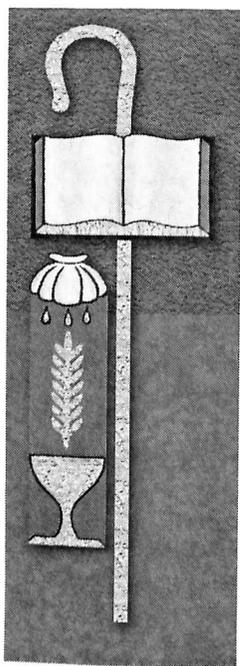


# WOMEN PASTORS?



**The Ordination of Women  
in Biblical Lutheran Perspective**

**A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS  
THIRD EDITION**

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**Edited by Matthew C. Harrison  
and John T. Pless**

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# MAY WOMEN BE ORDAINED AS PASTORS?

DAVID P. SCAER

## PART I: INTRODUCTION

### A. "WHY FACE THE QUESTION?"

The entire issue of the ordination of women as pastors has hit the Lutheran Church in our country rather recently and without much warning or preparation. I have failed to discover any significant comment in Lutheran theological literature in America on the issue in the 1950's or in the first half of the last decade.

Three books have come across my desk written by women dealing with their role as pastors.<sup>1</sup> The one thing they have in common is that they feel it a plot of male domination that the office of pastor never be given to women. There is also no honest attempt to discuss the exegetical issues. Each writer assumes a type of democratic principle that men and women are equal, and without ever defining what is meant by "equality," states that women should be ordained as pastors without actually defending it from a Biblical stance. *Adam's Fractured Rib*, published by Fortress Press, even predicates of the Old Testament Jews and St. Paul a type of anti-feminism.

Whatever "anti-feminism" means, it does immediately suggest the women's liberation movement of the late sixties and seventies. One suspects that as long as our nation and perhaps the western world is taken up with the movement, the concern for the New Testament teaching in this question will be secondary. It is argued this way: Since men and women are equal and

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Sittler Ermath, *Adam's Fractured Rib* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970); *Women's Liberation and the Church*. Edited by Sarah Bentley Doely (New York: Association Press, 1970); Elsie Gibson, *When the Minister is a Woman* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970). Cf. my reviews in *The Springfielder*, Vols. 34, (3) and (4); 35, (1).

since men serve as pastors, women should have the same privileges. Many concerns of the women are legitimate. Where they have been offended by lack of promotion and inadequate salary simply because they are women, this should be corrected. Still the church recognizes that its worship procedures are based on principles determined by God who has revealed His will in the Scriptures. Certainly the political and social climate influences the church and always will, but as history has shown, these have hardly been beneficial at all times. The situation in the United States may be further complicated by the proposed constitutional amendment guaranteeing equality regardless of sex.

## B. ITS ORIGINS

### 1. Europe

The contemporary movement in Lutheranism to ordain women as pastors originated not with any theological studies but because of the connection of the church and state in certain countries of Europe.<sup>2</sup> The history of the ancient Catholic Church does not know of women holding the pastoral office.<sup>3</sup> The Montanists knew of women preachers, but the witness of a sect judged to be heretical hardly can set in itself an example to be emulated.<sup>4</sup> The ordination of women in Lutheran churches occurred in those countries where the church is at least in some way supported and hence regulated by the government. The roots of this problem go back to Constantine. Since then, with only a few interruptions, church and state, throne and altar, have existed in alliance. Unfortunately the Lutheran Reformation did not abrogate but endorsed this

2 A summary of the situation in Europe was gathered by Dr. Fred Meuser, now president of Capital Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio of the American Lutheran Church in *The Ordination of Women* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1970), pp. 34f.

3 The question of the canonicity of the pseudigraphical *Acts of Paul and Thecla* was decided negatively by Tertullian because the Asiatic clergyman who confessed to being the author "made Paul guilty of allowing a woman to preach and baptize." Bruce M. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 91 (March 1972), p. 14. Thus the early church understood the apostolic testimony as against women preachers.

4 The Montanists had many things in common with today's Pentecostals, including special manifestations of the Holy Spirit. There is very good reason to believe that the situation of the Montanists might have been parallel with that of the Corinthian congregation where so-called Spirit manifestations and the participation of women as leaders in the church service are treated by Paul as abuses. That 1 Corinthians 14 handles both problems is hardly coincidental. It could very well be that the Spirit movement is basically incompatible with the proper institution and correct exercise of the public office of the ministry. Pentecostals tend to treasure more highly their selective worship among themselves and to neglect the regular services of the congregation. Those possessed with the Spirit in Corinth, so they thought, had the right to speak at will, regardless of qualifications. Some had tried to set their authority up against Paul's (v. 34). It is hardly coincidental that the movement to ordain women as pastors is contemporary to Neo-Pentecostalism, at least in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The precedent for this is the Corinthian congregation and the Montanists.

