A Rhetorical Analysis of Paul's Contrasting Use of προλαμβάνω and ἐκδέχομαι in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

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ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν, καὶ ὃς μὲν πεινᾷ, ὃς δὲ μεθύει (1 Cor 11:21).

For one takes his own (evening) meal first at the time of eating, and, moreover, one is drunken (with wine), though another is indeed hungry (my translation).

ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου, συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν ἀλλήλους ἐκδέχεσθε (1 Cor 11:33).

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, as you get together in order to eat, receive one another (my translation).

1. Introduction

In recent Pauline scholarship on 1 Corinthians no scholars explicitly examine the translations and interpretations of the two words — προλαμβάνω and ἐκδέχομαι — in 11:17-34 in terms of the close relationship between Paul's rhetorical strategy of 'contrast',[1] the Pauline principle of Christian hospitality, and his message of breaking down the socio-economic hierarchies among the Corinthian Christians. These two words play a significant role in the argument that the entire section of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is a distinctive rhetorical discourse, and moreover, that this rhetorical discourse comprises characteristics of both epideictic and deliberative genres and of three modes of proof — *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* (see below). By using the words προλαμβάνω (v.21) and

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1) For detailed explanations of 'Contrast' see below.

ἐκδέχομαι (v.33) right before and after his description of the institution of the Lord's Supper (vv.23-32), Paul seems to attack and challenge the unhealthy and improper behaviour of some Corinthian Christians at the time of eating in their Christian gatherings. He then encourages them to welcome and receive one another at their Christian meal/table fellowship (see below).

The whole section of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is disputed and controversial in recent Pauline scholarship. One group of scholars argues that the Pauline passage addresses the issue of love-feasts and table fellowship, another that of a Eucharistic ceremony, another that of both communal meal and Communion, and another that of the election of officers.[2] Engaging in this controversial debate is not the primary interest of this essay, though I support the first group of scholars who claim that in these verses Paul describes the problem of divisions (σχίσματα) and factions (αἱρέσεις) among the members in the Corinthian Christian community. These factions were apparent at their communal meal and table fellowship due to their different understandings and practices of meal etiquette and Christian hospitality and to their socio-economic hierarchies (1 Cor 11:18-22).[3]

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 as a whole comprises features and elements of Greco-Roman rhetoric in which Paul was trained and which he employs in his other writings, such as Romans, Galatians and 2 Corinthians.[4] In order to endorse the statement that 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is a rhetorical unit, it would be necessary to investigate thoroughly the two verbs — προλαμβάνω in verse 21 and ἐκδέχομαι in verse 33. These two words play an important and crucial role in establishing that the rhetorical discourse of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is both

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2) See Timothy A. Brookins, "The Supposed Election of Officers in 1 Cor 11.19: A Response to Richard Last", *NTS* 60 (2014), 423-432 (who argues for the 'election of officers'); Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 856 (for the 'Eucharistic ceremony'); Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, Tyndale (Grand Rapids: Eerdman, 1999), 156-157 (for the 'communal meal and Communion'); Richard Horsley, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 192-193 (for the 'love-feast').

3) See Oh-Young Kwon, *1 Corinthians 1-4: Reconstructing Its Social and Rhetorical Situation and Re-Reading It Cross-Culturally for Korean-Confucian Christians Today* (Eugene: Wipe and Stock, 2010), 105.

4) See J. Paul Sampley and Peter Lampe, eds., *Paul and Rhetoric* (New York; London: T & T Clark, 2010), 25-38. For Paul's formal rhetorical education see Ryan S. Schellenberg, *Rethinking Paul's Rhetorical Education: Comparative Rhetoric and 2 Corinthians 10-13* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 17-56; and also Nathan J. Barnes, *Reading 1 Corinthians with Philosophically Educated Women* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2014), 3-4.

deliberate and epideictic rhetoric.[5] Moreover, it is likely that Paul uses these two words within 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 for the rhetorical purposes of contrasting different behaviours. These arguments will be explored carefully throughout this essay.

2. The Rhetorical Technique of Contrast

In 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Paul cleverly uses the two verbs – προλαμβάνω and ἐκδέχομαι – in terms of the rhetorical technique of 'contrast' that refer to "the state of being strikingly different from something else in juxtaposition or close association."[6] In his *Topica* Cicero demonstrates this 'contrast' (Latin, *contrarium*) as part of the way an orator constructs an argument for rhetorical effect in speech and writing.[7] The Latin word *contrarium* is translated as either 'contrary' or 'contrast'.[8] And yet I prefer the latter that would be more appropriate for and relevant to the Pauline rhetorical strategies in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Wherein Paul invites the Corinthian Christians to change their unhealthy behaviours into more Christ-like ones.

In his *Topica* Cicero provides a detailed description of *contrarium*:

The next topic is that which is called 'from contrast (Latin, *contrarium*)'. There are several sorts of contrast (*contrarium*). One, of things which belong to the same class, but differ absolutely, as wisdom and folly. Words are said to belong to the same class if when they are uttered they are met face to face, as it were, by certain opposites. For example slowness is contrasting (*contrarium*) to speed, but weakness is not. From these contrasting (*contrarium*) arguments develop such as these: if we shun folly···let us pursue wisdom; kindness if we shun malice···There are still other kinds of contrast (*contrarium*), such as those

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5) For the characteristics of deliberative and epideictic rhetoric see Sampley and Lampe, *Paul and Rhetoric*, 26, 145.
6) https://www.google.com.au/#q=contrast+meaning (2015. 9. 14).
7) Cicero, *Topica*, 3.11, 17; 11.47-49; 13.55; 18.71, *De Inventione; De Optimo Genere Oratorum ; Topica*, H. M. Hubbell, trans., the Leob Classic Library (London: Williams Heinemann; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).
8) See http://www.latin-dictionary.net/search/latin/contrarium (2015. 9. 14).

which are compared with something, as double and single, many and few, long and short, greater and less (*Topica*, 11.47-49).

This description makes clear that speakers/orators and writers are encouraged to use this rhetorical technique in their speeches and discourses, when they use two or more contrasting things in comparison, which belong to the same class, but they absolutely differ in meaning and degree. In this sense Paul would have employed the rhetorical skill of 'contrast' within his writings.[9]

Paul's rhetorical use of 'contrast' is frequently found in his letters where he deliberately employs two or more opposing words and expressions in comparison. By doing this Paul challenges, motivates, persuades and encourages his readers to agree with him on arguments and opinions that he addresses in his writings and speeches.

Here are several examples for the Pauline rhetorical use of 'contrast': In Romans 5:12-21 Paul uses two sets of rhetorically contrasting words: 'sin' (ἁμαρτία) and 'trespass' (παράπτωμα), versus 'grace' (χάρις); and 'death' (θάνατος) versus 'eternal life' (ζωή αἰώνιος). This is more clearly exhibited in verses 20-21 in particular,

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9) Cf. In his *Topica* Cicero frequently employs the Latin word *repugnantia* that is translated as 'contradiction' as part of his rhetorical techniques (*Topica*, 12.53; 18.71). Cicero suggested that this technique be used in the conclusion of oratory and discourse, since it does "not need further proof or demonstration" (Daniel Markovic, *The Rhetoric of Explanation in Lucretius' De rerum natura* [Leiden: Brill, 2008], 100). Markovic points out that this rhetorical skill was "most frequently used by philosophers and orators" and that Cicero employed it "within the frame of Stoic logic" (Daniel Markovic, *The Rhetoric of Explanation in Lucretius' De rerum natura*, 109). Markovic further provides a "list of Stoic syllogisms": 1) either A or B; A; therefore not B. 2) either A or B; not A; therefore B. 3) not both A and B; A; therefore not B. 4) not both A and B; not A; therefore B (Daniel Markovic, *The Rhetoric of Explanation in Lucretius' De rerum natura*, 101). Furthermore, Cicero gives an example for this 'contradiction' in his *Topica*: "From contradictions (*repugnantibus*): If a *pater familias* has bequeathed to his wife the usufruct of maid-servants as a proviso in naming his son as heir, and has made no such proviso in naming a reversionary heir, on the death of the son the woman will not lose her usufruct. For what has once been given to someone by will, cannot be taken from him to whom it has been given without his consent. For 'receiving legally' and 'surrendering unwillingly' are contradictory (*repugnat*)" (*Topica*, 4.21). These notions help assume that the rhetorical technique of 'contradiction' would have represented, to some extent, the rhetorical and social atmosphere of the Roman privileged and elite in the time of Cicero (106−43 BCE). And yet it is unclear that Paul uses the rhetorical technique of 'contradiction' in this sense within 1 Corinthians and especially within 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

But law came in, with the result that the trespass (παράπτωμα) multiplied; but where sin (ἁμαρτία) increased, grace (χάρις) abounded all the more, so that, just as sin (ἁμαρτία) exercised dominion in death (θάνατος), so grace (χάρις) might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life (ζωή αἰώνιος) through Jesus Christ our Lord (NRS).

In Romans 6:1-11 Paul employs two contrasting verbs, 'to die' (ἀποθνήσκω) and ' to live' (ζάω). This is explicitly demonstrated in verses 8-10, "But if we have died (ἀποθνήσκω) with Christ, we believe that we will also live (συζάω) with him⋯the death he died (ἀποθνήσκω), he died (ἀποθνήσκω) to sin, once for all; but the life he lives (ζάω), he lives (ζάω) to God" (NRS).

Paul further uses this sort of rhetorical technique in Galatians. In Galatians 4:21-31 Paul addresses the contrasting themes of '(female) slave' (παιδίσκη) versus 'free (ἐλεύθερος) woman' in a rhetorically creative reinterpretation of the Sarah-Hagar stories. This is clearly shown in verses 30-31, "…drive out the slave (παιδίσκη) and her child; for the child of the slave (παιδίσκη) will not share the inheritance with the child of the free (ἐλεύθερος) woman⋯we are children, not of the slave (παιδίσκη) but of the free (ἐλεύθερος) woman" (NRS).

Furthermore, Paul employs more frequently these kinds of contrasting words and expressions in 1 Corinthians. 1:27-28 explicitly shows contrasting rhetorical expressions that "God chose (ἐξελέξατο) what is foolish (τὰ μωρὰ) in the world to shame (καταισχύνη) the wise (τοὺς σοφούς)," "God chose what is weak (τὰ ἀσθενῆ) in the world to shame the strong (τὰ ἰσχυρά)," and "God chose what is low (τὰ ἀγενῆ) and despised (τὰ ἐξουθενημένα) in the world, things that are not (τὰ μὴ ὄντα), to reduce to nothing things that are (τὰ ὄντα)" (NRS). Such rhetorically contrasting expressions continue to appear in 1 Corinthians 2:6-13: 'wisdom of God' (σοφία Θεοῦ) versus 'wisdom of this world' (σοφία τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου), 'wisdom of the rulers of this age' (σοφία τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου) and 'human wisdom' (σοφία ἀνθρωπίνης). A similarly contrasting description is also found in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 "Those who are unspiritual (ψυχικός) do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit⋯Those who are spiritual (πνευματικός) discern all things⋯"

Moreover, such contrasts for rhetorical purposes are found in 1 Corinthians

15. In 15:42-44 Paul describes,

> "···What is sown (σπείρεται) is perishable (φθορᾷ), what is raised (ἐγείρεται) is imperishable (ἀφθαρσίᾳ). It is sown (σπείρεται) in dishonor (ἀτιμίᾳ), it is raised (ἐγείρεται) in glory (δόξῃ). It is sown (σπείρεται) in weakness (ἀσθενείᾳ), it is raised (ἐγείρεται) in power (δυνάμει). It is sown (σπείρεται) a physical body (σῶμα ψυχικόν), it is raised (ἐγείρεται) a spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν). If there is a physical body (σῶμα ψυχικόν), there is also a spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν)" (NRS).

Paul further uses the rhetorical technique of 'contrast' in 15:50-54:

> "...nor does the perishable (ἡ φθορά) inherit the imperishable (τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν)...the dead will be raised imperishable (ἄφθαρτοι)···For this perishable body (τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο) must put on imperishability (ἀφθαρσίαν), and this mortal body (τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο) must put on immortality (ἀθανασίαν). When this perishable body (τὸ φθαρτὸν τοῦτο) puts on imperishability (ἀφθαρσίαν), and this mortal body (τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο) puts on immortality (ἀθανασίαν)···" (NRS).

Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Paul deliberately employs the two verbs προλαμβάνω and ἐκδέχομαι to contrast two types of behaviour in order to apply rhetorical pressure resulting in changed behaviour. These two verbs obviously contrast in their basic meaning: 'to go ahead (of time)' and 'to wait, expect'. The implications of this Pauline rhetorical strategy of contrasting is precisely demonstrated in the Pauline description of the inhospitable and indecent behaviour of προλαμβάνω that some of the Corinthian Christians demonstrated in their Christian *ekklēsia* (1 Cor 11: 20-22). The word προλαμβάνει in verse 21, which is a third person singular present tense of προλαμβάνω certainly represents an incident of the current situation of the Corinthian Christian *ekklēsia*. In this particular verse Paul intentionally and consciously uses the word προλαμβάνω to blame and attack some members in the Corinthian congregation, who behaved arrogantly.[10] This is described

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10) In a similar sense Paul uses the word καυχάομαι (which is translated as 'boast') to challenge some of the Corinthian Christians to change their unhealthy behaviours into Christ-like ones in

further in verse 22,

> "What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show
> contempt (καταφρονεῖτε) for the church of God (τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ
> Θεοῦ) and humiliate (καταισχύνετε) those who have nothing? What
> should I say to you? Should I commend (ἐπαινέσω[11])) you? In this matter
> I do not commend (ἐπαινῶ) you!" (NRS).

Some of the Corinthian Christians acted inhospitably and impatiently towards
other members who were poor, and those who had nothing were humiliated
when they assembled for their communal meal and table fellowship (1 Cor
11:20-22). Those members who were rich and wealthy apparently came earlier
for the meetings and went ahead with their own meal without waiting for other
members who came in later. Then, such an inhospitable and impatient attitude
would have, in part, caused tensions and conflicts among the members. These
tensions and conflicts may have been part of the cause of the divisions
(σχίσματα) and factions (αἱρέσεις) that developed in their Christian *ekklēsia* (1
Cor 11:18; 1:10-13; 3:3). To deal with this critical current issue and to challenge
these Corinthian Christians to change their behaviour in their Christian

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their Christian community (see 1 Cor 1:29-31). The word καυχάομαι and its equivalents occur
39 times in 1 and 2 Corinthians (see Oh-Young Kwon, *1 Corinthians 1-4*, 85, 87).
Interestingly, Cicero frequently uses the Latin word *gloriatur* (that is translated as 'boast') and
its equivalents. They are found 151 times in his thirty-one rhetorical handbooks and writings
(see Oh-Young Kwon, *1 Corinthians 1-4*, 84, 84 n.120). Cicero states, "The professors and
masters of rhetoric···boasted (*gloriatus*) before an audience···(about) their knowledge of
literature and poetry, and the doctrines of natural science" (*De Oratore*, 3.32.127). Cicero
gives further examples: "For all the world like C. Caesar, as he himself often boasts"
(*Epistulae ad Familiares*, 10.32.2). "Asellus was boasting (···*gloriaretur*) that his military
service had taken him over every province" (*De Oratore*, 2.44.258). "I (Cicero) have often
heard my own father and my wife's father say that our people···desired to win high distinction
(*gloria*) in philosophy" (*De Oratore*, 3.33.133). Cicero encouraged his people "to seek and
pursue fame and glory," and, moreover, he "boasted about his oratory, political success, fame
and reputation in Roman society" (Oh-Young Kwon, *1 Corinthians 1-4*, 85). Paul found this
kind of Cicero's idea of boasting in the inappropriate mentality and conduct of some of the
Corinthian Christians in their congregation. In order to challenge these Christians Paul states,
"no human being might boast (καυχάομαι) in the presence of God" (1 Cor 1:29), and he
further quotes from Jeremiah 9:24, "Let (one) who boasts (καυχάομαι), boast (καυχάομαι) of
the Lord" (1 Cor 1:31).

11) Translated in the New International Version (afterward NIV) and Good News Translation
(afterward GNT) as 'praise', though the Orthodox Jewish Bible uses 'commend'.

community, Paul rhetorically and deliberately uses the contrasting word ἐκδέχομαι in verse 33. In this particular verse he employs ἐκδέχεσθε — the imperative second person plural form of ἐκδέχομαι. In this use of the word ἐκδέχεσθε it could be assumed that Paul appears not to target in public a particular person or a particular group of people, though he might have them kept in mind for himself only, but to challenge everybody in the Corinthian congregation to welcome and receive one another at their communal meal fellowship. All these features could be seen as characteristics of epideictic rhetoric — a present-oriented discourse describing the present situation of readers or an audience. This epideictic discourse or speech is used to "praise and blame someone or something" in the audience in order to bring about a change in behaviour.[12]

