17) said that love was the sphere within which the spiritual gifts had to operate in order to affect God's purposes for His church.

In the body of the message (13:1-3), Paul first demonstrates the excellence of love by speaking of its necessity and its importance. Contrary to his habit, Paul here presents himself as a bad example (Keck et al. 2002:951). He tells the Corinthians that the one who says to have a spiritual gift must also have love. Otherwise, he is empty and the gift worthless. It means, when exercised in love, the gift is profitable to the church as well as to individual. He selects four of them, which he intelligibly illustrates. A person can proud or be praised by men because of spiritual gifts while in reality he is a nobody. As a noisy gong is undesirable, a valueless man subjected to neglect and a looser inestimable, so is a knowable, full of faith, charitable and martyred Paul without love. Schreiner (2001:335) notes that Paul does not debunk spiritual gifts, nor does he say that love should supersede them, but it (love) should govern their use in the assembly of the saints. In short, Paul told the Corinthians that love values the spiritual gifts.

Second (13:4-7), a cameo, Paul set love in a showroom where he publicly exposed its excellence by revealing its characteristics. As Solomon exalted wisdom and personified it (Prov. 8), even so did Paul with ἀγάπη to show that the love he is

speaking about is not a feeling or an attitude.⁹ Through these fifteen descriptive verbs, he told the Corinthians what they were supposed to be, and what not to be, what to do and what to avoid.

All the characteristics enumerated in this section relate to God's, love itself being His nature. The first and the last verbs of this section suggest that Paul also addressed in a particular way those without the attractive gifts. As defined by Thayer (1982:387, 644 and GDAG 2000:612, 1039) μακροθυμεῖ (is patient) in verse 4 and ὑπομένει (endures) in verse 7 connote the acceptance to suffer deprivation, humiliation, and tolerance (without complaint). Through the sentence "love endures all", Bruce (1992:127) sees love's ability to cover all things unworthy instead of exposing them or blazing them abroad. Paul's message through the portrait of love is that the Corinthian Christians must be marked by these characteristics when they gather together.

Third (13:8-12), Paul keeps on providing evidences according to the proposition he made in his introduction. He does nothing else than to demonstrate the excellence of love and now he speaks about its ceaselessness. Paul illustrates his point with the nature (the human growth) and Corinthian custom (the mirror usage), and put love and the spiritual gifts on the scale of time. Then he told the Corinthians that the future favours love and even eternity agrees with it. The moment is coming when the spiritual gifts will decay and loose life while love will still exist. Their obsolescence will not even affect the church. Thiselton (2000:1060) says that the explicit comparison with spiritual gifts now also becomes eschatological and temporal. Most interestingly, Paul rhetorically told the Corinthians that his present knowledge of the mystery of God is partial, and the day is coming when he will know fully.

Lastly (13:13-14:1a), Paul concludes his demonstration on the excellence of love. He first presented two other virtues, which along with love will resist the test of events of time. Faith, hope, and love will not vanish at the coming of the maturity. Unfortunately, despite their longevity, love encompasses them. Love is eternal and always greater. Paul closes his message by giving the Corinthians no other choice than to walk in the way of love.

⁹ The love Paul is speaking about is not something abstract. It is materialized in Christian deeds.

In short, Paul's message in this chapter is, "Corinthians, the same manner the Spirit manifests Himself in you; let it be so with love". This was the only way the Corinthian church had to respond to the goodness of the Holy Spirit instead of grieving Him in their selfishness. God is honoured when His benefits are used in the way He intended them. Though working in individuals, the spiritual gifts are given to the church and for its welfare. Individuals are simply instruments and cannot therefore become masters to the point to proud themselves.

The explanation of the message is not a deviation to the survey of the literary features 1Corinthians 13, but a necessary bridging stage to sense Paul's feelings without which it is impossible to discern the literary devices that will allow to categorise the text. The following stage intends to examine the literary genre of 1 Corinthians 13.

3.3. Literary genre of 1 Corinthians 13

Young (1994:248) defines the literary genre as a "discourse type" characterized by certain grammatical, structural, and lexical features by means of which a message is communicated and its meaning and purpose understood.

The literary genre of 1 Corinthians 13 ceaselessly attracts scholars who know Paul as a skilful writer, and see him at the apex of his career. After speaking about Stanley's imagination of the countenance of Paul's secretary due to the sudden change in style of his dictation, and of Harnack's description of 1 Corinthians 13, Robertson and Plummer (1958:258) witness to the high standard of the writing style of this chapter in these terms, "Writer after writer has expiated upon its literary and its rhythmical beauty, which places it among the finest passages in the sacred, or, indeed in any writings". Concerning Paul's shift in style, Long et al. (2002:951) said that the rhetorical handbooks that saw such a change of pace and concentration as powerful way of focusing the audience attention. Another scholar who acknowledged the beauty of this chapter is MacArthur (1984:50). He admirably wrote that 1 Corinthians 13 is the greatest passage Paul ever wrote. I already mentioned Scott's recognition of the greatness of the literature and the grandeur of the language of 1 Corinthians 13 in 2.10. Johnson (2004:239-40) quoted two other scholars who also acknowledged the excellence of this chapter. The first, Adolf van Harnack called it

the greatest, strongest, deepest thing Paul ever wrote. The second, Ralph P. Martin, suggested that 1 Corinthians 13 is in a class by itself in Pauline literature.

Referring to Robertson and Plumber's (1958:258) statement, I assuredly assert that apart from their inspirational aspect, the books of the Bible have been written in common and popular literary styles. Kuen (1991:192) wrote that taking in account the aesthetical need that is in us, God gave us His word in beautiful aspect that have to contribute to our joy while it communicates important truths about Himself and us. Richards (2004:125) even said that the fact that Paul wrote in the language of the common man of his day is a principle we have to remember. Considering the influence of the literary genre in the interpretation of the Scriptures, this section will address Paul's writing style in 1 Corinthians 13. It is in that way that the study can bring out the distinctive features of this chapter.

Although the study of the literary genre of 1 Corinthians 13 is a long-standing undertaking, views still differ whether the chapter is a hymn, an encomium, a diatribe, an epideictic, an instruction (cf. 1 Cor. 14:1), a psalm, or a poem. Such a divergence of opinions opens the way to a further discussion on the subject.

The line of demarcation between hymn and poem is finely drawn, but can be distinguished even though both forms intertwine. In his differentiation between hymn and other forms, Kasemann (1991:88-100) says that 1 Corinthians 13 is not a hymn, which is a song that focuses on God and Christ and praises some aspect of divine nature or activity. Guthrie classifies 1 Corinthians 13 neither as a hymn, nor as parenesis (exhortation). The five criteria enumerated by Stauffer (in Fee 1995:24-5) exclude 1 Corinthians 13 as a hymn. Stauffer goes on to say that the detection of hymnic forms in the literature of the New Testament is a product of recent scholarly works, including the results of an analysis of the literary features, which are present in the documents. Corley, Lemeke, and Lovejoy (2002:39) confirmed that scholars are continually seeking to detect hymns and traditional material in the Paul's corpus. Portions containing hymns (Eph. 5:14; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15-20; 1 Tim.3:16) and traditional materials (Rom. 3:1-4; 3:24-26; 4:25; 10:9; Gal.1:4) have been identified in Paul's writings. The above examples are only few of the numerous passages that are so designed. They concluded their argument by referring on 1 Corinthians 11:23-

26 and 15:1ff. So, 1 Corinthians 13 is not a hymn or a song, but Stott (1993:225) said that the chapter is a magnificent song of Christian love.

1 Corinthians 13 is not a diatribe either. Richards (2004:137-38) says that the modern discussion of this common oratorical device began in the late 1800s among the German classical scholarship. The practice originated in the classroom where teachers used it to provoke learning. It is characterized by a conversational nature, consisting of anticipation by the communicator of a possible objection or response to his argument, and puts the question or objection in the student's words and responds to it (the use of an imaginary dialogue partner). Richards asserted that the purpose of the diatribe was not a technical discourse but rather for preaching, to persuade the listeners to some philosophical or moral position. Cousar (1996: 42) quoted Bultmann (a German scholar) who, in his doctoral dissertation, argued that the diatribe was a form of mass propaganda used by the wandering Cynic street preachers to convince the common man.

1 Corinthians 13 is neither a psalm, though Robertson and Plummer (1958:285) called it so, nor an instruction. Fleming (2004:360), Fee and Stuart (1993:187) define psalm as Hebrew hymn of praise to God or a prayer. They are means of self-expression to God and of consideration of his ways. This argument sets aside the hypothesis of considering 1 Corinthians 13 as a psalm. Smit (1991:193) says that Weiss didn't hesitate to reject the qualifications attributed to 1 Corinthians 13 as psalm, hymn and prayer. The text is not instructive because Paul's desire for the Corinthians to embrace love is not expressed in form of injunctions, by the use of the imperative mood or the imperatival future except 14:1a where there is only one verb (διώκετε) in present active imperative. For this reason, the remaining three apply to 1 Corinthians 13.

3.3.1. 1 Corinthians 13 as encomium

Having already defined the term in the previous chapter, here I will directly demonstrate why 1 Corinthians 13 is called so. Scholars such as Hendricks H. G and Hendricks W. D (1991:217), Keck et al. (2002:951), and Morris (2000:176) agree that 1 Corinthians 13 is an encomium or a praise of love. The question concerning

the way Paul honoured love in 1 Corinthians 13 will be satisfactorily answered by re-examining the text.

The introductory sentence (12:31b) suggests that Paul exalted love. He said that love is an immeasurable way, a way of outstanding quality; a way that surpasses all others, including the spiritual gifts. According to him, love is matchless, the top.¹⁰

The next three verses (13:1-3) are very impressive. Paul is categorical; no spiritual gifts are valuable and profitable when exercised independently from love. As salt values meat and makes it enjoyable, so does love to spiritual gifts (only sick people eat unsalted meat). Thiselton (2000:1032) said, "without love, all gifts are fruitless". When spiritual gifts move, on the driving seat is love. For Paul, love is that something without which everything else is nothing, and which would be all sufficient, even if it were alone. Without having love, one would produce nothing, be nothing, and gain nothing (Robertson and Plummer 1958:286-287).

Fifteen verbs (13:4-7) have been selected with purpose to uplift love. Ellsworth (1995:213) pointed out that the list of characteristics pretty well covers every area of life and they are nothing less than a composite of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. As for Paul, love has only qualities. He meant here that love is blameless and pure. Since there is nothing such in the world, love has no equal. Considering love as the umbrella of the fruit of the Spirit, in a comparative study of Galatians 5:22-23 with 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, Keller (1979:86-7) saw love as the finding form of the nine facets of the fruit of the Spirit. Keck et al. (2002:953) say that an encomium of virtue depicts its characteristics and its functions. Paul's assertions establish love as the context in which the difficulties and the trials of life are met.

Later on Paul says that love is everlasting (13:8-12). While spiritual gifts will come to an end in the future, nothing will stop love to exist. Love will see them all ceasing whether one after another or all at the same time. Paul assuredly asserts that love is eternal. No event has power over love at any time. Love is placed on the top, the pinnacle of the spiritual empowerment edifice. Paul could have added, "Love resists all, Love defeats all". In his overview of the spiritual gifts section, Keck et al.

¹⁰ Soards (1999:276) argues that despite the use of hyperbole, the language here is not extravagant exaggeration.

(2002:951) says that though not explicitly identified as a charisma, or gift, chapter 13, extols love and thereby sets the stage for its specific application in chapter 14.

Lastly, in his conclusion (13:13-14:1a) Paul introduces to the Corinthians three abiding virtues of which love is declared to be the greatest. Robertson and Plummer (1958:301) advocated that love is greater than hope and faith because it is the root of both and also, faith and hope are purely human while love is divine.¹¹

The level Paul to which exalted love is seen not only through its description, but also through its appearances (9 times in 12:31b-14:1a). This eulogy proves the goodness of love as Aristotle (1952:604) wrote, "That which is praised is good, since no one praises what is not good". Decided to finish the work he has started, Paul resorted to the famous literary style of his day.

3.3.2. 1 Corinthians 13 as epideictic rhetoric

Since the early days when men started to communicate through written messages, there never existed a standard writing style. The style of a letter is generally determined by its purpose. A letter of congratulations for instance differs from that of condolences, and a letter to a pastor, requesting the conduct of a wedding differs from that of resignation from an office. Even within a letter, chapters differ from one another, and in itself a chapter can be heterogeneous.

In ancient time, public speeches requested a special way of expressing ideas, the speaker's primary goal being to influence his audience. The fact that Paul's letters were to be read in corporate gatherings, they substituted for him in addressing physically a given congregation. Paul strongly claimed in this epistle that he did not come to Corinth to display cleverness through eloquent speech (1 Cor.1:17; 2:1-3), which would extract the essence of the message of the cross. He despised such speech and called it human wisdom. Observers expected him to keep his word in the exercise of his ministry whether in speech or in writing.

The literary quality of 1 Corinthians 13 is so impressive that it necessitate a deeper examination. So, this study intends to investigate the assertions of recent scholars

¹¹ The Bible never explicitly connected hope and faith to God as it does with love as a verb.

who say that Paul didn't resist the temptation of displaying knowledge by the use of the scholarly writing style of his epoch. They have noticed his letters following the pattern of Greek rhetoric. Witherington (1995:46) is sure of the epideictic character of 1 Corinthians 13 and agreed with Kennedy and Berger who understood Paul's letters primarily as rhetorical speeches. The epistolary form appears only in the opening and in the closing. While emphasising rhetoric, Betz and Mitchell (in the Anchor Bible Dictionary 1996:1146) favoured more the epistolary forms. Thiselton (2000:46-49) said that Bunker and Thuren applied both categories to different level of the exploration in complementary ways, and that Norden wrote two major and influential works, which were ambivalent about Paul's rhetoric. According to him, Paul's writing style especially the rhetoric didn't reach the literary standard of his day. He saw some basic features such as figurative, poetic, and rhythmic largely lacking in Paul.

Referring to 1 Corinthians 9:19-22, Witherington (1995:46) said that Paul used the conventions of rhetoric and thus sought by all means to win people to Christ. Cousar (1996:37) states firmly that Paul's letters were highly rhetorical since they were purposefully written to affect actions and thoughts of audiences. Corley, Lemki, and Lovejoy (2002:342) argue that Paul adopted certain rhetorical strategies that were common in his time because his letters were written to be heard rather than read, though their later statement on the presence of many New Testament letters that do not follow the rhetorical pattern does not give details. Fee (2002:17) warned the exegete, while dealing with Paul's letters, to beware of rhetorical devices. These assertions compel us to ask, how rhetorical and epistolary were Paul's letters? Unfortunately, I cannot presently answer the question because this study is limited to 1 Corinthians 13. I would like before to explore the rhetoric as used in the Greco-Roman culture, particularly in Paul's day.

Rhetoric is an old art, predating the Christian era. When Corinth was rebuilt by Julius Caesar (c. 44 BC.), who renamed it Laus Julia Corinthensis (Colony of Corinth in honour of Julius), the city became eminent in commerce and wealth, in literature and arts, especially the study of rhetoric and philosophy (Thayer 1982:352). But, long before Thayer, Gramacki (1974:200) said that Corinth never became a learning centre. Long et al. (2002:784) quotes Demetrius of Phalerum (contemporary of Aristotle) who, about 4th century BC, spoke of three devices as the only options in

the use of rhetoric. Keck et al. (2002:783) and Cousar (1996:37) say that in Paul's day, rhetoric was a primary subject taught in the secondary schools. It is not ascertained whether or not Paul had studied it. If he didn't, he could possibly have gained access to it through manuals in common circulation.

Originally, the teaching of rhetoric had to do with speech making. It comprised the choice of topics and proofs, the arrangement of the outline of the speech, and the handling of the material in composition, on the one hand, and the memorization of the speech, and the appropriate gestures and strategies in delivery, on the other (Cousar 1996:38). Then Aristotle (1952:594) added that in its strict sense, rhetorical study is concerned with the modes of persuasion, which are clearly a sort of demonstration, since we are most fully persuaded when we consider a thing to have been demonstrated. The speaker's demonstration is in general the most effective of the modes of persuasion. As a subject, rhetoric has components that I am now going to survey to find out which ones, if any, are evident in 1 Corinthians 13, since Paul used a variety of arguments to persuade his readers to adopt his perspective (Corley, Lemeke, and Lovejoy 2002:342).