arrangement on an emergency basis. The emergency situation of the state controlling Lutheran church affairs to some extent has lasted nearly one half of a millenium. At first kings in certain Lutheran countries appointed bishops and pastors and provided for the church's financial support. Since the time of the Enlightenment, the power of kings has steadily declined and the real power has been placed in the hands of the parliaments representing the people on a democratic basis. The authority of the monarch to support and regulate the church has been gradually transferred to the parliaments and prime ministers. To a certain extent the church has become a political implement in the hands of the government, reflecting in its organization the desires of the government in power. Thus it is not surprising that the first decisions to ordain women in Lutheran churches were political, not ecclesiastical. Norway permitted the first women pastors in the year 1938, but the decision was made by parliament not by a church convention representing the congregations. Until 1956 a woman appointed pastor of a congregation by the government could be rejected by a congregation. At that time even this right was taken away from the congregation. It was not until 1961 or twenty-three years after the law was passed that a woman was ordained in Norway. Denmark and Sweden would follow suit. East Germany and Czechoslovakia took similar action. In each of these cases the action was taken by governments with socialist or communist leanings.<sup>5</sup>

A word should be said about the case in Sweden as it indicates the tension between the church and state. The ordination of women as pastors was rejected by the church convention; however, it was made law by the parliament, which in Sweden has been socialist controlled for many years. Faced with this dilemma, the church convention subsequently approved it. A number of bishops opposed it. Bishop Bo Giertz and others have fought it tooth and nail on the bases of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.<sup>6</sup> Women pastors are now the rule in European Lutheran territorial churches with the exception of Bavaria. There Bishop Dietzfelbinger has made a valiant stand against his own church convention.<sup>7</sup> Statistically it might be said, as *Ordination of Women* claims, that "Over half of the Lutherans in the world are in churches which now have women clergy on their rolls."<sup>8</sup> Now that

5 All of the cases taken from Fred Meuser, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-39.

6 Dean Gustav Danell, acting as bishop during the illness of the regular bishop, went so far as to lock the church doors when women came for ordination. *The Springfielder*, Vol. 34, 1, (June 1970), p. 68.

7 In the summer of 1970 members of the Bavarian Church had expected that church to implement the ordination of women pastors against the desires of their bishop, who had been in ill health. Surprisingly this church has not carried through with these plans.

8 *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

two large Lutheran bodies in America have taken the step, nearly 60 or 70% of world Lutheranism endorses the practice of women in the pastoral role.<sup>9</sup> However, arguments for the ordination of women as pastors based on the practices of Lutheran churches throughout the world are tenuous at best, as the action was initiated by the state and not the church and was politically motivated with theological considerations secondary or non-existent. In some cases the state forced women pastors on the churches against their expressed will.

## 2. The United States

The situation in the United States can be surveyed briefly. Of course, in our country, the government does not control the church. After what some confessionally minded Lutherans have endured for the sake of conscience in Europe at the hands of the state,<sup>10</sup> I believe that we have something for which to be thankful. The first step to the ordination of women came when the seminaries of the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America admitted women into their regular 'B.D.' programs of their seminaries.<sup>11</sup> The next step could have been predicted. The question then had to be asked of what to do with women 'B.D.' students. In 1967, the ALC's Church Council found nothing biblically or theologically opposing the ordination of women. They did indicate that there might be practical and ecumenical difficulties.<sup>12</sup> Here the door was opened. The only opposition was one of expediency in which some might be offended. The LCA followed suit in 1968 when its Commission on the Comprehensive Study of the Doctrine of the

<sup>9</sup> Church statistics can be deceptive, especially in giving the membership of Lutheran churches throughout the world. In Scandinavia and many parts of Germany, the Lutheran population is basically coterminous with the resident population. They are Lutherans by law even without baptism. In the United States they are Lutherans by choice. The Lutheran churches in Europe face the prospect of de-establishment. In compiling membership figures for world Lutheranism we are adding numbers which do not in any way represent the same things. In some European Lutheran churches the attendance of the people at church does not even represent 1% of the membership. American churches have their problems, but if we dare to compare, the results will be quite obvious. Forty-one per cent attend on a weekly average in America.

<sup>10</sup> The union between Lutheran and Reformed, as the ordination of women pastors, was instigated and enforced by the state. Most infamous is the Prussian Union of 1817 and 1830. The majority of the remaining Lutheran and Reformed churches in Europe have now willingly expressed their desire for fellowship on the basis of the Leuenberg Concord of 1971. Cf. *The Springfielder*, Vol. 35, 4, (March 1972), pp. 241-249.