Nevertheless, I would argue that 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 comprises characteristics of deliberative rhetoric as well. Cicero, as a translator and interpreter of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, describes in his rhetorical handbook, *De Inventione*, that deliberative rhetoric is a future-oriented discourse and that by employing a deliberative discourse a speaker or writer seeks in his or her audience something honourable and advantageous but delivers his or her speech/discourse to lessen and avoid something dishonourable and disadvantageous.[13] The Pauline language in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 precisely contains several rhetorical features and elements that characterise deliberative rhetoric. In claiming this statement, the two verbs προλαμβάνω and ἐκδέχομαι play a crucial role. In 1 Corinthians 11:21 by employing the word προλαμβάνω Paul seems to have explored what had been happening in the Corinthian church at the very time when he was writing a letter to it. Then, he criticised and warned the whole Corinthian congregation that some members consciously or unconsciously caused something disadvantageous to occur in their Christian community. These members took their own supper first before some other members joined them to eat together as a Christ-believing *ekklēsia*. From Paul's point of view such careless and inhospitable behaviour made a critical contribution to despising (καταφρονεῖτε) "the church of God" (τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Θεοῦ) and to putting to shame (καταισχύνετε) and discriminating against

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12) Samply & Lampe, *Paul and Rhetoric*, 26.
13) See Oh-Young Kwon, *I Corinthians 1-4*, 252-253.

those members who were poor and of low social status (1 Cor 11:22).

Notwithstanding, in 1 Corinthians 11:33 by using the word ἐκδέχομαι Paul appears to have shown his intention to command and encourage the Corinthian Christians to recover their identity as a hospitable and caring Christ-believing community and to welcome and receive one another at their meal fellowship (1 Cor 11:34). Thus the two words προλαμβάνω and ἐκδέχομαι play a significant role in maintaining the view that the whole section of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is a rhetorical unit and that it comprises characteristics and features of both epideictic and deliberative rhetoric. It remains, therefore, to explore a proper translation and understanding of these two words within the literary context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

2.1. προλαμβάνω

In recent Pauline scholarship the translation and interpretation of the verb προλαμβάνω in 1 Corinthians 11:21 is controversial. Its translation varies from one translator to another. Such translators as RSV, NIV, GNT and ESV translate it as "go ahead with", NRS "goes ahead with", NET "proceed with", KJV "taketh before other", NKJ "take ahead of others," and NAS "take first." And yet this Greek verb has several other meanings as well. It means: 1. to "do something before the usual time, anticipate something" (e.g. Mark 14:8), 2. to "take it upon oneself, undertake", 3. to "take, get of a meal" (1 Cor 11:21), and 4. to "detect, overtake, surprise" (e.g. Gal 6:1).[14]

Despite noticing such diverse translations, Pauline scholars like Bruce Winter, Richard Horsely and Anthony Thiselton contend that the verb προλαμβάνω contains "the sense of devour or consume"[15] and that it places much "emphasis on (the act of) selfish greed rather than on (that of) courtesy or manners."[16] Moreover, Leon Morris, Richard Hays and Gordon Fee claim that the word προλαμβάνω points out that some of the Corinthian Christians who were wealthier and came earlier took first their own meal and finished it before others who were poor and slaves — and perhaps working longer — arrived.[17] For this

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14) Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., BDAG (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000), 872.
15) Anthony C. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 863.
16) Ibid.

reason, the verb $\pi\rho o\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$ represents the inappropriate practice of Christian hospitality and meal etiquette that some members in the Corinthian Christian *ekklēsia* demonstrated at their table/meal fellowship, rather than simply that some members were greedy. Therefore, in agreement with the translation of the NAS I suggest that the word $\pi\rho o\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$ in 1 Corinthians 11:21 be translated as 'take first' within the wider literary context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

2.2. $\dot{\epsilon}\kappa\delta\acute{\epsilon}\chi o\mu\alpha\iota$

The verb $\dot{\epsilon}\kappa\delta\acute{\epsilon}\chi o\mu\alpha\iota$ in 1 Corinthians 11:33 is translated as "wait for" in most English translations such as NAS, NET, ESV, NRS and NKJ, though it is translated as "all eat together" in NIV. It appears, however, that Paul presented the word $\dot{\epsilon}\kappa\delta\acute{\epsilon}\chi o\mu\alpha\iota$ in this verse in order to challenge some members to stop their inhospitable mentality and behaviour (represented by $\pi\rho o\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$) and to encourage the whole congregation to accept and welcome one another, when they got together to eat communal meals. The verb $\dot{\epsilon}\kappa\delta\acute{\epsilon}\chi o\mu\alpha\iota$ in verse 33 obviously contrasts with the verb $\pi\rho o\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$ in verse 21 in terms of their meanings and of Paul's rhetorical strategies. Interestingly, Paul employs the verb $\dot{\epsilon}\kappa\delta\acute{\epsilon}\chi o\mu\alpha\iota$ once again in 1 Corinthians 16:11. The Greek word in this particular verse is translated as 'to expect' in most translations (NRS; NIV; NAS; NET; GNT), though it is translated as 'to wait for' in NKJ. The Greek word denotes "to remain in a place or state and await an event or the arrival of someone" (e.g. Acts 17:16; 1 Cor 16:11; James 5:3, 7; Heb 11:10, 13).[18]

Nevertheless, the translation of this verb in 1 Corinthians 11:33 is problematic and disputed in recent Pauline scholarship, and may be divided into two groups in general. One group translates it as 'to wait for' in a sense of Christian hospitality and caring by which Paul would challenge some members who were impatient or hungry to wait for others and encourage them to eat at home before coming to their Christian gathering.[19] The other group translates the Greek verb as 'to receive' in terms of the socio-economic distinctions and hierarchies

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17) Anthony C. Thiselton, *First Corinthians*, 863; Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 156-157; Richard Hays, *First Corinthians*, 197.
18) BDAG, 300.
19) See Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 162; F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdman, 1971), 116.

among the Corinthian Christians. They point out that by using the word ἐκδέχομαι Paul would emphasise the breaking-through of social hierarchies and economic differences among the members in the Corinthian Christian community.[20] I support this translation as it more consistently contrasts with the meaning of προλαμβάνω (see above).

I suggest, however, that in order to comprehend the Pauline message in the broader literary context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, it would be more appropriate to incorporate these two different translations and interpretations. It should be acknowledged that the whole section of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is a rhetorical unit that Paul deliberately interwove into his rhetorical strategies, clearly marked by the two verbs προλαμβάνω and ἐκδέχομαι as a rhetorical inclusio before and after his description of the instructions regarding the Lord's Supper. Paul wishes to restore and retrieve the principle and genuine exercise of Christian hospitality and meal etiquette that the Lord Jesus had taught his disciples on the night when he had been betrayed (1 Cor 11:23-26). In the Corinthian Christian *ekklēsia* this tradition was being distorted by some members who showed an inappropriate practice of Christian hospitality by taking their own meal/supper first (προλαμβάνω) before the rest of the people came.

Furthermore, Paul wished to stimulate the Corinthian Christians to leave the unhealthy atmosphere of divisions (σχίσματα) and factions (αἰρέσεις) between them (1 Cor 11:18-19) and to recover unity within their Christian community in the spirit of the authentic Christian hospitality that the Lord Jesus Christ had modelled when he had had the last supper with his disciples before his crucifixion (1 Cor 11:23-26). I claim that Paul was applying rhetorical pressure on the privileged and wealthier members to invite and receive (ἐκδέχομαι) less privileged and poorer members as guests in their homes and share their meal together in the name of the genuine Christian hospitality that Paul had received from the Lord (ἐγὼ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου), and then delivered to the Corinthian congregation (ὃ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν; 1 Cor 11:23). In doing this Paul would hope to see the social hierarchies and discriminations among the Corinthian Christians broken down in table fellowship within the Christian gatherings and in their homes where poor members of low social status were

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20) See Richard Hays, *First Corinthians*, 202; Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 558-559.

being humiliated by those members of wealth and high social status (1 Cor 11:21-22). These situations would have played a critical factor in causing the Christian community in Corinth to be split and divided into factions (1 Cor 1:10-13; 3:3-4; 11:18-19).

In order to help resolve this critical problem Paul introduces the new word ἐκδέχομαι in verse 33, which has never occurred before in 1 Corinthians and encourages the Corinthian Christians to welcome and receive (ἐκδέχομαι) one another at their meal/table fellowship as sisters and brothers in the body of Christ and the family of God regardless of their socio-economic background. Then they would turn the inhospitable atmosphere of their Christian community into a hospitable, friendly and welcoming community for everybody (1 Cor 11:22, 33).

3. Ethos, Pathos and Logos

The Pauline language in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 comprises characteristics of three modes of proof or of effecting persuasion − *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* and Cicero in his *Orator*, *De Oratore* and *De Inventione* describes characteristics of all these three modes.[21] Ben Witherington summarises,

> The function of a good deal of rhetoric was to arouse the emotions, which were divided into *pathos* and *ethos*. The former included the stronger feelings such as anger, fear, and pity, and the latter the gentler emotions, such as the capacity for laughter⋯According to the usual order, a speech attempted first to establish the speaker's or writer's *ethos* or character. Then *logos*, the act of actual persuasion or argumentation, would come into play. Finally the speech or letter would turn to *pathos*, to what the rhetor hoped to arouse in the audience.[22]

The elements of *pathos* and *ethos* are explored in the Pauline language in 1

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21) See Oh-Young Kwon, *1 Corinthians 1-4*, 252 n. 13.
22) Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Social-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 43-44.

Corinthians 11:17-34. The whole section exhibits a mixture of Paul's feelings and emotions such as anger, grief, anxiety, sadness and disappointment over what has been happening in the Corinthian Christian *ekklēsia,* and especially over the critical issue of divisions (σχίσματα) and factions (αἰρέσεις) among its members (vv.18-19). In this particular passage Paul appears to speak in an angry, anxious and frustrated tone of voice which characterises elements of *pathos* and, moreover, in an authoritative tone which describes those of *ethos.* He seems to claim himself ironically as the *paterfamilias* (or head) of the Corinthian Christian household and, at the same time, the Corinthian Christians as his children. This would remind them of what he describes in 1 Corinthians 4:14-16,

> ⋯I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish (νουθετῶν) you as my beloved children (ὡς τέκνα μου ἀγαπητὰ)⋯Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father (ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα[23])) through the gospel⋯I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me (μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε) (NRS).

The notion of a relationship between a *paterfamilias* and children is affirmed in the Pauline expression 1 Corinthians 11:17-34:

> Now in the following instructions (παραγγέλλων) I do not commend (or 'praise'; ἐπαινῶ) you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse" (v.17), "⋯do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend (or 'praise'; ἐπαινέσω) you? In this matter I do not commend (or 'praise'; ἐπαινῶ) you!" (v.22), and "⋯About the other things I will give instructions (or 'set in order'; διατάξομαι) when I come (v.34) (NRS).

Using these kinds of emotional and authoritative tones of voice and the first person pronoun 'I' repeatedly as his rhetorical strategy, Paul attracts and draws the Corinthian audience's attention to his teaching and attempts to help restore the ἀγάπη love of the Lord Jesus in their Christian *ekklēsia*. Then it would

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23) Its literary translation is 'I begot you'.

become a welcoming and hospitable community and embrace all members as sisters and brothers in equality. Within it all people would be united in Christ regardless of their socio-economic, ethnic and cultural distinctions (vv.23-26; 1 Cor 12:12-13; 13:1-13). All these notions would help maintain that the Pauline language in 1 Corinthian 11:17-34 contains rhetorical elements of *pathos* and *ethos*.

Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 as a rhetorical unit comprises characteristics of *logos* ─ that is "the act of actual persuasion or argumentation."[24] Paul clearly employs this rhetorical technique in persuading his Corinthian audience to agree with and accept what he teaches in the section. In this Pauline *logos* the two verbs $προλαμβάνω$ and $ἐκδέχομαι$ play an important role. Paul skillfully and logically uses these words just before and after his explanation of the institution of the Lord's Supper to challenge the Corinthian audience's indecent and inappropriate performance of Christian hospitality and teaches them to put in practice the hospitality that the Lord Jesus Christ instructed with one another in their Christian *ekklēsia* and in their private homes. They are encouraged and expected not to judge and humiliate one another on the ground of their socio-economic distinctions but to acknowledge and appreciate the value of one another as part of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-31).

The rhetorical unit of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 could be divided into three parts in terms of the rhetorical technique of *logos*. In verses 17-22 employing the verb $προλαμβάνω$ Paul opens up a case that he is going to address as his primary concern and topic in the following verses. Here Paul discloses to his Corinthian audience the problem of divisions ($σχίσματα$) and factions ($αἰρέσεις$) among them, which was, in part, caused by their misbehaviour and misconduct (as expressed by the use of $προλαμβάνω$). Some of the Corinthian Christians took first their own meal/supper that they brought with themselves into the meeting for their communal gathering and meal fellowship. From Paul's point of view this behaviour failed to comply with the principle of Christian hospitality that he had instructed them about during his ministry in Corinth (1 Cor 11:23).

In verses 23-32 Paul displays the foundation of his teaching and argument that does not come out of his own opinion (cf. 1 Cor 7.25) but which is profoundly and fundamentally based on what the Lord Jesus had revealed to him. Paul just

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24) Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community*, 44.

delivered it to them (v.23). The Lord Jesus instructed his disciples of the manner and etiquette of Christian table/meal fellowship. He explained all the details of how the Christian table fellowship should process in order and how they should share bread and drink cup together among themselves (vv.23-26). In verses 27-32 he goes on to address warnings that what would happen if they did not follow and adopt such an instruction carefully and thoroughly at their communal meal in the Christian gathering that is the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27).

Lastly, in verses 33-34 Paul presents a practical solution to resolve the problem of divisions (σχίσματα) and factions (αἱρέσεις) that occurred at their table/meal fellowship and love-feast in the Corinthian Christian *ekklēsia*. The Pauline solution is ἐκδέχεσθε — that is the imperative form of ἐκδέχομαι — "Receive one another!" (v.33). Paul contends that the Corinthian Christians should receive and welcome one another at their table/meal fellowship regardless of their socio-economic differences. He further suggests that when they get together for communal meals, no one should go ahead of others with or take first his or her own meal but eat together as a welcoming and hospitable community that is the body of Christ (v.33). If any one is too hungry or impatient to wait for others, he or she should eat at home before coming to the meeting (v.34).

Furthermore, Paul asserts that the Corinthian Christians should receive and invite one another as guests in their private homes (1 Cor 16:15-19). No one should be excluded from this reception and invitation on the ground of his or her socio-economic background. All the members should be treated in equal importance. Every single person in the Corinthian Christian community should be received, welcomed, acknowledged and valued as a significant part of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-31). All this description would help argue that the Pauline language in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 comprises characteristics of *logos*. As examined earlier, the two words — προλαμβάνω and ἐκδέχομαι — play a most significant role in this argument.

4. Conclusion

Paul deliberatively used the two words — προλαμβάνω (v.21) and

ἐκδέχομαι (v.33) — in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 in terms of his rhetorical strategy of highlighting contrasting behaviour. These two words play a significant role in claiming that the entire portion of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 is a rhetorical unit and comprises characteristics and features of both deliberative and epideictic rhetoric, and of three modes of proof — *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. The translations and interpretations of the two words vary from one translator to another and are controversial in recent Pauline scholarship. I conclude that the word προλαμβάνω is best translated as 'to take first', and the word ἐκδέχομαι as 'to receive'. These understandings help clarify that in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Paul cleverly placed the word προλαμβάνω before and the word ἐκδέχομαι after his presentation of the institution of the Lord's Supper. He challenged the Corinthian Christians' inappropriate practice of Christian hospitality that the Lord Jesus Christ had demonstrated his disciples on the night before his death, and stimulated them to put in practice the genuine hospitality of Christ Jesus with one another. Paul further encouraged them to break down their socio-economic barriers and hierarchies among themselves and to welcome and receive one another in equal importance at their meal/table fellowship and Christian gatherings regardless of their socio-economic background. All these findings provide an alternative approach to understanding more clearly the Pauline message in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and to translating and interpreting the two word προλαμβάνω and ἐκδέχομαι in this literary context.

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<Abstract>

A Rhetorical Analysis of Paul's Contrasting Use of
προλαμβάνω (prolambanō) and ἐκδέχομαι (ekdechomai)
in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

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This essay argues that Paul uses the two words — προλαμβάνω and ἐκδέχομαι in the literary context of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 — to challenge the inhospitable atmosphere of the Christ-believers' meal at Corinth and to encourage them to exercise the Lord's hospitality at their meal/table fellowship.

These two words, it is argued, play a significant role in Paul's rhetorical strategy in this particular passage, which is characterised by epideictic and deliberative rhetoric and three modes of proof — *ethos, pathos* and *logos*. Paul's argument is drawn from his rhetorical technique of 'contrast'. Paul cleverly uses προλαμβάνω before and ἐκδέχομαι after his description of the Lord's Supper to attack the Corinthian Christians' inappropriate practices and to motivate them to exhibit the love and hospitality of Christ towards one another, and to break through the socio-economic distinctions and barriers between them.