Resurrection faith in 1 Corinthians 15

J N Vorster

ABSTRACT
Taking the problem of the resurrection faith as point of departure an attempt is made to construct the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 15. It is argued that when the "implied readers" are distinguished from the "deniers" of the resurrection, the rhetorical problem concerns a crisis in loyalty. The implied readers are confronted with deciding between the authoritative, apostolic kerygma of Paul on the one hand, and the "kerygma" of the deniers on the other hand. The problem of the deceased is solved for the implied readers by means of sequential argumentation in which the pragmatic argument and the device of stages play an important role.

1 INTRODUCTION
According to Schüssler Fiorenza (1987:388) rhetorical criticism distinguishes not only between "poetic and rhetorical texts", but also between the historical argumentative situation, the implied or inscribed rhetorical situation and the contemporary rhetorical situation. Although these distinctions seem feasible, they give the impression that a construction of the rhetorical situation can expose the historical situation (cf 1987:389, 388, 391, 397; cf also Wuellner 1988:9). This is to my mind highly disputable.

Although the rhetorical situation an sich forms part of the historical situation, a rhetorical situation an sich never exists, but is always a construct and always perspectivistic. The rhetorical situation is commonly defined as "a situation where a person feels called to a response that has the possibility for affecting the situation" (Schüssler Fiorenza 1987:387). Put differently, it would be possible to say that a rhetorical situation is constituted by a need, an identification of that need and the possibility of responding to that need. However, whether a need exists, whether it can be identified, and what kind of response should be seen as an appropriate "fit", depends on interpretation and interpretation is determined by perspective. This does not make a rhetorical situation any less a historical situation, but it does show that a rhetorical situation is always a construct of reality. The construct of Paul's rhetorical situation can therefore not expose his historical situation as such, but only his perspective on the need of his situation.

Despite the fact that the rediscovery of the rhetorical situation does not answer the New Testament scholar's prayer for the resurrection of the historical situation, a rhetorical critical analysis of the author's perspective on
the rhetorical situation can yield fresh and fruitful insights. It compels, for example, the interpreter to search for what might have been the "need" of the situation, to take the audience seriously as well as the interaction between orator, problem, message and audience.

It is then also my intention to see whether and to what extent it is possible to construct the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 15 via the perspective of the author, Paul. I do not intend to provide an extensive rhetorical critical analysis, but will focus only on the main elements of the rhetorical situation. Within 1 Corinthians 15 the focus will be on the first part of the argument, namely 15:1-34, although material from the remaining section will be used in a complementary manner.

As the kind of interaction between the participants in the rhetorical situation will be our clue to the rhetorical problem, the participants will form our point of departure in each section.

2 THE ROLE OF THE IMPLIED READERS
To establish the audience to whom the discourse in a rhetorical situation is addressed is of the utmost importance, because, as one of the "deciders" of the situation, it is this audience who not only determines the argumentation, but who eventually decides in favour or disfavour on the argumentation. Without a real "flesh-and-blood" audience, without even any substantial data on that audience in most of the New Testament letters, the notion of "implied readers" brings us closest to what can be regarded as an audience. One should, however, bear in mind that "closest to what can be regarded as an audience" is still very far from a real flesh-and-blood audience. Firstly, language simultaneously reduces and creates reality, obscuring the "audience". Secondly, written language further reduces reality into its own codes, simultaneously again contributing to reality. Thirdly, any traces of audience found in a text, whether speech or letter, are primarily a reflection of the orator/author's perspective. Looking at the role of the "implied readers" in 1 Corinthians 15 does, therefore, not imply a reconstruction of the Corinthian audience, neither does it assume the possibility of a "bridge" towards the discovery of the audience, but it simply means that an attempt to construct Paul's perspective of that audience is embedded in the text. It stands to reason that the interaction of reduction and creation has taken and given its due. Furthermore, it is important to note that the concept of "implied readers" has been consciously adapted from its use in reception criticism. It overlaps with its use in reception criticism, however, as a notion which refers to a personified, interpretative, textual construct. To avoid an exposition of 1 Corinthians 15 which is too technical, "implied readers" will be used even when the readers in the text are explicitly mentioned.

To construct the rhetorical situation of 1 Corinthians 15, the question of whether the deniers of the resurrection of the dead should be identified with the addressees (in our case the "implied readers") should first be addressed.
Although Wedderburn (1981:233) asserts a consensus among scholars that the deniers of the resurrection should be identified with the Corinthian addressees, this is by no means certain. As a matter of fact, when the interaction between encoded author and implied readers is taken into account, a clear distinction can be made between the attitudes towards implied readers and deniers of the resurrection.

The crucial question is, however, whether the "those" of 15:12 should be identified with the implied readers. Where this happens the "those among you" is usually explained as a way of softening the direct accusation of the Corinthians. It can, therefore, be seen as a politeness strategy. However, various factors indicate that such an identification is illegitimate.

In the first place, the past is positively evaluated by the encoded author (Paul) as a time of identification between him (Paul), the kerygma of the gospel and the implied readers. The introduction to the main argument (15:1-11), diverts the attention of the implied readers to the past. The pronoun deictics function as the indication of interaction between encoded author and implied readers in the past. The past is here used as a means of identification between encoded author and implied readers. Both are depicted as having shared the same symbolic universe. Not only did they share the same kerygma concerning the gospel, but they also mutually recognised and acknowledged the symbols of authority within the larger circle to which they belonged. The identification with the implied readers is, therefore, simultaneously a re-establishment of a hierarchical relationship. What has become objectified and institutionalised among the implied readers, is affirmed.

Secondly, a very close correspondence exists between 15:12 and 33,34 (Stenger 1979:99). The negative directive μη πλαστείτε, taken as a passive, has the function of a warning. Two presuppositions of a warning should here be emphasised. On the one hand, a person is warned against something which poses a threat to him/her – following a certain line of action will not be in his/her interest (cf also Scarle 1969:67); on the other hand the action of warning is done by someone possessing superior knowledge. The warning directed to the implied readers, therefore, serves to distance "them" (the deniers) from them (the implied readers) and to confirm the hierarchical relationship between the apostle and the implied readers. That a warning is implicit is confirmed by 15:34a. This twofold function of a warning clearly emerges in the reference to those who do not have a knowledge of God as well as in the verdictive (for "verdictive" cf Traugott & Pratt 1980:229) closing the first part of the argument (15:34d).

Thirdly, the question posed in 15:12 is a specific type of rhetorical question. Its function is not only to convey information, but rather to establish agreement concerning values or norms. As such it presupposes that the implied readers agree with the encoded author as to the absurdity of the utterance made by the "those among you". Both the elements of identification
and confirmation of a hierarchical relationship are again emphasised. Although the "those" are among those addressed, they are not those addressed – but are isolated and extrapolated.

Fourthly, last impressions are just as important as first impressions. For that very reason the final section of 1 Corinthians 15 abounds in strategies of identification. The in-group designation οἱ ἐκλεκτοὶ, used throughout the discourse (15:1,6,31) as a means of identification, appears again in 15:50 and is qualified in 15:58. The possessive μου emphasises the identification already prevalent in the qualification. To the circle of brothers a mystery is imparted (15:51), thereby not only emphasising the identification of the encoded author with implied readers, but also confirming again the hierarchical relationship between them. Both encoded author and implied readers will play a role in the future drama (15:52d) and both share in the victory thanks to the destruction of death (15:57). Finally, the directives in 15:58 are a further reminder that Paul's identification with his readers occurs in a hierarchical relationship.

It is clear that Paul consistently wishes to identify with his readers. By means of various speech acts the solidarity of this group is emphasised. No attempt whatsoever is made to identify the implied readers with the deniers of the resurrection. On the contrary, explicit efforts are made to distance the implied readers from the deniers. Identification and confirmation of a hierarchical relationship serve to kindle the goodwill of the implied readers, thereby creating a favourable disposition towards the argument.

If it is conceded that the deniers of the resurrection should not be identified with the implied readers, the question arises as to why they (the implied readers) are addressed at all. This brings us to the reason for the emergence of this rhetorical situation. What was the need for this discourse?

Although a relationship of hierarchical identification existed between Paul and the Corinthians, and although this relationship was mutually positively evaluated, doubt and uncertainty as to the present loyalty of the implied readers to Paul's kerygma raised its head. This is clearly indicated in 15:2 and 11. Although the past is emphasised as the time in which they believed (ἐπιστεύσατε), the present signals a question mark concerning their faith in Paul's kerygma. Implicit in the antithesis of 15:11c οὕτως κηρύσσειν καὶ οὕτως ἐπιστεύσατε, the implied readers are questioned on their present loyalty towards the tradition in which Paul still stands. Paul and the apostles' kerygma in the present, which stands in continuity with the kerygma in the past, stands in contrast with the implied readers' faith only in the past (Stenger 1979:83). The urgent question is: "what about the present?"

The cause of this doubt lies in the implied readers' association with another version of the gospel. The kerygma concerning the resurrection, proclaimed by Paul and sanctioned by the apostolic tradition, is contradictory with the kerygma proclaimed (λέγειν) by some in the Corinthian community
According to Paul associating with this kerygma and the people proclaiming it will have severe consequences for the implied readers.

As the desirability of this relationship is questioned, the status of the discourse in 1 Corinthians 15:1-34 can be classified as one of quality. As such, the question which has to be decided by the implied readers, being the kritai, can be formulated as: An respectu utilitas faciendum (Lausberg 1960:126). In the status qualitatis two norms are usually opposed, irrespective of the genre to which the discourse belongs. In this case the implied readers have to decide between "our" kerygma (including Paul's and the apostles') and "their" kerygma. The former propounds the resurrection of the dead, the latter denies it. It is important to see that the conflict which gives rise to the rhetorical situation does not entail resurrection versus non-resurrection, but rather Paul's apostolic kerygma concerning resurrection versus the kerygma of the deniers. The question the implied readers have to decide upon is: which will be more to their advantage?

Although our focus does not lie on the second part of the argument it is important to note that a change in status takes place. From 15:35-58 the status coniecturae is introduced. The question the implied readers have to decide upon is, then, whether the apostolic kerygma of the resurrection of the deceased is indeed possible (Lausberg 1960:125). Contrary to convention the status coniecturae is here introduced after the status qualitatis (Lausberg 1960:125). It is only after he has secured the goodwill and loyalty of the implied readers by pointing to the advantages and disadvantages of rejecting his apostolic kerygma that the question of the resurrection as such is addressed.

Before treating the arguments of Paul an attempt must be made to construct the viewpoint of the party against whom the implied readers are warned.

3 THE DENIERS OF THE RESURRECTION
Schüssler Fiorenza (1987:389,390) writes:

Since many things are presupposed, left out, or unexplained in a speech/letter, the audience must in the process of reading "supply" the missing information in line with the rhetorical directives of the speaker/writer. Historical critical scholars seek to "supply" such information generally in terms of the history of religions, including Judaism, while preachers and bible-readers usually do so in terms of contemporary values, life, and psychology. Scholarship on 1 Corinthians tends to "supply" such information about Paul's opponents either with reference to the symbolic universe of contemporary Judaism, of pagan religion, especially the mystery cults, philosophical schools, Hellenistic Judaism, or developing Gnosticism. The studies of the social setting or "social world" of Pauline Christianity in turn, do not utilize ideological, doctrinal models of
interpretation, but supply the missing information in terms of "social data" gleaned from the Pauline corpus, Acts, and other ancient sources, which in turn, are organized in terms of sociological or anthropological models.

Schüssler Fiorenza further illustrates that Paul's "dualistic rhetorical strategy" is followed without critical evaluation. From her observations a few important methodological aspects should be considered. Firstly, a lack of information is recognized. Constructs of the "opponents" of Paul are usually based on a phrase here and there. Secondly, we hide our informational embarrassment by supplying information from the ancient religious world or from modern knowledge on man and his society. This need not be illegitimate, although one should realize that all the data thus obtained are tainted and/or given meaning by minds observing and operating in various frames of reference. Thirdly, the intratextual perspective given is the perspective of the implied author. This perspective need not necessarily coincide with either the real author or the readers' perspectives. Put differently, there need not be a one-to-one correspondence with reality. It is in this context also that one should be very careful of the so-called "mirror-reading" approach, by which the "opponents of Paul" are "reconstructed" by means of antithetical remarks and denials in the text. Lyons (1985:96-105) gives an indication of how Schmithals and Marxsen within the "pure" historical critical circles and Betz even within a rhetorical critical analysis have been seduced to identify the opponents of Paul in Galatia. It should be borne in mind that the reality which Paul is constructing concerning the specific issue at hand is his construction of reality. Fourthly, because we are dealing with Paul's perspective and because he represents one party in the rhetorical situation and has to persuade his readers of his point of view, the opposite party is usually negatively evaluated. Outside language is used to describe them, but this need not necessarily be the case. They need not necessarily be "opponents". With these methodological presuppositions in mind it will not be my intention to provide a construction of the deniers of the resurrection in Corinth, but rather an attempt to construct Paul's viewpoint on them.

As elsewhere in the Pauline epistles, nearly no information has been supplied on the group or groups he regards as a threat to the Corinthian community. Direct reference to this opposing party is made in 15:12,33,34, which also closes the first part of the argument. Although Paul does not directly address the deniers of the resurrection, a negative attitude prevails against them. This is seen in the following.

Although in a very indefinite manner, they are isolated from the larger group of Corinthians and simultaneously their kerygma of non-resurrection is contrasted not only with Paul's, but also both with the other apostles' as well as with the remaining loyal Corinthians'. Following them poses a threat to one's relationship with the kerygma acknowledged by Paul and the apostles. Furthermore, their denial of the resurrection proves their ignorance about
God (15:34c). As such they are not to be associated with; on the contrary, tolerating them is a shame (15:34d).

The question now is: what, according to Paul, did this group mean with their denial of the resurrection? The following alternatives are usually proposed.

Firstly, there was no general resurrection whatsoever. Although an exception was made for the resurrection of Christ, no resurrection was envisaged for other beings. From a historical perspective, parallels are sought in Judaism and Hellenism. In the case of Judaism the Sadduceans (Wedderburn 1981:230) can be indicated (see also Talbert 1987:102); in the case of the Hellenists a general resurrection of people was regarded with scepticism by nearly all, especially by the Epicureans (Conzelmann 1969:309; Wedderburn 1987:7). It is also possible that the decay of the bodies of those that died in Christ and disappointment over the delay of the parousia convinced some of the Corinthians that there was no resurrection of the dead. These historical arguments indicate that the denial of the revival of the dead was not a strange phenomenon, but it does not clarify the meaning of the "resurrection of the dead" within this context.

Secondly, it is sometimes asserted that the deniers, having an aversion to the body, believed in a platonic type of immortality of the soul. According to Wedderburn (1987:16-21) this view is due to a history of religious perspective, emphasising Hellenistic religious and philosophical ideas of which Gnosticism constituted an important part (see also Bünker 1984:61). However, although it cannot be denied that anthropology plays an important role, especially in 15:35-58, it is not the focus of Paul's argument.

A third suggestion, confirmed by the majority of scholars (who may however not agree on every detail concerning the deniers) entails them spiritualising the resurrection (Schütz 1969:445; Lang 1986:218, 219; Talbert 1987:98). Put differently: as pneumatic enthusiasts they adhered to an overrealised eschatology. It is not a question of no resurrection, but rather a question of resurrection now. It is also in this context that baptism achieved importance, because it was through baptism that the resurrection realised itself. The attractiveness of this proposition lay in its harmonising with the attitude of the group responsible for the problems elsewhere in the letter, as well as with an extra-textual reference in 2 Timothy 2:18. According to 1 Corinthians 4:8 they viewed themselves as rich and already ruling and according to 10:1-13 they had received spiritual gifts from the spirit at baptism, proving to them that the eschatological age had already dawned. Due to the overrealised eschatology, libertine tendencies abounded. Their "natürlich-magische Sakramentsauffassung" (Lang 1986:218) involved the belief that they did not only die with Christ by being baptised, but were also resurrected (Schütz 1969:450; Bünker 1984:61); they claimed that the resurrection had already taken place. This pattern of belief correlates with what is later found
in 2 Timothy 2:18, namely the accusation against Hymenaeus and Phyletus, who claimed that the resurrection had already taken place.

There are, however, the following difficulties in ascribing this view to the deniers. Firstly, no distinction is made between those addressed by Paul and the deniers of the resurrection. So, while it may be true that the implied readers showed libertine tendencies, too little information was given regarding the deniers to equate them with the readers. Secondly, Wedderburn (1987:275, 277, 294) indicates that although a very optimistic self-image resulting from the ecstatic practices of the Corinthians cannot be denied, it is unlikely that they would have thought of themselves as being resurrected. Resurrection entailed having been made physically alive and presupposed death. Thirdly, Paul’s references to the future are usually used as an indication of the deniers’ present eschatology. That Paul refers to the future as far as the resurrection is concerned is undeniable; that a temporal scheme underlies a large part of his argument also rings true and that the future gives meaning to the present must also be conceded. However, it is important to see that the future resurrection always relates to the dead (15:22, 36). We see, therefore, that resurrection concerns those that have died and the aspect of futurity does not give any indication of the deniers’ assumed mode of existence now (contra Schütz 1969:442-448). Furthermore, with 15:12-19 as the refutatio (Bünker 1984:68) one would have expected an indication of a rejection of an overrealised or present eschatology, or at least a reference to baptism as a means to resurrection now (cf also Sellin 1983:227; 1986:24-30). However, although hypothetical consequences play a role in this section, the future only plays a role in the transitional verse (15:19). The temporal scheme is important to Paul’s argument, but that does not necessarily mean a reference to the viewpoint of the deniers. Various apocalyptic schemata existed during Paul’s day which could have formed his frame of reference.

Fourthly, what does suggest to us that “no resurrection whatsoever” was probably not what Paul had in mind, is the qualification “of the dead”, because it could imply another type of resurrection, namely of those that are alive. What the deniers denied was not a resurrection as such, but a resurrection of the dead. The problem they had to face was the reality of death. It is in this respect that 1 Corinthians 15:6b, 18 and 19 become important. The parenthetical character of 15:6b highlights for the implied readers the contrast between those that are still alive and those that have passed away. Although not part of the shared “kerygmatic” tradition, it also functions as shared knowledge between encoded author and implied readers. The fact that some have died is acknowledged. 1 Corinthians 15:18 is an amplificatio of the argument in 15:13-15 (Stenger 1979:88) and can be seen as the climax of the incrementum. Incrementum is a genus of the amplificatio which consists of the gradually rising designation of the subject matter. That 15:18 indeed forms the climax of the incrementum can be seen by the introductory ἡκαί as well as by the abrupt change in deictic pronouns. Its importance is further
highlighted by the contrast between "those that passed away in Christ" and "we ... hoping only in this life on Christ." The conjunction of these two sentences by means of contrast gives us an important clue to Paul's perspective of the deniers and confirms the fact that their denial concerned the resurrection of the dead. Those that have died do not belong to this life and accordingly, although "in Christ", they are deprived of hope. Hope belongs to this life only, not to the sphere of the dead. They are not resurrected.

Once it is conceded that the death of those that passed away constituted a problem for the deniers, it is remarkable to see the importance given to death in every ensuing subsection. Without my going into detail, one can see that death is the enemy to be destroyed in 15:20-28 and the destruction of death is highlighted by both the digression in which it occurs, as well as the two quotations surrounding the reference to its destruction; a baptism takes place on behalf of those that died (15:29) and Paul's life is continuously threatened (15:30-32). Although the main question in 15:35-49 differs from the problem in 15:1-34 and consequently also the status of the two sections, death keeps raising its ugly head in important sections (cf 15:36,42); it is presupposed in every antithesis made in 15:42b-49; and in the closing section (15:50-58) Paul bursts out in thanksgiving (15:57) because death has been smitten (15:54c,55).

It is in this respect that 15:35 also becomes important. The questions in 15:35 can be seen as an example of *subiectio*. *Subiectio* is a question figure characteristic of the party dialogue. A question is posed by the fictive dialogue partner, who usually functions as the opposing party. This question is then refuted in the answer. The objective is to enliven the debate (Lausberg 1960:381,382; see also Stenger 1979:101) and it can also serve to amplify the argument. It is important to see that the fictive dialogue partner is here negatively characterised (15:36a), thereby distinguishing "him" from the implied readers. Despite the fictitiousness of the situation it is more plausible to see the interlocutor as belonging to Paul's perspective on the group of deniers than to include the interlocutor within the circle of implied readers.

The view that a fictive dialogue partner from the opposition functions here as the questioner coincides with an important observation by Sider (1975:429). Identifying the two questions (15:35) as being rhetorical, challenging or rejecting an idea, he suggests 15:35a should be translated as: "Is it possible for the dead to be raised?" He indicates that this is exactly the way in which ἄν ἐστι was used in 14:7,9,16. The question Paul is dealing with concerns, therefore, not the "manner" of the resurrection, but rather the question of whether it is possible or not (cf also Stenger 1979:113,114; Talbert 1987:101).

This translational possibility becomes even more possible when one realises that actually very little is said about the manner of the resurrection.

It seems, therefore, that the "kerygma" of the deniers concerned the deceased and the impossibility that they could be raised from the dead. Their kerygma included neither a denial of the kerygma concerning Christ's resur-
rection nor a denial of a resurrection analogous to that of Christ but effected through baptism. The latter was, however, not the issue raised.

4 PAUL’S RESPONSE

4.1 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 as point of departure
Bünker (1984:62-64) structures the discourse of 15:1-11 into three sections, namely 15:1,2 as exordium, 15:3a as transitus and 15:3b-11 as narratio. The exordium is qualified as insinuatio, concealing the subject matter of the discourse with the object of effecting sympathy (1984:62) and the narratio is qualified as “Vorgangserzählung”, emphasising the historical (1984:66). Both the treatment of 1 Corinthians 15 in terms of exordium, transitus, narratio and argumentatio, and the mutual relationship of these categories are problematic. Although 1 Corinthians 15 could be seen as a speech or discourse on its own, treating it thus severs the links with the letter genre in which it has been embedded, and ignores important elements such as the position of 1 Corinthians 15 towards the end of the letter, the fact that a relationship has already been established between encoded author and implied readers, and the fact that with each subsequent section of a discourse the preceding parts are illuminated from a different angle – in short, the processural nature of rhetoric is neglected. Furthermore, his divisions into exordium and narratio are not really convincing. Why for example is 15:1,2 not seen as narratio? A very definite storyline can be discerned, use is made of historical material of which both parties are aware and, if the interaction between encoded author and implied readers is taken seriously, it could even be said that the foundation for the first part of the argument is given. Just as problematic is his view on 3b-11 as narratio. Although elements regarded by the community as historical do appear, they do not have the function of a “historical” narrative. Instead of treating 1 Corinthians 15 as a new discourse, it should be seen as part of the ongoing discourse embedded into the letter genre.

For that very reason 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 should not be separated from the main argument, but forms part and parcel of it, despite its point of departure.

We have already identified the status of the first part of the discourse as that of quality. The objective is to persuade the implied readers that a certain line of action will be more beneficial to them than another.

The argument starts off on an authoritative note, ἐνώπιον, thereby emphasising the superiority of the encoded author and the inferior role of the implied readers. Whisked off to their mutual past, they are reminded that they have been given and have accepted the gospel. The relationship of superior-inferior extends from the past. However, in also having received, the author can identify with them (15:2). The implied readers are given a glimpse into a further past, from which they are excluded. It is important to note that although the author identifies with them, the identification is qualified in the
roles of superior and inferior, thereby emphasising his authority. Not only is this already implicitly given in the omission of a reference to the implied readers transmitting the tradition (they believed), but it becomes clearer in his exposition of what he received.

What he received is presented in a very formal manner, again emphasising its authority. This can be seen not only from the parallelism, but also from the role of time. From the past from which the implied readers were excluded they are moved to an even further pre-past, and even further back into the past by the κατὰ τὰς γραφάς. What Paul received was indeed authoritative. Whether the christological formula in 3b,4 ends with 5a or not is irrelevant in a rhetorical analysis. What matters is the authoritative note emphasised by Cephas, the Twelve, the five hundred brothers, James and all the apostles. The stylistic arrangement refutes a chronological order. The encoded author, Paul, is given a prominent position. Just as Cephas introduced those that He appeared to, Paul closes the membership of that group, being the last of the "all" (Stenger 1979:79). Subtly he has suggested that he is on a par with Cephas. By his inclusion in the group who saw, he not only transmits the kerygmatic tradition, but has himself become part and parcel of it. His authority as an apostle has been established. The past witnesses to his inclusion into a privileged group.

In 9-11 his apostolicity is elaborated upon and it is done by comparing himself with the other members of that privileged group. Although inferior because he is the last member and because he prosecuted the communities, he is superior because by the grace of God he has worked harder than them.

It is only in 15:11 that he explicitly returns to his readers. By differentiating between them and himself he suggests on the one hand the totality of the group and on the other his superiority over them. By means of the præsens κατὰ τὰς γραφάς the implied readers find themselves again in the same time as the ὑποτήκου (15:1), but the tour through the past has firmly established their place. Furthermore, a question mark hangs over their present.

As the basis of Paul’s argument, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, has the following functions.

First and foremost, it serves to confirm the authority or power of Paul. By using the past, the "person" of Paul is structured (Perelman 1969:296), not only as a transmitter of the kerygma, but as part and parcel of that kerygma. The kerygma concerning the resurrection, confirms the authority of Paul. It gives him a privileged position within a privileged group. The implied readers are therefore confronted with the prestige of Paul – a prestige structured from the past.

Secondly, as the introduction to Paul’s argument, it confirms what is regarded as the object of agreement. The factuality of Paul proclaiming the kerygma of Christ’s resurrection and the implied readers’ acceptance of that kerygma is brought to the fore. Consensus exists on the following facts, namely the apostolic nature of the kerygma concerning the resurrection of
Christ and the acceptance of that kerygma by the implied readers. It is, therefore, not the historicity of the resurrection which is here at stake. The past is used, not to give the reader a historical account of the resurrection, but rather to confirm what is regarded as an object of consent.

Thirdly, although the role of the implied readers has also been structured from the past, and although they have agreed in the past to the authority of Paul's kerygma, doubt exists as to whether the superiority of Paul's kerygma is still accepted in the present. Uncertainty exists on whether the identification with the past in terms of a superior-inferior relationship is still valid in the present.

Fourthly, anticipation is created by the parenthetical 15:6b. Implicit is the suggestion that the kerygma concerning the resurrection of Christ did not exclude the death of those that witnessed and subsequently became part of that kerygma.

4.2 The argument in 1 Corinthians 15:12-34.
Having established the authority of his kerygma and what encoded author and implied readers agree upon, Paul's objective is now to indicate the disadvantage (inutile) of not following his kerygma and the advantages or sensibility of accepting his kerygma. The status of the discourse is that of quality which requires that his argumentation should persuade his readers that acceptance of his kerygma is more beneficial to them than the acceptance of that of the deniers. Although interspersed with various types of argumentation, the sequential type of argumentation dominates (Perelman 1969:261-349).

Since inutile is the objective of the argument, illustrating the disadvantages if a certain course were to be followed, the search for a logical structure in this section becomes futile (cf Bachmann 1978:265,272; 1982:84; also Sellin contra Bachmann 1986:256,257). Although it is logical to deduce from the general statement (that there is no resurrection of the dead) the particular (that Christ has not been resurrected, it is simply not logical to infer from the particular positive statement that Christ has been resurrected a general resurrection of the dead (Schütz 1969:443). However, if Paul's argument were logically to be valid, this must have been the case. The main problem with the debate concerning the logical structure of 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 is the scant attention paid to the rhetorical situation in which the argumentation takes place. The interaction between encoded author and implied readers is to a large extent neglected. It comes then also as no surprise that when the "ad hominem" or "affektische" character of the argumentation is observed, the logical structure of this passage is denied (Stenger 1979:90; Bünker 1984:142).

The argumentation becomes clearer when approached from a rhetorical perspective. After an agreement has been established between encoded author and implied readers on what is mutually regarded as shared facts on.
which there are agreement, the kerygma of the opposing party, namely the deniers, is refuted (refutatio). The refutation takes place by means of a pragmatic argument (Perelman 1969:266-270). A pragmatic argument consists inter alia of an event or action and its consequences. Depending on the values attached to the consequences, the audience has to make a favourable or unfavourable appraisal of the event or action. Put differently: the action or event is evaluated from the perspective of the consequences. These consequences need not necessarily be temporal – they could also be hypothetical. How does this type of argument function in our case?

In juxtaposing the kerygma of Paul and the kerygma of the deniers (15:12), the implied readers are compelled to weigh the odds should they opt for the latter. That which has to be appraised is the kerygma of the deniers. In its evaluation, various hypothetical consequences are indicated. Although the future is not explicitly mentioned, except in 15:19 which functions as the transition to the next part of the argument, the consequences have a futuristic character due to their hypothetical nature.

It is important to see that the consequences should be appraised by the implied readers and not by the deniers of the resurrection. The "those among you" defies identification of the deniers with the implied readers. Consequently, due to the implied readers being responsible for the appraisal, the argumentation is not only addressed to them, but they are also involved in it – they become part and parcel of it. The unfavourable consequences concern them (15:14c, 17b, c, d) and their relationship with Paul (15:14a, 15). A choice for the kerygma of the deniers – and therefore a negation of Paul's kerygma – severs their relationship with the apostolic office (15:5-11; 14b, 15), a relationship acknowledged in the past. A positive appraisal of the deniers' kerygma not only excludes Paul's kerygma, but it also poses a threat to his authority as an apostle. However, the consequences do not only pertain to their relationship with Paul, but they are of direct relevance for themselves. Negating the "liberating" power of Paul's kerygma means they are still in their sins and those members who passed away have no hope. In short, appraising the kerygma of the deniers positively and therefore simultaneously rejecting the apostolic kerygma of Paul, means erasing the immediate past which was so positively evaluated in 15:1-11. They are where they were before their encounter with the apostolic kerygma.

The sequential type of argumentation occurs again in 15:29-32, although now as an argument of waste and after the importance of the future has been established. An argument of waste also concerns an event-consequence or means-to-an-end relationship, that is, a succession of events. The succession of events strives for completion. The notion of waste appears when the completion is prevented by robbing the sequence of events of its end. If completion cannot be reached, what has happened so far is rendered useless or a waste (Perelman 1969:279-281).
The two rhetorical questions suggest mutual knowledge and appreciation for the custom of substitutionary baptism (15:29) on the one hand and Paul’s suffering (15:30-32) on the other. The ethical and emotional appeals dominate (Bünker 1984:70). In both cases the non-acceptance of the apostolic kerygma concerning the resurrection relativises behaviour in the present. In the case of the implied readers their rejection of a resurrection of the deceased, renders the practice of a substitutionary baptism on behalf of the dead useless (15:29). In the case of Paul, present sacrifices, due to suffering, will prove to be a waste if the kerygma concerning the resurrection is not accepted (15:30-32). "Lack" of the resurrection of the dead as the end of a succession of events devalues actions in the present. The resurrection of the dead is, therefore, evaluated from the futility of the present. As such the denial of the resurrection of the dead cannot be to the advantage of either the implied readers or the prestige of Paul as a martyr.

It is important to see that the sequential argumentation has the objective of highlighting the grave consequences, destroying the past and rendering the present useless, if a certain course of action were to be followed. The problem of the deceased is not logically resolved, but treated in terms of the interaction between Paul, the deniers and the implied readers. Due to the kerygma of the deniers posing a threat to the apostolic authority of Paul, the hierarchical identification introduced in 15:1-11 is here continued - social powerplay plays an important role.

In the discourse of 1 Corinthians 15 the section 20-28 occupies an important and prominent position, because it is here that Paul attempts to deal directly with the problem of the situation. An impression of greater "objectivity" or positivity (Stenger 1979:91; Bünker 1984:69; Sellin 1986:270) is created by the positive and assertive introduction "But now..." (Stenger 1979:90), the total omission of any first and second person pronoun deixics, the all-inclusiveness conveyed by the repetitive use of "all" (15:22,24c,25b,27,28,) and "everyone" (15:23a) as well as by the division in temporal stages. Various indicators have therefore been given to the implied readers to alert them to the importance of this section in the process of argumentation. It is for that very reason that Bünker (1984:69) identifies this section as the probatio of the argument, which, according to him, is "ruhiger und weniger affektisch...als die refutatio v 12-19."

A feature which strongly characterises this section is its emphasis on temporality. Wolff (1982:177) enumerates the following references to time: the "first" (15:23b), "those at his parousia" (15:23c), the "end" (15:24) as well as particles which have time as their focus: ἐπείτα (15:23c), ἑττα (15:24a), ὅταν (15:24b,24c,27b,28a), ἐχριστόν (15:25b), τότε (15:28). One could add the reference to "this life only" in 15:19, taking into consideration the transitional character of this statement, the νομισμένος (15:20), the antithetical parallelism in 15:22, where Ἀδημι...ἐποθησκεῖων refers to the present and Χριστός... ἔστωκεν to the future (Conzelmann 1969:318; Stenger 1979:92; Bünker
1984:69; Lang 1986:222,223) τάγμα (15:23a) and the ἔσχατος of 15:26. It is important to note that these temporal references mark definite stages in time. Even the indefinite ἡμεῖς-clauses (15:24bc), functioning to elaborate and describe the "end", refer to two subsequent periods in time as can be seen by the use of the praesens and aorist. According to Mearns (1984:27) Paul is then "deliberately concerned to impose a new order, a programmatic 'tagma', upon the eschatological events." These stages in time pertain specifically to the present and the future and the focus is on the latter (contra Sellia 1986:270,271,274).

The emphasis on temporality is a sure indication of the continuation of the sequential type of argumentation. However, it assumes a different form, namely that of the device of stages. The device of stages entails the fragmentation of a situation in time with the objective of smoothing out difficulties which might be encountered in a particular situation. In order to solve these incompatibilities a situation is extended by means of fragmentation (Perelman 1969:282). Although this type of argument can be concretised in various situations and forms, one of its main characteristics is to indicate the particularity of each phase or stage (Perelman 1969:284). Furthermore, although the device of stages is often used to obscure an ultimate, undesirable end, it can also be used as a delaying tactic, presenting and enhancing a situation as a stepping stone towards what the opponents regard as the final measure (Perelman 1969:282,283).

How does the device of stages function in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28? We have already seen that two stages in time can be identified, namely the present and the future. Particular to the present is the power of death (15:21a), introduced by Adam (15:22a). Paradoxically, with this dominant characteristic of the present is, however, also the belief, the shared knowledge, that Christ was the first One to rise from the circle of the deceased (15:20,23b). As such He should be seen as an exception which invalidates the rule (Perelman 1969:355) of the present, namely that people die.

It is, however, to the future that Paul wishes to direct the attention of the implied readers and for that very reason the future receives more attention and is divided into more stages. Although a clear distinction is made between present and future it is more difficult to identify the various stages in the future. The main problem is whether an interim period should be seen between the parousia of Christ and the end. The εἰρήν (15:24a) following the ἐπιλύσθαι (15:23c) seems to point to an interim period in which the subjection of powers by Christ and the transference of power from Christ to God will take place. However, two aspects contradict this interpretation. Firstly, the resurrection of Christ as the first fruits already signifies the beginning of the subjection of the powers. Secondly, "those who belong to Christ" (15:23c) will be made alive (15:22b) at his parousia. This implies that the ultimate power, namely death, has been destroyed. But the destruction of death seems to happen only at the ultimate end (15:26).
There is, however, another interpretation, namely that two series of inter-related periods are being presented. The first series elaborates on the τάγγηματα and two sub-periods can be discerned, the first being that of the present in which the resurrection of Christ took place, but not the resurrection of the deceased. The second sub-period is then introduced with the parousia of Christ and this signifies the time in which those in Christ will be made alive (15:22b,23c). The εἴτε τὸ τέλος (15:24a) should then not be seen in a chronological sense but in a transitional sense summarising the preceding and simultaneously introducing a digression (Stenger 1979:93; Bünker 1984:69,144; Sellin 1986:272).

If the reference to the "end" is seen as a transitional statement introducing a digression, the following periods can be discerned. Period 1 is the resurrection of Christ. With the resurrection of Christ the present forms the time in which the subjection of powers begins. Period 2 is the parousia and the resurrection of those in Christ. It is here that the culmination of the subjection of powers is reached with the destruction of death. During period 3 authority is handed over to God (cf also Conzelmann 1969:320,321; Wolff 1982:181; Sellin 1986:272).

The digression has, therefore, the following functions. As a further, complementary, description of yet another series of periods it interrupts the flow of thought, thereby emphasising to the implied readers the importance of these periods. Furthermore, it serves to focus the readers' attention on the future. Finally, it highlights the future as a time in which the subjection of powers and authorities will reach its culmination in the destruction of death. That death's end is the point Paul wishes to emphasise in the digressio can also be seen by the inclusio formed by the two quotations from Psalm 110:1 and 8:7 (cf also Conzelmann 1969:324; Sellin 1986:274). The objective of his argumentation in this section is to emphasise that in the end death will be destroyed (Wolff 1982:182).

By means of the device of stages, the resolution of the problem of the deceased is delayed until a time in future. The two "characteristics" of the present, namely Christ and Death, will meet again in future, but then death will be finally destroyed. For the time being, for the present, the authoritative apostolic kerygma concerning the resurrection of Christ serves as an indication that this problem will indeed be resolved.

Although the device of stages is not explicitly used again in the argumentation of 1 Corinthians 15, the situation achieved by means of this technique is very important to the rest of the discourse and determines to a large extent the flow of the argument. Another type of argument may be used, but the situation created by the device of stages underlies the argumentation.

We have already seen that the status of the discourse changes at 15:35 from qualitas to coniectura. What is at stake is the possibility of the resurrection of the dead, and anthropology (the second question) has been chosen as
point of departure. Wolff (1982:195) states: "die zweite präzisiert die erste" (contra Talbert 1987:100). It is, however, noteworthy to see that the anthropological point of departure is to a large extent determined by the elements established by the device of stages. The essential, qualitative difference between the resurrection body and the mortal, perishable body is one of succession. Paul's objective is not to give an anthropological exposition of the manner of resurrection. What is in focus is once again the role of death. On the one hand the unavoidable necessity of death is underlined, on the other the destruction of death. However, death's shadow lies on the present, while the resurrection signifies the dawn of a new day, the future. (Present and future do not necessarily refer to the tense of the verb.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to die (15:36c)</td>
<td>to live (15:36b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bare grain (15:37c)</td>
<td>future body (15:37b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sowing in corruption (15:42b)</td>
<td>raising in incorruption (15:42c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sowing in dishonour (15:43a)</td>
<td>raising in glory (15:43b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sowing in weakness (15:43c)</td>
<td>raising in power (15:43d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natural body (15:44b)</td>
<td>spiritual body (15:44b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first man Adam (15:45a)</td>
<td>last Adam (15:45b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>living soul (15:45a)</td>
<td>life-giving Spirit (15:45b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first man (15:47a)</td>
<td>second man (15:47b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we have borne (15:49a)</td>
<td>we shall bear (15:49b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all will not pass away (15:51b)</td>
<td>all will be changed (15:51c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever this corruptible...</td>
<td>Trumpet shall sound, dead as incorruptible shall be raised, we shall be changed (15:52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15:54a)</td>
<td>Will be clothed with incorruption (15:54a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This mortal...</td>
<td>Will be clothed with immortality (15:54b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Then shall be (15:54c).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Stenger (1979:108), who makes a division between a parable (15:36-38) and a list (15:39-41), the qualitative succession due to the narrative character of the parable is transposed upon the list, leading to the qualitative local opposition between earthly and heavenly bodies (cf also 15:47-49). Furthermore, the function of indicating differences is to bring about distance and this is done by referring to what is decisive or essential and by referring to the cause (Perelman 1969:348). The list (15:38-41) serves to indicate the decisive differences inherent in the creation (references to the creation narrative abound). As such it links with the parable – God is the cause of the essential differences in the creation (15:38). However, it also paves the way for 15:42-.
57. A decisive "distance" exists between the body now and the body then. This
distance, this essential difference, is likewise created by God – God’s victory
over and removal of death (15:53-57).

The "impossibility" objection of the deniers is countered by referring the
implied readers to the future, which is essentially and qualitatively different
from the present. Knowledge of the future is the prerogative of only the lead­
ers of the initiates (15:51), which emphasises their social power.

5 CONCLUSION

Mearns (1984:20) identified four "pressures" from a historical perspective in
the early Pauline communities, namely the growing numbers of deceased
first-generation believers, the tendency to eschatological enthusiasm, bodily
weakness and imminent persecutions. These were the pressures that had to
be considered in a new apocalyptic programme.

My analysis has shown that the deceased were indeed a problem for a
group in the Corinthian community. Although very little can be said about
the deniers of the resurrection, their problem with the deceased seems to
have been less intellectual or cognitive than practical. They seem to have
been less deniers of the resurrection than Christians confronted and dis­
appointed with the reality and unassailable power of death. Although they,
too, accepted the kerygma concerning Christ’s resurrection, the practical
situation prevented them from adhering to a physical resurrection of the
deceased. Although their denial, therefore, concerns the deceased, accept­
ance of some or other form of spiritual resurrection for the living – that is, in
their solidarity with Christ – cannot be excluded. However, that is not the
problem addressed by Paul. Finally, it could be that these deniers expected a
parousia so imminent due to the kerygma of Paul (cf 15:51) that the death of
their brothers caused them to doubt his authority as apostle.

The problem of the deceased should, however, be seen in a wider context,
namely in the context of the interaction between Paul, his readers and the
opposing group. Although it is impossible to construct the sociological rela­
tionship between the readers addressed by Paul and the opposing group (cf
Schöllgen 1988:77) the readers clearly tolerated and were perhaps even posi­
tively inclined towards the group of deniers. Being a more liberal community
it is quite possible that they could have been more tolerant to other views of
the gospel as well. There is, on the other hand, very little to substantiate
Schüssler Fiorenza’s (1987:396) viewpoint that Paul misinterpreted Chloe’s
information concerning the Corinthian debates as party strifes. Whatever the
case, the group addressed as the readers did not reject the "kerygma" of the
deniers and this posed a serious threat to Paul’s authority as an apostle. It
created the "doubt" which was the cause for the rhetorical situation.

Paul responds to the doubt or the need of the situation in the first place
by driving a wedge between the implied readers and the deniers, thereby
strengthening in-group consciousness and his own social power. The
argumentation of Paul reveals, therefore, what MacDonald (1988:43), following G Theissen, finds as a pattern for life in the Pauline communities, namely "love-patriarchalism". However, where a situation develops in which the boundaries laid down by "love-patriarchalism" are threatened, it could lead to the ostracisation of Christians who believe differently. In the Corinthian crisis of loyalty the implied readers have to decide where their loyalties lie. Opting for their "kerygma" means severing their relationship with him, rejecting his authority over them. The readers are pointed to the disadvantages gained in maintaining their relationship with the deniers. Opting for his kerygma means confirming their past relationship and participating in the divine and revealed knowledge of the ultimate destruction of death. It is important to see that neither the refutation of the viewpoint of the deniers nor the propounding of his own should be subjected to logic or should be seen as comprehensive – the intention is pragmatic.

The problem of the deceased is postponed to the future by means of the device of stages. The possibility of the resurrection of the deceased is made dependent upon a change in stages effected only by Christ's subjection of all powers. By pointing his readers to a glorious future, he transfers the values attached to that era to the dark realities of the present, thereby relativising the problems of the present. In the reality he presents to his readers the future not only determines the present, but also the past. Should their future decision be negative, that which constituted their past will be damaged.

WORKS CONSULTED

MacDonald, M 1988. The Pauline churches: A socio-historical study of institutionalization in the Pauline
and Deutero-Pauline writings. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


Schüssler Fiorenza, E 1987. Rhetorical situation and historical reconstruction in 1 Corinthians. NTS 33, 386-403.


J N Vorster, Department of New Testament, UNISA, P O Box 392, Pretoria, 0001, Republic of South Africa.