<sup>11</sup> *The Ordination of Women*, pp. 36f. More recent reports assert that 22 women are enrolled in Luther Seminary, St. Paul (ALC) with the Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary (LCA) having an equal amount. Until now the several ordained women in the ALC and LCA have been isolated incidences. In ten years this will hardly be the case.

<sup>12</sup> This is the same attitude held now by some in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Cf. "The Orders of Creation," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. 43, 4, (March 1972), p. 177.

Ministry approved the practice. The ALC and the LCA do not have their own theological commissions as does the Missouri Synod. They rely instead on the Division of Theological Studies of the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. Sometime in late spring or early summer 1970, the division of theological studies published the booklet *The Ordination of Women* which came to the conclusion that there was nothing commanding and nothing forbidding the ordination of women as pastors of congregations. It was declared to be what our Confessions called an adiaphoron, neither commanded nor forbidden and not a matter of revelation and doctrine.<sup>13</sup> The results contained in this booklet were received as the theological opinion of both the LCA and ALC at their plenary conventions in the summer of 1970 when both groups endorsed the ordination of women pastors. The press reported that there was little or no theological discussion on the issue. The vote in the LCA was nearly overwhelming, while in the ALC the vote was closer than anticipated. To date, at least one woman in each of these synods has received ordination. At its conventions in 1969 and 1971, the Missouri Synod continued to oppose the practice as doctrinally contrary to Scripture.<sup>14</sup>

## PART II: IS THE ORDAINATION OF WOMEN AS PASTORS PERMISSIBLE ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT?

### A. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ORDAINATION?

In answering any question about the ordination of women as pastors, the meaning of ordination must be defined. Ordination as a ceremony for entering the office of the ministry is an adiaphoron, as it is not commanded or forbidden by the Scriptures. The term can mean exactly what the church wants it to. This is true of other theological terms, the most outstanding of which may be "sacrament."<sup>15</sup> The public office of the ministry is not an adiaphoron but is commanded by God. Generally in the Missouri Synod the term ordination by common consent is used to designate the service in which an individual is recognized as being capable of performing all the functions of the pastoral ministry, whether or not he actually performs all of them. Thus ordination

13 The same position was asserted by the president of the ALC. (Cf. *Lutheran Witness Reporter* VII, (November 14, 1971), p. 3. As the matter is not specifically handled in the Lutheran Confessions, it cannot be made a matter of fellowship. This is similar to the debate between the Missouri and the Iowa synods in the 19th century. Missouri held that whatever was revealed by God was binding and Iowa held only that which the Lutheran Confessions specifically discuss is binding. Cf. Fred W. Meuser, *The Formation of the American Lutheran Church* (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1958), pp. 56-62.

14 "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" issued by Dr. J. A. O. Preus, president of the Missouri Synod, in March 1972 seems to support this position. Cf. p. 2.

15 Cf. Augsburg Confession XIV and especially Apology XIII.

may be the first installation service or it is closely connected with the first installation service.<sup>16</sup>

However ordination may be given a broader definition, depending on the needs of the church.<sup>17</sup> It may designate as "ordination" any service in which an individual is publicly recognized as having been assigned or called to any office in the church. Here can be included parochial school teachers, church officers who are generally inducted into service sometime after the first of the year, Sunday School teachers, and Vacation Bible School teachers. The list can be as long as there are services officially connected with the church. Evangelism and stewardship callers can also be ordained into their offices. Persons who undergo these types of ordination services are not pastors as they are not ordained or recognized as pastors. They are ordained only into the function which the congregation assigns to them and for the length of time which the congregation assigns them. A parochial school teacher may be given his task for several years or a lifetime. Perhaps a VBS teacher works two weeks, and an evangelism caller is assigned for several hours on a given Sunday afternoon. Let it be said clearly that such people publicly recognized by the congregation for specific functions possess a public office but not the office of the pastor. Strictly speaking, there can be no opposition of the ordination of women so long as that ordination is not to the office of pastor. They are by no means excluded from every office or function in the church.<sup>18</sup> The issue before us is the ordination of women as pastors of churches—not the question of whether they can be given certain public offices in the church in a public way.<sup>19</sup> The life of sanctification whereby every Christian witnesses

16 Until the 1960's many seminary graduates who had served as missionaries or instructors at synodical schools were not ordained because they were not called as pastors directly by individual congregations. They were commissioned. This provided an awkward situation when they accepted calls as pastors. The common procedure was to install or commission them but not ordain them. Thus there are some pastors in the Missouri Synod who have not been ordained, in the sense of having undergone a rite specifically called 'ordination.'

17 Here we are reminded that form follows function in the organization of the church. Unlike Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists and others, Lutherans have never insisted on any one form of church government and have refrained from regarding the organization of the New Testament churches as legally binding. If such were the case, we would be faced with embarrassingly different forms of church government, e.g., 1 Corinthians with its apostles, teachers, prophets, tongue speakers, etc. and 1 Timothy with its pastors and deacons. Cf. Herman Sasse, "Walther and Loehe: On the Church," *The Springfielder*, Vol. 35, 3, (December 1971), 176-182.

18 "The Orders of Creation," *op. cit.*, seems to suggest this possibility with which I would agree. A clear definition of "professional ministerial roles" would be beneficial.

19 This position is also held by Dr. Berthold von Schenk. "There is no Scriptural reason why she should not be ordained, but she can't celebrate or preach in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, for she symbolizes the Bride of Christ." *The Springfielder*, Vol. 36, 1, (June 1972), p. 11.

to Christ continually falls not under the category of ordination, but under baptism as no specific functions are designated.

## B. CAN WOMEN BE PASTORS?

The real question is whether women can serve on a permanent basis as pastors of congregations. This is the action endorsed by the majority of the European Lutheran churches and the LCA and the ALC in America. It also has widespread and growing support in the Missouri Synod. Therefore we must pose the question to the New Testament, “Does the New Testament permit women pastors?”<sup>20</sup> and not the question “Does the New Testament know of the ordination of women pastors?”

### I. 1 Corinthians 14: 33b–38

#### *a. Context*

Of the several passages in the New Testament that might possibly speak to the issues, I Corinthians 14:33b–38 must be singled out first. Let us first attempt to reconstruct the context. Paul’s great concern from chapters 11 through 16:4 is liturgical. In other words, he is interested in setting the worship life of the Corinthian congregation in order procedurally and doctrinally. In Chapter 11 he deals with the problem of women having uncovered heads and drunkenness and gluttony in the church in connection with the Lord’s Supper. Chapter 12 discusses how various gifts in the congregation are to be used. Some of these gifts are connected with the worship service, for example, the utterance of knowledge and wisdom and the gift of tongues. The famous chapter on love, 13, is really a parenthetical element, following Chapter 12. Love or consideration is to be used in manifesting various gifts in the worship service of the church. This admonition applies quite specifically to the tongue speakers. Chapter 14:1–33b discusses the necessity of clarity of preaching in the church. Chapter 14:37–40 sums up Paul’s authority as an apostle to interfere in the worship affairs of the congregation. Chapter 15, the great section in the New Testament on the resurrection of Jesus, deals with the content of the Christian preaching in the Corinthian congregation. Chapter 16:1–4 deals with the problem of taking up monetary collections in the congregation with the suggestion that it be done every Sunday. The remaining verses of the chapter and book are Paul’s farewell greetings. We may also assume that these greetings were read right in the middle of the regular worship service. This

<sup>20</sup> The question, thus worded “Does the New Testament know of women pastors” is fraught with difficulties. It is an historical question and akin to the Aland-Jeremias debate on infant baptism. The theological principle is at issue here, not the political administration of the church at Corinth. Regardless of the type of church administration adopted, the basic principle involved is whether women may lead the worship services.

might be the beginning of special intercessions for individuals read from the diptych in connection with the celebration of the sacrament.

*b. Exegesis of I Corinthians 14:33b-38*

The section dealing with the silence of women appears among other sections that deal specifically with the worship services. Whatever is meant by silence or not being permitted to speak has to do with the regular worship services. It does not mean that whenever Christians get together, that women are not allowed to speak. Let us divide our discussion of this section into three parts: I. What does Paul mean by requiring the silence of women in the church? II. By what authority does Paul enforce this regulation on the church? III. Can Paul's prohibition be interpreted sociologically as being the custom of the day and hence not applicable in another time or culture?

I. What does Paul mean by requiring the silence of women in the church?

The prohibition applies specifically to the regular worship services. It has already been shown that chapters 11 through 16 have to do with the regulations of the worship service. This pericope does not demand that women must be silent at all times. It does not forbid women from witnessing to Jesus Christ. Lydia, as we know, was instrumental in gathering Christians for the congregation in Philippi. Neither does it mean that women cannot give instruction outside of the regular worship services. Priscilla and her husband Aquilla (Acts 18:26) expounded Christianity to Apollos. This was a private instruction and had nothing to do with the public proclamation of the Word in the regular worship services. The Greek word *didasko* deals with the public proclamation and it is not used to describe Priscilla's private instruction.<sup>21</sup> The passage also says nothing of women as teachers in our schools, as these are not involved with the leading of public worship of the congregation. Therefore those arguments that suggest that if we take this passage "literally"<sup>22</sup> (whatever that might or might not mean) we could not have women parochial or Sunday

21 The LCUSA's *The Ordination of Women* very wisely does not use the case of Priscilla as a major part of its argument. Still it is a little more than slightly confusing in stating that she, Lydia, and Thelica had "leadership roles." The phrase "leadership roles" has all the marks of the 20th century culture and in any case seems totally inadequate in describing the functions of these women. The phrase "leadership roles" may mean positions of responsibility. To assert that certain individuals, male or female, are permitted to take various responsibilities in the church hardly per se means that they are capable of assuming the pastoral office in the church, no more than a Sunday School or parochial school teacher, male or female, can be a pastor. *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

22 This view is set forth in *The Ordination of Women*, *op. cit.*, p. 14. "By pointing out that if it is taken literally, women may not teach in church school or parochial school, direct choirs, or even pray or sing aloud." If the question of the ordination of women becoming pastors were not so serious, one would like to suggest that the writer of this phrase has slipped from the sublime into the ridiculous. Literally Paul is forbidding not the use of female vocal chords, but the women's participation in the sermon. The prohibition to 'teach' refers to public instruction of the congregation. Cf. Bo Giertz,

School teachers, have not taken into consideration the situation to which the Apostle is speaking.

As we have defined the location to which the prohibition refers, namely the church services, we must define what it means "not to speak". Twice in this pericope Paul forbids women from speaking. A third time, he mentions that they should keep silent. Thus, within four verses there are three prohibitions. We can hardly say that this prohibition was merely a slip of the apostolic pen. The term speak used here is *lalao* and not *lego*. *Lego* means any kind of speaking or use of the vocal chords in some type of intelligible words. *Lalao*, unless otherwise modified by adverbs, when used in connection with worship services, refers to religious speaking or speaking religiously in the public way.<sup>23</sup> Thus Paul does not mean that women may not participate in the public singing of the congregations and the spoken prayers, i.e., the Lord's Prayer. The command to keep silent is a command not to take charge of the public worship service. The NEB catches it best when it translates the section in question in this way: "Women should not address the meeting. They have no license to speak . . . It is a shocking thing that a woman should address the congregation."<sup>24</sup> I Timothy 2:12 has the same intent. The situation in the Corinthian congregation can be partially reconstructed. Women in Corinth were accustomed from the association with the Temple of Aphrodite in that city to lead worship services. As there had been priestesses in the adulterous and idolatrous worship of the sex goddesses it was quite natural for them to assume the leadership roles in the Christian congregation.<sup>25</sup> Paul specifically forbids this.

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"Twenty-Three Theses on The Holy Scriptures, The Women, and the Office of the Ministry" *The Springfielder*, Vol 33, 4, (March 1970), p. 14f.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Whether the Corinthian congregation had a sermon in the sense that we do is open to question. *The Living Bible* paraphrases that idea with "They are not to participate in the discussion." At Corinth there might have been something of a dialog sermon with various persons or officers of the congregation commenting on the sermon. Paul's prohibition is against their participation in this kind of activity. The question of whether the congregation knew of 'ordained pastors' cannot be discussed here, as it cannot be determined whether the ceremony of ordination was exercised here. But if Paul is forbidding women from the minor role of theological discussion in the church service as seems the case from these words "If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home," it can hardly be argued or permitted to state that they should assume the task of discussion leaders.

25 *The Ordination of Women*, *op. cit.*, pp. 14f. suggests that the subordination of the women "is typical of the code morality which shows up in several New Testament references. It is a catechetical form perhaps taken over from the culture of the day." *If anything, Paul is going against the prevailing culture in not letting women participate in the church services as leaders.* Also it will not do to state that he is imposing his "Jewish" culture upon the Gentiles. He fought tooth and nail against imposing the Jewish circumcision regulations on the Galatians and holiday regulations on the Colossians. In the matter of hats,

II. We must now speak to the second question: "By what authority does Paul enforce this regulation upon the church?"

Paul is not slack in offering more than a few authorities in refusing women permission to exercise the leadership role in the congregation. (1) First it is not permitted by what he calls the "Law." The reference here is not necessarily to the Ten Commandments, though this is not excluded. He is referring to the Torah, the written revelation of God, the Scriptures.<sup>26</sup> Regardless of who wrote I Timothy 2 (and I for one still accept the Pauline authorship), I Timothy 2:14 is a further application of what Paul calls the Law. Here in I Timothy he points to the account contained in the written revelation of the creation of Adam and Eve and the subsequent fall into sin. I Corinthians 11 also refers back to Genesis 2. (2) He refers to his own apostolic office. "What! Did the word of God originate with you, . . . ?" Obviously this is not a question asked for information, but a rhetorical question. Both Paul and the Corinthians knew where the authoritative word of God originated—God has spoken through His apostle Paul. In 11:23 and 15:3, he speaks about passing things along to the Corinthians that he had learned at the hand of God. (3) He appeals to the Holy Spirit. "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing is a command of the Lord." Paul appeals to those people in the congregation who have been claiming for themselves some type of unique inspiration of the Spirit. If they really do have the Spirit, and this is questionable, then with their gifts of the Spirit they should also recognize that Paul is "inspired" by the Holy Spirit so that he knows the mind of God. The background for this is 2:11–16 where those who truly have the Spirit will recognize the Spirit speaking through Paul. (4) Fourthly, Paul calls upon Jesus as an authority. Forbidding women to lead the public worship is "a command" of the Lord.<sup>27</sup> The Greek word *entole* has the force of a divine decree that threatens punishment to all those who break it. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus uses the word *entole* in the plural to describe the entire Old Testament revelation as unbreakable. "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. . . . Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these *com-*

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he suggests that men go bare headed and the women wear head coverings which is also against the known common Jewish usage.

26 Bo Giertz, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

27 Some have tried to mitigate the force of the word "Lord" by stating that "Lord" in the New Testament simply can refer to an honorific title for important men. The case cited was Matthew 25:37 and 44 where at the judgment Jesus is addressed as "Lord." Obviously this pericope of the final judgment uses the term in a divine sense and not merely honorific. Secondly, and here we can use the opinions of even the most radical and liberal New Testament scholars, that if the New Testament is merely a book written by the church to glorify Jesus, then "Lord" is an example of calling Jesus the Son of God. The lack of an article would only suggest that there is only one LORD.

*mandments* and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:17, 19). He places the prohibition against women pastors on the same level as the Lord’s Supper and Resurrection. All three have Jesus’ own authority behind them.

III. The third question is: “Can Paul’s prohibition be interpreted socio-logically as being the custom of the day?”<sup>28</sup>

Those who do not see anything in our passage dealing with women pastors generally take two approaches in interpretation. One, Paul is just reflecting current mores which did not let women speak. Two, Paul is reflecting his own “hang-ups” about women. John Reumann suggests the first in the LCUSA booklet, while Peggy Ann Way in her article in *Women’s Liberation and the Church*<sup>29</sup> finds the latter to be the case. Let’s tackle the first question. I Corinthians is written to a thoroughly Gentile congregation. It was the Jews and not the Gentiles that forbade women to participate in the worship services. The pagan cults in Canaan from the time of the Jewish invasion had female gods and priestesses. Aphrodite, a Hellenistic form of the Phoenician sex deity Astarte, was found in Corinth. Paul could hardly just be expressing custom in not letting women participate as pastors, since custom not only allowed Gentile women to participate, but encouraged them to lead in the worship. It is safe to assume that the desire of women to be pastors in the Corinthian congregation is directly traceable to the pagan influence of the priestesses at the temple of Aphrodite. This is not mere speculation, as Paul in the same epistle speaks of the Christians’ relationship to idols.<sup>30</sup> Apparently some Christians were attending the Lord’s Supper and pagan worship.<sup>31</sup> If the Corinthians could not totally detach themselves from their idols, no wonder that they could not detach themselves from their priestesses. The second objection in regard to our passage is that Paul is reflecting his own “hang-ups” about women. It seems unlikely that Paul was anti-feminist. He depended upon Lydia in the establishment of the congregation in Philippi and he calls

28 *The Ordination of Women, op. cit.*, p. 13. “Should this instruction (concerning silence of women in the churches) be brushed aside as no more binding than Paul’s tastes in clothes and hairstyles? He might just have been irked with wives who had interrupted.” This is hardly a serious exegetical option and is no credit to St. Paul or the writer’s interpretation of this apostle.

29 Peggy Ann Way, “An Authority of Possibility For Women in the Church,” *Women’s Liberation and the Church, op. cit.*, p. 81. “Shall we women spend our time developing nice little papers on what Paul really meant or how he would speak in a different cultural setting, or, on another level discovering that he was once in love with a temple prostitute who rejected him and from which came his feelings about women?”

30 I Corinthians 8.

31 I Corinthians 10, especially v. 21, “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.”

Priscilla and Phoebe<sup>32</sup> fellow workers. In addition there are a number of things in our pericope that speak eloquently that the prohibition of women into the pastoral office is a universal prohibition, not limited in time and in space and in culture. (1) First he says, "As in *all* the churches of the saints." The prohibition is not limited to the Corinthian congregation, but Paul is putting down a principle that is applicable to every congregation. In the word "all" there is no room for exceptions.<sup>33</sup> (2) Secondly, he labels women's leading of the public services as "shameful". In Ephesians 5:12 he uses the same word to designate not the secret things done by the children of darkness, but the mere description of them. (3) Thirdly, Paul threatens excommunication to those who favor giving women the leadership role in the congregation. "If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized." There are two interpretations here possible. Paul is cutting him off from the congregation or God is no longer recognizing such an individual as a Christian. The end result in both cases is the same, exclusion from the church.<sup>34</sup>

*c. Other considerations in connection with I Corinthians 14:33b-38*

I. Some claim that Paul's concern was with order in the church and verse 33a is quoted in this regard. "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace." This is hardly an adequate explanation. First, according to the published Greek texts this passage belongs to the previous section. Secondly, from the context it belongs to the previous section where Paul deals with the problem of several people speaking at the same time. Thirdly, if Paul is concerned with mere orderliness or everyone speaking in turn, why does he only forbid the women from speaking? This would cure only half the problem. Does this mean that Paul allows disorderly men, but not disorderly women? If Paul was

32 Romans 16:1-4.

33 Some have contended that these were regulations just for the Corinthian congregation. This does not seem to be the case, but was regulation for all the churches. The prohibition against women pastors has the same type of force that the commands to baptize and celebrate Holy Communion have. They only lose their force when the final eschaton breaks through. The distinctions between male and female and hence the restriction of men to the pastoral office, pass away in the new age (Matt. 22:30). The pastoral office itself passes away at Christ's coming. Forbidding women in the pastoral office in no way speaks to the faith or glorification level of sexes. There are levels of glory in heaven, but no continuation of church offices.

34 *The Ordination of Women, op. cit.*, p. 13 suggests that perhaps Paul is not responsible for (vv. 34 and 35) these words or that perhaps Paul was not really being Pauline. "It could be that these verses were added later. Some manuscripts have verses 34 and 35 following 40; the verses do seem out of context as they are here; and it is odd to hear Paul saying, 'as even the law says.'" The one responsible for this section must, as a New Testament scholar, be aware that Paul uses the term "law" in different senses. Here the term has nothing to do with the Law-Gospel antithesis as used in classical Lutheran theology.

concerned with orderliness, then he should have suggested that the women wait their turn to speak. He doesn't. He simply tells them to be silent.

II. Some claim that I Corinthians 14:33b-38, the section on women speaking, is no more binding today than I Corinthians 11:2-16, the section on head coverings for women. The argument goes that just as we allow women to go without hats in church, so we should also allow them to be pastors. True, our churches do not demand that women attend church with covered heads, though some continue the custom as a legitimate expression of piety, but this should hardly permit us to dismiss the theological principles contained in this pericope.

The theological principles of the relationship of the man to the woman are more carefully spelled out here than in I Corinthians 14. I Corinthians 11 very much resembles I Timothy 2, as will be shown below. First, Paul identifies the eternal principle or truth with the word "traditions," *paradosis*, the same root word which is used in connection with the Lord's Supper and the Resurrection in the same book.<sup>35</sup> This is something established by God and before God as true and binding. No deviation is permitted. The theological principle is this: "But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." The imagery here cannot be dismissed.<sup>36</sup> Paul sees in the relationship between a man and woman a reflection of the relationship between Christ and man and the relationship between God and Christ. The first one deals with the concept of the image of God, the second with the relationship between God and His Christ. Paul says in verse 7 that man is made in God's image and woman in man's image. In I Timothy 2:13 Paul says the same thing by stating that Adam was created first and then Eve. God has established in the creation a certain order or relationship. To man and woman individual functions are assigned and it is not proper, in fact, it is unlawful to step outside of this order.<sup>37</sup> The functions are not interchangeable. Even Christ has a position

35 1 Corinthians 11:23, 15:3. Cf. also 2 Corinthians 2:15, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter."

36 This concept was both adequately and beautifully portrayed by C. S. Lewis, "Priestesses in the Church" in *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 234-239, especially p. 238. "We have no authority to take the living and sensitive figures which God has painted on the canvas of our nature and shift them about as if they were mere geometrical figures." Ephesians 5:21-33 applies the Christ-Church imagery to the husband-wife relationship within the family. This principle is also applicable to the congregation's worship.

37 This is substantiated by Martin Scharlemann in "Apostolic Form," a devotion delivered to a St. Louis pastoral conference on May 8, 1972. His argument is based on 1 Peter 2:13. The Greek word used is *hypotassethai*. In the next chapter Peter discusses how the male-female principle applies to the family. Though worship services are not discussed, the same principle applies to the regulations of both family and worship services.

in regard to God that must be kept. God assigns the Messianic tasks to Christ. The reverse is not true.<sup>38</sup>

The question which now must be asked is: "Are women permitted to go without hats to churches?" We have already established that we are dealing with divinely established principles by which the man is the head of the woman and that the woman bears the image of the man. The practice of covering or uncovering the head belongs not to doctrine or the practice of doctrine, but to custom reflecting doctrine or principle. Paul closes the section with the words, "But if anyone wants argue about it, all I have to say is that neither we nor the churches of God have any other *habit* in worship." (NEB 11:16). The Greek word, *syntheia* means something which is expected of people, but which is not legally established. Pilate says that the Jews have a *custom* of releasing a prisoner at the feast.<sup>39</sup> He is hardly legally bound to take such action. There are many things in our culture that we are expected to do, but not bound by law to do so. Standing when a woman comes into the room and offering her a seat is a type of custom in our culture. We show deference and respect for the "weaker sex." Giving presents and sending cards at Christmas is another custom. Customs make up the very fiber of our culture. These we do by common consent, not because of legal compulsion. Paul is not establishing a once and for all culture. His whole strife with the Judaizers, characteristic of his ministry from the beginning, militates against this. He is saying that culture through its own forms should express divine principles when applied in a worship service. We can surmise that women without hair coverings in Corinth were expressing a type of contempt of men. Expressions of such contempt are always wrong. However in another culture women might show respect to men by having their heads uncovered. Regardless of the culture, the customs and practices derived from the culture and used in the worshipping congregation should reflect and never go against divinely established principle. The principle is that the man is the head of the woman, as Christ is the head of man. But note in this section that Paul is not setting down an eternal binding custom. Unlike Chapter 14 he does not appeal to the Scriptures, Jesus, the apostolic office, or the Holy Spirit in establishing the custom. He is, however, quite adamant about upholding the principle.

III. Some claim that I Corinthians 11:15 presupposes that women were allowed to lead in the services and that Paul changed his mind in Chapter 14.<sup>40</sup> Here is the passage in question, "any woman who prays or prophesies with

38 1 Corinthians 15:28.

39 John 18:39.

40 *The Ordination of Women* (p. 13) suggests that Paul might have changed his mind. "If it is taken seriously, a contradiction must be resolved. How can it be that Paul allowed the Corinthian women both to pray and prophesy in the previous passage (1 Corinthians 11), while in this one he forbids them to speak in the church?" The

her head unveiled dishonors her head—it is the same as if her head were shaven.” What this ‘prophesying’ was is difficult to determine with exactness. There were many gifts present in the Corinthian congregation which the Spirit has not given to the church in the post-apostolic period and which also do not appear in other churches at that time. Chapter 12 lists these gifts as working miracles, speaking in tongues, distinguishing tongues and interpreting tongues and prophesying. There is no suggestion that prophesying and leading the worship as pastor are the same gifts or offices,<sup>41</sup> any more than speaking in tongues and the offices of the pastor are the same gifts. I do not wish to go into detail to explain why these gifts are not always given to the church today. The ultimate answer is that the Holy Spirit and not the enthusiasm of men decides. I will rely on the words of St. Paul, “. . . the same Spirit who apportions to each one individually as he *wills*” (12:11). Perhaps praying and prophesying meant going around in a circle and asking each to say a prayer or word of testimony, but this is only a guess and no more. Such activity must be distinguished from the actual leading of the worship.

Still the words “any woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered” can hardly be interpreted to mean conclusively that he approves of women who do this with their heads covered. Consider in the same chapter Paul’s rebuke of gluttony and drunkenness in connection with the Lord’s Supper. “For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink! (12:21f.)” Does this passage mean that Paul disapproves of drunkenness in the church, but not at home? Hardly, because Paul in Galatians 5:21 stated that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Being drunk is bad enough; but Paul pleads with the congregation not to do it in the church, bringing added offense to the congregation and damnation to themselves. Therefore Paul’s words about women covering their heads when they pray and prophesy cannot by themselves be used as an apostolic endorsement of their praying and prophesying. They could very well mean, at least hypothetically, that it is a disgraceful habit for women to participate as leaders of the worship, but what is worse is that they do it with uncovered heads. Still there is no conclusive evidence that “prophesying” is identical with actually leading the worship services. Regardless of its exact meaning it probably is witnessing in which all Christians engage.

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answer is quite obvious in that prophesying and praying were different from leading the worship service and participating in the discussion centering around the sermon.

41 However, this is just the suggestion made in *The Ordination of Women*, p. 24. “They serve as prophetesses (1 Corinthians 11; Acts 21:9), perhaps ‘ordained’ at Corinth, certainly speaking in the Lord’s name under the Spirit.” Walter A. Maier in “Some Thoughts on the Role of Women in the Church,” *The Springfielder* Vol. 33, (4) 34, interprets prophesying as any type of witnessing in the Gospel.

## 2. I Timothy 2:12–14

The other passage that should be considered is I Timothy 2:12–14. There are some who consider that the author was not St. Paul and that he had no connection with St. Paul. This I am not willing to grant. But regardless of who wrote it, it must be regarded as the first commentary available to us on I Corinthians. In other words, in this passage Paul repeats his prohibition of women as pastors or someone from the first century has accurately repeated Pauline thought. Here also Paul or the unknown author is also dealing with liturgical regulations. He speaks about having intercession for civil authorities in the worship service (2:1–7). