

## Lego

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August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010

1 Corinthians 14:33-40

Bunkertown COB

A toy manufacturer from Denmark, Ole Christiansen, created what we know as the Lego brick. It's been a favorite ever since it hit the toy shelves in 1958. I spent a lot of hours as a young boy dreaming and creating things from these little plastic brick. And what's interesting is that a brick from today will still connect with a brick made back in 1958. As for the name, it is a combination of two Danish words, "leg" and "godt", which means "play well". However, the word *Lego* actually has its origins in the Greek language. In that language *Lego* means to teach or to build up (exhort), which I thought was pretty cool.

The Greek word *Lego* is used throughout the New Testament when a speaker is conveying a thought or declaring a truth. For example, Matthew uses this when he writes of John the Baptist. *John had been telling Herod, "It is against God's law for you to marry her."* (Matthew 14:4) Here a clear thought or truth had been conveyed, even though Herod did not like what was being said. Paul uses this word most times in his first letter to the Corinthian Church. While talking about the words Jesus spoke at the last supper, Paul says, "*and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."*"<sup>2</sup> (1 Corinthians 11:24) But for some reason Paul uses a different word later in his letter that has a slightly different meaning. And it's unfortunate that our English Bibles have translated it as "Speak".

In Paul's entire discourse on Spiritual Gifts, he's been using a slightly different word called *Laleo*, which means to babble or prattle. As a verb it means to talk rapidly, incoherently, or indistinctly. And as a noun it means unintelligible or foolish talk. Now, I tell you this so that when we turn to the end of chapter 14 it might become more clear to you what Paul is actually saying.

*As in all the churches of the saints, the women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as*

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<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>2</sup>*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (1 Co 11:24). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. Was it from you that the word of God *first* went forth? Or has it come to you only?

If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize *this*, he is not recognized.

Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.<sup>3</sup>

(1 Corinthians 14:33-40)

When the Bible was first written there was no punctuation, no chapters, and no verse separation. These things were added at a later time. Most Bible scholars agree that the end of verse 33 fits grammatically and theologically with verse 34, which is why I read it that way. Apart from that, it is here that Paul uses the word *Laleo*. Women were not permitted to babble on or say foolish things in the church. He calls the wife to submit to the role God has asked her to fill, and implies that the husband should fulfill the role He has asked him to fill. This is the practice within all the other churches, and it is actually a command by God. But for some odd reason the Corinthian church was not doing this, and actually thought they could do as they please. Sure, the other churches had their way of doing things, but in their arrogance, Corinth felt they could do whatever they wanted even if it did contradict scripture.

Of course Paul is not saying a woman can never speak in church. In chapter 11 he talks about women praying or prophesying in church. He certainly would not contradict himself here. But considering the word he uses (*Laleo*), we begin to get a picture of what might have been happening. Apparently some women were disrupting the worship service with an ecstatic outburst that was meaningless (perhaps mimicking the Priestess at Delphi), or saying something that went against the teachings of God (foolish).

In Jewish history, women were not allowed in the Tabernacle, the Temple, or even in a local Synagogue. So any of the teaching they would receive came from a

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<sup>3</sup>*New American Standard Bible : 1995 update*. 1995 (1 Co 14:33-40). LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

father or a husband. Into this custom comes Jesus who allowed these women to set at his feet while He taught. Teaching His followers that this is permitted, the new church begins allowing women within the fellowship. So when an Apostle (like Peter) or a Pastor (like Apollos or Timothy) begins to teach the truths of God and the message of Jesus, these women learn things they possibly had never heard before. Compound this with a woman who was Gentile (non-Jewish). This woman probably never heard the wondrous things of God. Naturally, in both cases, they would have a ton of questions, and perhaps a ton of ideas of what this new spirituality should look like.

Do you want to know what I think caused the problem in Corinth? It was the fathers and the husbands not doing what they should have been doing. These men would have been the ones who had learned about God, and God had commanded these men to teach this to his family. Okay, so no Jewish woman was allowed in the Temple. But her husband was. And no Jesus girl was allowed in the Synagogue. But her father was. Their absence of understanding and grounding is evidence to me that dad was not doing his job. He was not the leader God had called him to be. He was passive in his role as a man, did not accept the responsibility God had given him, nor did he lead his family courageously. So that when Christ came along there was a whole generation of women without the proper foundation they needed to understand the New Covenant of God found in Christ, the Son.

I could spend a great deal of time talking about the absence of the Bible during this time in history. But I see the greatest problem in the men of this church not being the man God called them to be. And this caused confusion within this church because people were left to grasp at anything and everything simply because it seemed spiritual.

Today's society has fallen into the same trap. In many nations today men have neglected the role God has given them. They become passive in their responsibility to teach and train their children. And this passivity has cause turmoil everywhere, even in the church. The problem that plagued Corinth began with the men. I believe the problems that plague many a church can be found in men who have not taken upon themselves the responsibility to be the man God has called him to be.