About the subject itself, Aristotle (1952:587) wrote: "Rhetoric is the counterpart (ἀντιστροφος) of dialectic. It is a subject that can be treated systematically. The argumentative modes of persuasion (πίστεις) are the essence of the art of rhetoric: appeals to the emotions wrap the judgment. Argumentative persuasive (πίστις) is a sort of demonstration (ἀπόδειξις), and the rhetorical form of demonstration is the enthymeme (ἐνθύμημα)".

In short, Aristotle meant that rhetoric is analogous to the Socratic and Platonic method that consists of discussing and reasoning by dialogue as a method of intellectual investigation, that aims at exposing false beliefs and eliciting the truth, after an argument has been proven.

Every communication involves three components: a speaker or writer, a subject (item), and an addressee/s (listener/s). Nida (1984:2) named them, "the source, the message, and the receptor". Aristotle (1952:598-599), Cousar (1996:40), Corley, Lemeke, and Lovejoy (2002:342-3), Long et al. (2002:783-4) and Smit (1991:194) agree that the three categories of listeners to the speech determine the three

divisions of rhetoric. So, the three species of argument also called kinds of rhetoric or elements in speech making in Paul's day are enumerated and explained by the above scholars as follows:

1. *Judicial rhetoric* or judicial plea (genus iudiciale; γένος δικανικόν)¹² or forensic (legal) is the language of the court law. It consists of convincing the audience concerning the rightness or the wrongness of a past action. Since men are naturally inclined to discuss statements and to maintain them, to defend themselves and to attack others, this kind of rhetoric is used by parties in conflict.

2. *Deliberative rhetoric* or political speaking (genus deliberativum: γένος συμβουλευτικόν). Is the speech adopted in political assembly where the speaker seeks to convince the audience by telling them that it is in their best interests to take a particular action in the future.

3. *Epidictic rhetoric* or ceremonial oratory (genus demonstrativum; γένος ἐπιδεικτικόν) is used in public gathering, such as such as official commemorations and festivities, when by means of praise or blame of common values and ideals, listeners are urged to adopt a current standard of evaluation in the present.

With regard to times and aims, Aristotle (in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1952 vol.2:598) tells that the judicial rhetoric is concerned with the past. It aims at establishing the justice or injustice of an action. The parties in a law-case also bring all other points related to this one. The deliberative rhetoric is concerned with the future. It aims at establishing the expediency or the harmfulness of the proposed action. Whether he urges its acceptance or its rejection, he does it based on its good or bad effects in the future. And the epideictic rhetoric deals with the present, since we praise or blame the things that exist presently, though the past may be recalled and the future in view. It aims at proving the one who is praised or blamed to be worthy of honour or the opposite. And they also treat all other considerations with reference to this one.

From the above data the question about the type of rhetoric which 1 Corinthians 13 belongs to can be now accurately answered. It is clear that of the three kinds, the

¹² The Latin and Greek equivalents are exclusively from Smit (1991).

first two (the judicial and the deliberative speeches) are far removed from 1 Corinthians 13 because they don't relate to it. The parallelism between the three species established by Smit (1991:197) helps to align 1 Corinthians 13 with the epideictic rhetoric. The parallelism states that judicial and deliberative speeches try in disputed causes to persuade the listeners through arguments, whereas the epideictic speech aims at amplifying the positive or negative estimation of the public, and strives to attain this by pleasing and entertaining the audience.

It would be unfair to classify an encomium under a rhetorical device other than the epideictic, which it is an example (Cousar 1996:40-41). Paul dealt with something that is real and does not need a repost from the audience. He stirred up the hearts of Corinthians to cause them to follow the way that is above all others by honouring love, a virtue long neglected to the detriment of spiritual gifts. The Christian leaders used to honour common values and people who are worthy of imitation. The Apostolic Father Clement, for instance, in his epistle to the Corinthians, blamed envy and jealousy and praised Abraham (in Holmes 1999:35-39). Moreover, Holmes (1999:24) asserts that Clement intended his letter to be a symbouleutic or deliberative one, and that a thorough examination proves that the epistle conforms to this category. Epideictic rhetoric is an interesting and intelligent way to incite the hearers to accept the orator's opinion and act accordingly.

Jean de La Fontaine (1668:np), the most famous French fabulist and one of the most widely read French poets of the seventeenth century, penned an interesting story that shows the end result of the epideictic rhetoric. He told how the fox deceived the raven to get the piece of cheese he was holding in his beak. The fox first praised the raven and in order to provoke it to talk. The fox said to the raven, "If your warbling is as beautiful as your feathers, you are the most beautiful phoenix of the forest". Flattered, the raven opened its mouth and the cheese fell. The animal seized the cheese and walked away. The fox taught the raven a very important lesson that has become a saying in French: "Every flatterer lives on the expense of the one who listens to him". The same applies to rhetorician; whoever gives ear to his discourse runs the risk of being persuaded.

1 Corinthians 13 confirms Paul's knowledge of the renowned and cherished Hellenic discipline and his expertise in letter writing. In the light of the above, I am tempted to

ask, “Is 1 Corinthians 2:1 a way for Paul to avoid critics on his poor rhetoric?” Though the subject is no longer famous in our day, and rarely mentioned among the educated, rhetoric remains an important discipline for public speakers including ministers of God’s word. Doesn’t 2 Peter 1:5 urge us to add to faith virtue, to virtue knowledge? Rhetoric is part of that knowledge. However, the epideictic rhetoric is not the only literary feature that shapes 1 Corinthians 13 as the next chapter will show it.

Chapter 4: Poetic Artistry of 1 Corinthians 13

This chapter intends to present a macroscopic view of the poetic artistry of 1 Corinthians 13. Scroggie (1940:105) wrote, “Very much of what passes for prose in the Scriptures is in reality poetry. Robinson (2001:69) adds that even sections we ordinarily think of as prose contain a large amount of poetry. This is true of large portions of the prophetic writings, and parts of the gospel and of the epistles”. Though they did not indicate the books. McCartney and Clayton (2002:231) say that though we have no poetic books in the NT, there are several poetic portions. Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard (2004:273) acknowledge the presence of poetry in the New Testament. The above scholars assertions were confirmed by Robertson and Plummer (1958:292), Smit (1991:204-5), Kasemann (1991:88) and Hedrick (1994:39-214). Hedrick (1994:60) saw Jesus’ stories to be poetic fictions. He artistically treated them and showed that they are as such. Nevertheless, Kaiser (1981:228) observed that “no New Testament book¹³ can be identified as poetical”. Concerning 1 Corinthians 13, along with Robertson and Plummer, and Smit, Fee (1987:628), together with many others scholars such as MacArthur (1984:50), Blomberg (1994:261), Guthrie (1996:38), and Barnett (2004:242) have attested its poetic nature.

Much literature on the literary genre of 1 Corinthians 13 has not fully done justice to the chapter because it has not explored its poetic aspect. Asserting a truth is good, but to making it a priority by proving its truthfulness is of crucial importance. Nevertheless, such a failure¹⁴ should not be a reason to question the poetic nature of the chapter, or to silence the problem, but a stimulus to a thorough examination of the original text through artistic lenses. It is undoubtedly a time consuming undertaking but it cannot be escaped because intellectual honesty compels. The

¹³ There is agreement among scholars concerning the non-existence of poetic books in the NT, and about the existence of poetic piece of writings there and there.

¹⁴ The term failure here is not used to mean that none of the cited scholars has examined the poetic aspect of 1 Corinthians 13, but rather in terms of ratio of their number to the publications. Up to this point, very few materials have been written on this subject.

problem on the other part is the comparison of the features of the style which are typical to the encomium and epideictic rhetoric with those exhibited by 1 Corinthians 12:31b-14: 1a. The better way to proceed in the study of the poetic style of this multifaceted literature is before all to determine the degree of its artistic genius.

4. 1. Prose and poetry in 1 Corinthians 13

The line that distinguishes prose from poetry is extremely thin. However, it is noticeable that 1 Corinthians 13 is stylistically heterogeneous. Like the acknowledged poetic biblical texts, the chapter is a mixture of prose sections and poetic speeches. Poetry differs from prose in the organization of rhyme. Ryken (200:159) provides us with two important distinctive features of poetry. They are: "its reliance on images and figures of speech" and its verse form".

4.1.1. Prose expansion

Vine and Shaddix (1999:100) say of prose as the normal speech of humankind.

The expansion of prose in 1 Corinthians 13 is based on the argument itself which derives from the situation in the Corinthian church. Paul used the most popular literary form in the Greco-Roman culture to direct the Corinthian believers to the excellent way he proposed to them. Verse 12:31 belongs to chapter 12 even though it serves as prelude and introduction to chapter 13. The verse inherits its style from chapter 12. As the style of chapter 12 is constantly prosaic, it follows that the style of 12:31b is also prosaic. Since there is no intermediate stylistic determiner that can be used, Paul had no choice than to carry on with prose but to introduce the change in the next section, which in fact appears to be sudden and brutal.

Another part that contains prose is 13:12–14:1a. The argument has already reached its climax. Paul has taken enough time, and has used suitable terms to demonstrate the excellence of the way by exposing its necessity and characteristics in an artistic manner. He then illustrated the point using the human growth metaphor similar to that of 12:14-27 to bring out irrefutable proof concerning the fate of spiritual gifts at the coming of the mature. Paul now found it no more important to make an appeal to emotions. He was convinced that the subject has been sufficiently and perfectly

developed to persuade even the most stiff-necked Corinthian that now they are ready to set their hearts into the way.

This is tantamount to saying that the introduction and the conclusion of 1 Corinthians 13 are prose and that the body is not. Hence the *raison d'être* of the following point.

4.1.2. Poetry development

The above argument served to suggest that the style of 1 Corinthians 13 is undoubtedly poetic. On one hand, Aristotle (9.9) had to view poetry as an invention or a plot (μῦθος). Watts (1970:24) adds that poetry could have been appropriately related to these stories of the very early stages. So, fitting in this category, 1 Corinthians 13, which is not a story, would be hard to believe. On the other hand, providing a principle to which they added no exception, Hayes and Holladay (2007:100) stated that the language of a text whose mood is liturgical should be read as poetic. 1 Corinthians 13 is the framework within which the spiritual gifts have to operate in the church gathering meant to set order at the public church worship through the proper use of spiritual gifts.

So, there is no better way to clear away any doubts that hang upon this assertion than to give back to the text its original form. But before I get there, I have thought that it is necessary to examine the specific components, which characterize the poetic style.

4.2. Figures of speech in 1 Corinthians 13

Poetic texts are full of images, rhythms, and various artistic procedures that make them real works of art. The art consists of expressing one thing through another. In poetry, images, symbols, and figures of speech play the same role than colour in painting. Ryken (2000:159) interestingly exemplified the figure of speech in poetry with godliness. He said we might get in the NT epistles for instance text that explains godliness and somewhere else, a historical narrative or a story about character displaying godliness, but a poet represents godliness through image or picture.

“A figure of speech is a form of expression used to convey meaning or heighten effect often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a meaning or connotation familiar to the reader or listener” Sally (1981:424). The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* 2000:436) defines it as “a word or phrase used in a different way from its usual meaning in order to create a particular mental image or effect”. The latter definition seems to be more concise, incorporating the key components of poetry: creation, mind and image. Zuck (1996:102) says that the figures of speech form the third level of the multiple senses of meaning, following the primary or most common meaning and the secondary or less common uses of the semantic range.

Biblical writers have incorporated many figurative expressions in their works. They are purposefully used to add richness to the statements, especially when they are used as illustrations. The importance of examining the figurative language of 1 Corinthians 13 will become evident when one interprets the text. A literal interpretation of the language of imagination will result in bizarre conclusions that could distort the message of the text and obscure its beauty. An interpretation of the meaning of the text cannot be achieved until the figurative language has been isolated and appropriately interpreted.

The language of 1 Corinthians 13 is largely figurative, as it is shown in the following illustrations:

1. *Hyperbole*. According to Zuck’s (1996:105-11) classification, the hyperbole is a figure of addition or fullness of expression. It is a conscious exaggeration or overstatement in order to drive home a truth. In other words, in hyperbole, the statement says more than what it means (Scroggie 1948:25). In 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Paul rhetorically speaks of himself speaking tongues of men and angels, having the gifts of prophecies, all knowledge and faith that can remove mountains, distributing his belonging to feed the needy, and handing himself over to be martyred. He appears to be unrealistic. Even in the climax of his spiritual life, Paul never displayed spiritual gifts and zeal to such a degree; the repetitive condition gives the hint. Referring to the Jew and Greek milieus, Smit (1991:200) saw the

expression to move the mountains as Paul's hyperbolic presentation of the *charismata*.¹⁵

2. *Metaphor*. A metaphor is a standard figure of speech implying a more direct comparison. Literally, the word metaphor (μεταφέρειν) means "to carry over" or "to transfer", but it does not mean what it says (Hedrick 1994:97). Contrary to the simile, the metaphor carries the comparison without the prepositions "like" or "as". Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else.¹⁶ In this chapter, Paul used metaphor three times (the comparison is apparent in verse 1 and 2 because of the use of the static verb in the apodoses. He first compared the speaker in tongues (without love) with a noisy gong (v. 1), then the miracle doer with nullity (v. 2). Contrary to verses 1 and 2, in verse 3 Paul preferred to use a verb of action. He could have said, "I am a loser". All the three constituents of figures of comparison are found in all the three cases: the topic (I in all the three verses), the point of comparison (am [gain]), and the image (noisy brass or a clanging cymbal/nothing/[loser]).

3. *Personification*. A figure stressing the personal dimension. Personification is common in the Bible, especially in the Hebrew poetry where it is frequently used to describe wisdom in Proverbs (1:20-33; 2:10-22; 7:4; 8:1-36; 9:1-6). It consists of attributing qualities, words or actions to an inanimate or abstract object in order to represent them as a person (Zuck 1996:111; Scroggie 1948:25) (Ps. 98:7-8; 148:4). 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 13 describes love not only as something palpable but also as a perfect human being whom the Corinthians should look at and then imitate. Robertson and Plummer (1958:292) notice that Paul usually used this figure of speech. He personified Sin, Death,¹⁷ and Law in Romans.

¹⁵ Smit first of all considers the expression as "grotesque metaphor" that Paul has purposefully used to empower his hyperbolic presentation of the gifts of miracle which is indicated by the repetition of "all".

¹⁶ Aristotle. Poetics. 21-22

¹⁷ Another personification of death by Paul is in 1 Corinthians 15:55, a quote of Hosea 13:14.

4. *Antithesis*. Antithesis is a figure of speech in which two elements are in opposition or contrast each other. In the ancient world, placing emphasis upon the relationship between antithetical statements was an important aspect in communication (Black 1987:183). In 13:6, two characteristics are in such position. Paul says that love does not rejoice in evil, but rejoices in truth. The opposition of the verbs χαίρει and συγχαίρει by the negation particle οὐ before the first verb, results in that of their objects: evil (ἀδικία) and truth (ἀλήθεια).¹⁸ However, if Black's definition is applied strictly to 1 Corinthians 13, then half of the chapter (vv. 4-8) should be regarded as antithetical. This is because these verses incorporate a series of contrasts in which the characteristics of love are set over against the impermanence of the spiritual gifts. In other words, Paul defined love through comparing opposites.

It can also be said that Paul used here the litotes, a figure of speech that consists of affirming something by denying its opposite (Kuen 1991:81).

5. *Ellipsis*. The *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1981:366) defines the ellipsis as the omission of one or more words that are obviously understood but that must be supplied to make a construction grammatically complete. Sally (2000:376) specifies that the omission is deliberate. As for Zuck (1996:109), the supplied information may relate to what has been previously said in context (repetitional ellipsis) or may not (nonrepetitional ellipsis). The phrase "But then face to face" (τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον) in verse 12b (repetitional ellipsis) can only make sense when read in the light of "For now we see through a mirror in an obscure image" (βλέπομεν ἄρτι δι' ἑσόπτρου). So, the information to be supplied is "we see" (βλέπομεν) in the future tense "we will see" (ὄψομεθα) because of the temporal markers "now" (ἄρτι) in the main clause and "then" (τότε) in the subordinate or the half to be fixed.

Ellipsis is frequently used in lyric poetry, where for verbal economic reason, some elements of the discourse are absent. In order to assimilate the poem, the interpreter is requested to read actively and meditate thoughtfully the text, being compelled to

¹⁸ Paul's description produces first an asymmetrical design by the objects of both halves, then a symmetrical one by the negation of the first half. By doing so, he gives a balanced image of love.

use both logical analysis and intuition to ascertain the combination and the significance of the terms (Estes 1995:425).

6. *Paronomasia*. This is one of the five figures of addition or fullness of expression.¹⁹ The words in this figure are chosen for similarity of sound and are placed side-by-side for emphasis (Zuck 1996:108). Paronomasia is in fact a play of words. The only instance in 1 Corinthians 13, the phrase “πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον” (v. 12), is once again the example. This expression occurs only here in the New Testament and twice in the LXX (Gen. 32:30; Judg. 6:22).

7. *Homœopropheron* or *alliteration*. This figure is seen only in original languages. It is a repetition of the same letter or syllable at the beginning of two or more words in close succession (Bulliner 1968:171). The phrase “πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον” is a clear example for this study.

8. *Epanalepsis* or *resumption*. According to Bulliner (1968:206), this figure implies a writer’s return to a subject after a break. Paul implicitly speaks of love from verse 1 to 4, he breaks from verse 5 to 7, and comes again to the matter latter on in verse 8, departs from it from verse 9 to 12, to return in verses 13 and 14:1

Those are the figures of speech Paul used to embellish 1 Corinthians 12:31b-14:1a and to bring home the points. They are the essential elements in the style of the text, which form the central part of Paul’s exposition of the spiritual gifts.

Figures of speech are not exclusively utilized in poetry. They are also in used prose. The particularities of a poem are found in words grouping, on how the sounds are combined to add a special kind of melody to the text even though it will seem not to make sense at glance.

4.3. Poetical structure of 1 Corinthians 13

When one understands the poetical structure of 1 Corinthians 13, he/she will be able to follow the thread of Paul’s thought and easily recognize the transition from section

¹⁹ In addition to the Paronomasia and the Hyperbole, Zuck lists the Pleonasm, the Epizeuxis, and the Hendiadys in the category of the figures of addition or fullness of expression. Having sufficiently explained each of them with appropriate biblical examples.

to section. He/she will also understand how the writer endeavored to apportion the attention paid to love, so as to have an appreciation for the message the text conveys. Even though Paul is not a professional poet, there are various patterns within the text. He sometimes took delight in certain arrangements and repetitions of words and sounds as well as a stylistic play of words.

The following structure excludes the prose sections (introduction: 12:31b and the conclusion: 13:13-14:1a).

4.3.1. The Poetics of the Argument

Longman (1987:121) says “that poetry is easily recognizable because the lines are short... the length of the sentences is sensibly equal, often linked by semantic or grammatical repetitions”. Estes (1995:425) gives this important advice to the reader of poetry as follow:

To read poetry well, one must detect how the poet has arranged the words to imply the message. The laws of composition are patterns characteristically used to great effect in poetry. Therefore understanding poetry requires skill not only in discerning what the sound, denotation, and connotations of the individual words contribute, but also in discovering the intricate ways in which the poet combined the words to imply the meaning.

In this section I will divide the argument into appropriate periods and clauses or lines. The goal is to determine what the poetics of the text imply for the reading of the argument.

PERIOD I

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαλῶ | If I speak in the tongues of men |
| 2 καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων | and of the angels |
| 3 ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω | but I do not have love |
| 4 γέγονα χαλκὸς ἤχῳ ἢ κύμβαλον ἀλαλάζον | I am a noisy brass or a clanging cymbal |

PERIOD II

1	καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω προφητείαν	and if I have the gift of prophecy
2	καὶ εἰδῶ τὰ μυστήρια πάντα	and understand all mysteries
3	καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γνῶσιν	and all knowledge
4	καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω πᾶσαν τὴν πίστιν	and if I have all faith
5	ὥστε ὄρη μεθιστάναι	so as to remove mountains
6	ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω	but I do not have love
7	οὐθέν εἰμι	I am nothing

PERIOD III

1	κἂν ψωμίσω πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου	and if I give all my possessions to feed to the poor
2	καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου	and if I deliver my body to be burned
3	ἵνα καυχῆσωμαι	to be burned
4	ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω	but I do not have love
5	οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι	I gain nothing

PERIOD IV

1	Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ	Love is patient
2	χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη	love is kind
3	οὐ ζηλοῖ	love does not envy
4	[ἡ ἀγάπη] οὐ περπερεύεται	love does not boast
5	οὐ φυσιοῦται	love is not puffed up

PERIOD V

1	οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ	love does not act unbecomingly
2	οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς	love does not pursue things for itself
3	οὐ παροξύνεται	it is not provoked
4	οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν	it keeps no record of evil

PERIOD VI

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ | love does not rejoice in evil |
| 2 | συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ | but rejoices in the truth |

PERIOD VII

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | πάντα στέγει | love covers all things |
| 2 | πάντα πιστεύει | believes all things |
| 3 | πάντα ἐλπίζει | hopes all things |
| 4 | πάντα ὑπομένει ²⁰ | endures all things |

PERIOD VIII

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει | love never fails |
| 2 | εἴτε δὲ προφητεῖα καταργηθήσονται | but if there are prophecies
they will be abolished |
| 3 | εἴτε γλωσσαι παύσονται | if there are tongues they will
cease |
| 4 | εἴτε γνῶσις καταργηθήσεται | if there is knowledge
it will be abolished |

PERIOD IX

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκομεν | for we know in part |
| 2 | καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν | and we prophesy in part |
| 3 | ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον | But when the mature comes |

²⁰ Robertson and Plummer (1958:292) have coupled the descriptive statements (periods 4-7) as follows:

Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ, χρηστεύεται,
[ἡ ἀγάπη] οὐ ζηλοῖ, οὐ περπερεύεται,
οὐ φυσιοῦται, οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ,
οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς, οὐ παροξύνεται
οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν, οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ
συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ
πάντα στέγει, πάντα πιστεύει,
πάντα ἐλπίζει, πάντα ὑπομένει

4 τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται the partial will be abolished

PERIOD X

1 ὅτε ἤμην νήπιος when I was an infant
 2 ἐλάλουν ὡς νήπιος I used to speak like an infant
 3 ἐφρόνουν ὡς νήπιος think like an infant
 4 ἐλογιζόμην ὡς νήπιος reason like an infant
 5 ὅτε γέγονα ἀνὴρ but when I became a man
 6 κατήργηκα τὰ τοῦ νηπίου I did away with the things of the infant.

PERIOD XI

1 βλέπομεν γὰρ for now we see
 2 ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου through a mirror in an obscure image
 3 τότε δὲ πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον but then we will see face-to-face
 4 ἄρτι γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους now I know in part
 5 τότε δὲ ἐπιγνώσομαι but then I will know fully just as I have been known.

From the beginning of his Corinthian ministry, Paul was aware of the unbelieving Greeks' hunger for wisdom (1 Cor. 1:22) and the Christians' class (1 Cor. 1:26-28), and he decided to keep his message pure by avoiding human philosophy (1 Cor. 2:6-8). The knowledge of these things can increase the doubt about Paul's authorship or lead one to ask questions such as "Why did Paul imitate these worldly renowned writers and philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and others?" "What did he want to achieve through this sophisticated style?"²¹ The answer to these two questions will constitute the next point and then will close the chapter.

²¹ Estes Daniel J. (1995:423) acknowledged poetry as the most complex ordering of language, and perhaps also the most demanding.

4.4. Poetics of 1 Corinthians 13

Before I get into the heart of the subject, I would like to clear the confusion that exists between imagination and fancy. They are similar, interchangeably used, and poetry receives its power from one of them. There exists a distinction though it is not easy to grasp. The *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1981:566) defines imagination as “the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality, a creative ability; a creation of the mind”. And it defines fancy as “an imagination especially of a capricious or delusive sort: the power of conception and representation used in artistic expression (as by a poet)”. As for Scroggie (1948:23-24), fancy deals with things that are not important or serious, while imagination with great things. The objects of the former are unreal, but those of the latter are real; the fancy is busy in dream, or when the mind is in a disordered state; but the imagination is supposed to act when the intellectual powers are fully active. Scroggie saw imagination and poetry to be intertwined as he said, “imagination is essentially poetic, and poetry essentially imaginative”. The art of poetry has been defined as a mirror for the imagination of men living in a society at once historical and free (Courthope 1949:533).

It is clearly established that in poetry imagination is the power without which the feelings and emotions of the poet's mind cannot express themselves. Figurative language is one of the commonest and powerful instruments that a poet uses thanks to his imagination.

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul lays down a basic principle which Christians of all ages will have to refer to for a healthy relationship with one another. The fact that the message of the text appeals to common interests may seem to be a reason to spare it from examination in the light of the work of Aristotle that is considered as a model in poetry.²² Nevertheless, I have adopted this approach²³ in this section.²⁴

²² A 4th century BC Greek philosopher, Aristotle wrote a treatise on poetics (*Poetica*) which is the first extensive systematic treatment of the subject that has been preserved (Hedrick 1994:47). He divided poetry into three types: epic, tragedy and comedy. He deeply discussed tragedy which he considered as the highest form of poetry.

Aristotle (Rhet. 3.8.3) argued that in oratory, the work of a poet should be rhythmical, not metrical. A poem is characterized by the special way in which the sounds are selected and grouped. The author's main concern is the beauty of the text rather than its meaning even though it can make sense. This is the purpose of this stage.

The style of oratorical work has two main forms. It may be either continuous, united by connecting particles or what Aristotle calls "periodic". His discussion of the periodic style (Rhet. 3.9.3) has some immediate significance for analyzing 1 Corinthians 13. It is comprised of periods, which are defined as well-rounded sentences that have beginnings and ends. "A period is a complete sentence, distinct in its parts and easy to repeat in a breath...when it is taken as a whole". It may be composed either of two clauses or of a single clause (Rhet. 3.9.5). That is known in our modern and biblical language as "verse".

Though 1 Corinthians 13 is not a plot-telling story, or an imaginative work,²⁵ the text possesses few dramatic characteristics. One should therefore be open to its rhythm and be familiar to its use of sound devices, such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, and onomatopoeia, through the help the images created by the figures of speech as seen previously. The chapter contains three of the distinctive features of the poetic style.

4.4.1. Repetitions

One of the easiest identifiable features in the poetics of a text is the repetition. In this case, it appears from a close look at the text that 1 Corinthians 12:31b-14:1a is full of

²³ The analysis of ancient Near East poetic texts is one of the three potential areas of investigation for valid theory of biblical poetry proposed by Estes Daniel J. in *The Hermeneutics of Biblical Lyric Poetry* (Bsc Oct. 95p.418).

²⁴ References to Aristotle in this section have been taken from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* © 1952, published by William Benton under the title "The Works of Aristotle", volume II and I have adopted the popular way of poetic quotation.

²⁵ Hedrick (1994:60) says that in a narrow modern sense, a poetic work, called ποιημα, is an imaginative creation, deliberately made or fashioned (ποιειν). Secularly, a poem is a made up story that may not reflect reality. However, verses 1-3 may be regarded as imaginative.

repeated words, phrases and expressions spread throughout the text. Repetitions are an instrument of cohesion in the discourse. The same term is usually repeated to emphasize a key theme (Black 1987:176, 424). The word ἀγάπη for instance occurs eight times in total undoubtedly as a hook word.²⁶ Beside this, the following repetitions are noticed in each section:

In verses 1-3 we have ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω three times and καὶ ἐὰν four times (of which one is the contraction [κᾶν] and two in the expression καὶ ἐὰν ἔχω) further πάντα and πᾶσαν occur twice each, οὐθέν and οὐδὲν should also be mentioned.

In verses 4-7 the particle οὐ appears eight times and πάντα four times, are both anaphora (begin the period consecutively) and paromoiosis having similarities of the entire words in the beginning and in the final consonants in the final words.

In the verses 8-12 the following repetitions occur: εἴτε (three times, anaphora); καταργέω (four times); ἐκ μέρους (four times); γινώσκω (twice); ἐπιγινώσκω (twice); ὅτε (twice as anaphora); νήπιος (five times; four times as epiphora of which three in the phrase ὡς νήπιος); ἄρτι and τοτέ δὲ twice each as anaphora) and πρόσωπον (twice).

4.4.2. Antithesis

There are in the text words or expressions that contrast one another whether implicitly or explicitly.

In verses 1-3 both halves of each period are sharply opposed by the contrastive sentence ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, showing how the powerful spiritual gifts in the protases are annihilated in the apodoses. We have πάντα and πᾶσαν on one hand and οὐθέν and οὐδὲν on the other. The statements show the causes and effects, being placed in juxtaposition.

In verses 4-7 the seven virtues which love possesses are opposed by eight vices that it is bereft of. The addition of the fourfold πάντα confirms that love embrace excellence and not mediocrity. Verse 6 is explicit.

²⁶ From French “mot crochet”, is a word a writer repeatedly uses to link together the units of a text. In this case ἀγάπη is employed as a stylistic device to exhibit the structure of 1 Corinthians 13.

Section 8-12 starts with a threefold lifetime confrontation between love and the spiritual gifts. Paul opened the series with the verbs πίπτω and καταργέω (eternal / temporal), he moved to μέρους and τέλειον (partial / complete) to end with νήπιος and άνήρ (child or immature / man or mature).

4.4.3. Rhyme and rhythm

Due to its ability to decline, Greek lends itself to specific words sounding alike (assonance and consonance), that is, to rhyme and rhythm (Hedrick 1994:61). 1 Corinthians 13:1-12 is full of them.

a. Rhyme

Black (1987:186) says that the analysis of New Testament poetry must consider the characteristics of the Hebrew poetic form because the structure of New Testament poetry is based on the Hebrew poetical. A major feature of Hebrew poetry is parallelism and this may be regarded as the equivalent of rhyme in the Western poetry. There are in 1 Corinthians 13 some units having two or more lines whose terminal or ending sounds correspond. The examination of the rhyme of the text reveals the following:

Period I: we have λαλῶ and ἔχω in the first and the third lines, αγγέλων and ἀλαλάζον²⁷ in the second and the fourth lines.

Period II: we only have γνῶσιν and πίστιν in lines 3 and 4.

Period III: we have the twofold possessive adjective μου in lines 1 and 2, then the verbs καυχῆσμαι and ὠφελοῦμαι in lines 3 and 5.

Period IV: we only have here the verbs περπερεύεται and φυσιοῦται in lines 4 and 5

While Period V contains no rhyme, in period VI, the antithesis οὐ χαίρει ἐπι τῇ ἀδικίᾳ in line 1 and συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ in line 2 is an interesting couplet.

²¹ ων and ον sound the same despite their length

Period VII: we have all the verbs of the fourfold πάντα (στέγει, πιστεύει, ἐλπίζει and ὑπομένει. The clauses of this period are exactly balanced. In addition to rhyme, they have rhythmical qualities and assonance.

Period VIII: we have the verbs that indicate the end result of spiritual gifts (καταργηθήσονται in line 2, παύσονται in line 3 and καταργηθήσεται in line 4).

Period IX: we have γινώσκομεν and προφητεύομεν in lines 1 and 2.

Period X contains a fourfold νήπιος from line 1 to 4, alliteration in line 6 (νηπίου) and the threefold ὡς from line 2 to 4.

In period XI, we have ἐσόπτρου and μέρου in lines 2 and 4; and the phrase πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον in line 3 acts like rhyme.

b. Rhythm

The rhythm affects both content and form. Along with melody and verse, Aristotle (Rhet.3.1) said that rhythm is a “mean of imitation”. Elaborately structured rhythmical forms are also found in 1 Corinthians 13. In various parts, the text displays balanced clauses and lines. The threefold ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχων making a move from the ability to speak in languages to self-sacrifice via a sharing of possession draw the attention.

The descriptive section is the most interesting one. We have a bipartite formed by the twofold ἀγάπη followed by eight negations οὐ modifiers, followed by the play of πάντα and πᾶσαν. Then come the eight negated verbs of which Smit (1991:204) says are divided by literary means in two series of four. Alliteration, homoioteleum and equality of the number of syllables, and he grouped them as follow:

οὐ ζηλοῖ - οὐ περπερεύεται - οὐ φυσιοῦται - οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ

οὐ ζητεῖ - οὐ παροξύνεται - οὐ λογίζεται - οὐ χαίρει ἐπι

συγχαίρει δὲ

The section 8-12 consists of the numerical three:

A threefold parallelism beginning with εἶτε in period 8.

A threefold parallelism beginning with ἐκ μέρους in period 9.

A threefold parallelism ending with ὡς νήπιος in period 10.

An alliteration with threefold πρὸς in period 11

The text presents Paul's inconstancy in the use of the personnel pronouns. He started with the first person singular (vv.1–3), moved to the third person singular (vv.4-8), then he switched to the first person plural (vv.9), came back to the third person singular (v.10), returned to the first person singular (v.11), at the end he mixed both first singular and plural (v.12).

Much has been said about 1 Corinthians 13, but it seems that the analysis is incomplete until the reader is taken back to Paul's epoch and sees with his own eyes how the text was originally organized. That is the way Paul or his amanuensis (secretary) purposefully wrote the chapter and intended it to be. That was the only way the chapter could have impact and produce the effects that Paul was expecting from the Corinthians. But it seems to be necessary to know why Paul used this genre while S.T. Coleridge (in McCartney and Clayton 2002:229) defined poetry as specie whose immediate object is pleasure, not truth? Did Paul entertain the Corinthian believers (with his own thought) rather than telling them the word of God that is truth?

4.5. Purpose of the poetic style of 1 Corinthians 13

Paul saw the misuse of spiritual gifts and the Corinthian's view of spirituality as a great danger not only to the spiritual welfare of the Corinthian church, but also to that of the neighbouring local communities that could hear about the practice and blindly imitate it. However, the reason for Paul to use the poetic style in this part of the epistle seems to be elsewhere. If we follow Fee (1995:8)'s view that there was conflict between Paul and the church, which was calling his apostolic authority into question, and Betz and Mitchell (1996:1141) who saw Paul's claim of holding equal position with the Jerusalem apostles as controversial issue (1 Cor. 9:1-2; 15:3-11), we can say that Paul resorts to a rhetorically rich form of writing that would be both persuasive and memorable to drive home the central point of his argument on true spirituality. This is not Paul's only use of the poetic style. Kasemann (1991:88) saw

Titus 1:12 as poetic. Apart the above reason, Paul probably chose this literary determiner for its advantages. Estes (1995:419-23) said that poetry endeavours to re-create the poet experience in the reader. That is, through the poetic language, the writer (poet) communicates his feelings and reflexions about life to the reader rather than simply telling stories (Robinson 2001:69). Paul wanted the Corinthians to feel his pain for the fracture they have caused to the body of Christ by embracing futilities. Poetry also enables the writer to speak in a multidimensional way to his readers. Further, Estes spoke of verbal “economy”. So he quoted Perrine who saw poetry as the most condensed and concentrated form of literature, saying the most in fewest words, giving poetry its distinctive intensity and denseness. Quoted by Black (1987:187) Nida said that poetry provides the following five advantages:

1. The fact that the poetic language is unusual, it has a great impact in highlighting and emphasizing the significance of the theme.
2. The balance, symmetry and rhythm of the language make the text more aesthetically attractive.
3. The poetic language enables people to feel things they cannot explain.
4. The use of the poetic language makes the text to be like having supernatural basis or implication, since it was not expected God to express Himself in precisely the same manner as humans.
5. Poetic language raises emotions to a higher level. There is no doubt that poetic literatures arouse emotions. The Poetic communication ultimately facilitates the memorization and oral transmission. The special advantage that corresponds to the spirit of 1 Corinthians 13 particularly to periods I-III, is from Aristotle (Rhet. 9.3). It says that the poet can create a situation in which one can discover things about oneself and others.

To round off this chapter I shall say that even though we are far removed from the Hebraic and the early Christian eras, we can possibly make a way back through scholarly studies. Only, we will never be granted the possibility to hear these poems again exactly as they were heard and enjoyed in the ancient time. However, God’s intended purpose for His word remains the same for all the sons of men throughout all the generations.

This chapter has endeavoured to demonstrate the poetic aspect of 1 Corinthians 13. It has been clearly established in the light of the work of the pioneer of this art that though not a professional, the apostle Paul has done the work of a poet. The majority of the poetic features are found in a text that set the Corinthians side by side with the writer. Half a dozen of figures of speech, rhyme and rhythm have been isolated from the text divided in 11 periods and arranged according to the purpose of the chapter. Having done so, I give way to the next chapter for the conclusion that will end the journey.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study consisted of examining the literary aspects of Paul's argument in Corinthians 13. It began by realizing that Paul had introduced major thematic and stylistic changes in the course of the spiritual gifts discussion. The hypothesis was that if one is to know about these innovations, he/she would need first to consider on one part the relationship between the Corinthian Christians and Paul, and on the other part the situation within the Corinthian church before examining the value and the purpose of 1 Corinthians 13. Paul's explanation of the spiritual gifts, their origin and purpose probably drew the Corinthians' attention, which was certainly more awakened by his enticing promise²⁸ to display in their sight something better than the gifts they possessed. Surprisingly, he seemed to be disappointing, having not met the Corinthians' expectations. Even if they come both from the same person, the Holy Spirit, the fruit is totally different from the abilities. So, the Corinthian believers surely saw chapter 13 out of context.

The study had also realized that the proper understanding of 1 Corinthians 13, its power, its beauty as well as its meaning lies preliminarily in a survey of the epistle. So the approach attempted to take into account the Corinthians' behaviour in the context of the Greco-Roman socio-cultural ethos of the first century. The results of the detailed examination of the situation of the Corinthian church confirm my belief that the detrimental effects of the spirit of selfishness and self-exaltation had on the Corinthian believers led to greater problems in the life of the church. The deterioration of the socio-spiritual conditions, which is mentioned in 1:10-15:58, resulting in statements such as "You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you" (4:8) and. "knowledge puffs up, but love

²⁸ Surprisingly, 12:31b is the only promise of the spiritual gifts section.

edifies” (8:1), was indeed largely due to the acceptance of Hellenism²⁹ and its cultural practices. I do believe that the Corinthians deliberately embraced them.

5.1. Primary question

The epistle reveals that in spite of the abundance of her spiritual riches, the Corinthian church was spiritually unhealthy, and her members were unaware. The examination of the situation diagnosed the lack of genuine³⁰ love and the misunderstanding of spirituality as the main causes of the crisis that threatened the welfare of the church and led Paul to write chapter 13. Hence the primary question the research posed was, “How did Paul use rhetorical strategies in 1 Corinthians 13 to persuade the Corinthians that love is the canon of spirituality?”

This question was answered through the responses to the following three subsidiary questions:

5.2. Subsidiary questions

5.2.1. *What was Paul’s purpose in writing 1 Corinthian?*

This question dealt with various issues related to the situation within the church. The research has simply summarized some foundational and preliminary established and well-known observations about 1 Corinthians.

Because the letter is Paul’s reaction to the news (oral and written) he received, it shows his understanding of the state of affairs and his concern. The study examined the Corinthian situation and grouped its problems into disorder (chapters 1-6) and

²⁹ J.L de Villiers (1998:133) defines Hellenism as the Grecising (spreading of the Greek culture) of the East carried out by Alexander the Great and his successors before the rise of the Roman Empire. But here the term is used to indicate a cultural phase in human history.

³⁰ Apart from the characteristics found in 1 Corinthians 13, Paul describes Christian love as a love without hypocrisy (Rom. 12:9); a love coming from a heart that is pure, a conscience that is good, and a faith that is sincere (1Tim. 1:5).

difficulties (chapters 7-15).³¹ The untidy situation within the church led to the examination of the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians. Though the relationship still existed, it has been revealed that there were tensions between both parties. On the other side, the existence of relationship did not imply that the entire church accepted Paul.

The matter of love received a special attention because of its importance as part of the theme of the epistle. It has been noticed that Corinthians neglected love because of their exaggerated view of spirituality. Paul's answer to this situation was of a polemical nature. He categorically opposed their attitudes, condemning openly their behaviour. The study of the literary form of the epistle showed that 1 Corinthians is a unity.

5.2.2. How did Paul use contemporary literary forms to achieve his purpose?

To better understand Paul's methodology, one has to remember his aim in writing 1 Corinthians 13.³² In chapters 12-14, Paul was concerned about the Corinthians' ignorance (12:1). The lack of knowledge about their God-given abilities led them not only to abuse them but also to have a wrong comprehension of spirituality.

In chapter 13, Paul is not solving the problem of gifts abuse, but he is correcting the Corinthians' misunderstanding of being spiritual.

Paul certainly knew that his message was unpopular. So, he cared for its content and its form. He closed chapter 12 by encouraging the Corinthians to earnestly seek the best gifts (12:31a) and immediately, he introduced his delicate message with the announcement of an upcoming joyful event, the display of the best of the best (12:31b). He presented love like a beautifully wrapped "gift" that awakes the curiosity of the viewers, by calling it a "way far better than anything else". As a skilful speaker, Paul did not try to frustrate his audience by blaming them or by minimizing the spiritual gifts or by prohibiting their use. What he did, was simply to provoke them

³¹ Although chapter 16 contains a twofold *περι δε* (vv 1,12) (now concerning), it is not part of the answers to the church correspondence. Paul here told them his future plan.

³² Cf. 3. 2. 2 "Explanation" of the argument pp. 59-62

to know more about that way by magnifying love. He did not even mention them, instead, he used a series of rhetorical “I”. He then navigated between the “I” and the inclusive “we”. He basically explained to them gradually why love is the most excellent way.

Having made sure that he gained the Corinthians’ attention, Paul now starts his explanation, using the epideictic rhetoric, a ceremonial oratory of display. Paul is concerned with the virtue, which he praise and amplifies: encomium. He exalts love by speaking of:

1. its prominence (vv 1-3) As he set love next to sample of spiritual gifts among them the most coveted, Paul declares love to be above gifts. He says that unless used in the sphere of love otherwise gifts are useless.

2. Its perfection (vv 4-7) Paul exposes the characteristic of love and no evil is found in it. This description shows that love is the very nature of God.

3. Its Permanence (vv 8-13) love stands the tests of time.

In short, in 1 Corinthians 13, Paul exposed before the Corinthian believers the matchlessness of love by combining three literary genres at the same time: encomium and the epideictic. In addition to these two genres that intertwine, Paul used the poetic style, which is dealt in the next question.

The last subsidiary question that helped to answer the primary question was:

5.2.3. How did Paul use poetic artistry to achieve his purpose?

As part of the answer to the previous question, Paul’s main concern at this stage was about aestheticism and a related determining style. He organized the text in such a way the Corinthians will give attention to the reading. He used a style that touches emotions and makes a message enjoyable and memorable. He presented the truth in figurative language, appealing to imagination. He spiced up the message with many repetitions, rhyme and rhythm in short sentences easily readable in a breath. This is really a hidden hook in lure.

5.3. Final summary

I have considered, as my primary focus, the different literary devices used in the building up of the argument. 1 Corinthians 13 was found to be of high quality as first century literature. However, I did not argue that the text is analogous to the letters of Greco-Roman writers such as Cicero or Seneca; it rather showed that the basic mechanics of 1 Corinthians 13 were part of the culture.

The spiritual gifts section is a sandwich-type structure (McDougall 1992:231) in which the location of chapter 13 led me to review its boundaries. Those set in this research through the semantic analysis of the chapter are little bit different from the universal ones.³³ I have extended the text of 1 Corinthians 13 of a sentence up and down. That is, the portion devoted to love originates from 12:31b and ends to 14:1a.

I came to understand that in order to see his proposed solution joyfully acceptable to all; Paul used the contemporary writing style that he found to be harmless to the gospel. In this case, Paul utilised the following three literary genres:

5.3.1. *Encomium*

1 Corinthians 13 is undoubtedly a praise to love. In his exposition of the Corinthian believers' ignorance about the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:1), Paul wanted them to know that there is something better than what they are priding themselves on (12:31b): an excellent³⁴ way that is "love". Though he did not despise the spiritual gifts or prohibit their use in church gatherings, he showed them how matchless love is by demonstrating its value in a very special way. Paul highly exalted love, revealing its three wonderful facets: a) Its necessity, according to verses 1-3, love is the one that values the gifts and those who possess them. As the spirit gives life to the body and deeds to faith (James 2:20, 26) so does love to spiritual abilities and individuals. b) Its perfection, Paul demonstrated the perfection or blamelessness of love in verses 4-7 by exhibiting its characteristics which are made of qualities only. Paul selected fifteen verbs from all aspects of life to describe love. c) Concerning its longevity in

³³ I mean by wide spread boundaries, verses division as they are found in our Bibles.

³⁴ In Greek, the emphasis lays on the adjective (ὑπερβολήν), which determines the quality (modifies) than on the noun (ὁδόν) itself.

verses 8-12, Paul sadly speak about spiritual gifts with regard to lifetime in comparison to love that is eternal like God Himself. As result of this action, love is recommended.

5.3.2. Epideictic rhetoric

1 Corinthians 12-14 addresses mainly the problem of spiritual gifts abuse, and chapter 13 intends to specify one of the problems of the Corinthian church. As an argument, 1 Corinthians 13 aimed to affect the Corinthians' behaviour concerning the use of spiritual gifts in order to cause them to consider their relationship with one another. So Paul formulated his argument in a form that consisted of proving that love is above spiritual gifts and is therefore the better way of life in community. When I consider the role love plays in the use of spiritual gifts as well as in the believers themselves (13:1-3), the nature of love Paul is talking about: what it is and is not, what it does and does not (13:4-7), and its capacity to resist the events of time (13:8-13), I can assert that Paul's treatment of love in 1 Corinthians 13 is fair.

Also, the fact that the chapter has been declared an encomium, justifies its belonging to this kind of rhetorical species whose purpose is to persuade the hearers to embrace what has been praised or to abandon what has been is banished or blamed, is clearly seen in 14:1a where Paul invites³⁵ the Corinthians to keep on walking in that way.

5.3.3. Poetry

Having been convinced that 1 Corinthians 13 differs stylistically from the other two chapters of the spiritual gifts section, I decided to investigate thoroughly the kind of stylistic determiner the chapter embodies. Since chapters 12 and 14 are prose, and that there exists no other stylistic determiner apart from the two, 1 Corinthians 13 is therefore poetic. I endeavoured to prove the point by examining in detail the text in the light of the work of Aristotle. One of the most important things I have come to notice is that all the eighteen verbs in verses 4-13 Paul that relates to love (fifteen in vv. 4-7 and three in vv. 8-13) are all in the "present tense". This agrees with Kuen

³⁵ Fritz Rienecker (1981:87) says that διώκετε (present imperative of διώκω) is a call for a habitual action.

(1991:192) who said that the historical books are past centred, the prophetic books look to the future, but the poetic ones are present centred. I have finally arranged the text in its original form and have brought out many features that affirm that 1 Corinthians 13 qualifies to be classified among other Paul's poetical portions.

I was also persuaded that Paul introduced this stylistic change for three main reasons: firstly, the theme of love was out of fashion to people who claimed to have reached a higher level of spirituality and knowledge; secondly, by the excellent way, Corinthians surely expected a new and super gift than those listed in 12:8-10, speaking about love, Paul was considered as mistaken and the message was susceptible to be rejected; thirdly, poetry was very enjoyable as it is and will be. Poetry makes the message memorable since in the early church each Christian did not have his own copy of the apostolic teaching. Interestingly, this strategy in communicating the word of God seems to be ideal and perhaps agrees better with the standard process in the ancient world in which written texts were read aloud to gathered groups as Klein et al. (2004:73) note that hearing a text only once afforded the listeners no luxury to look ahead to the end or to reread a section already forgotten.

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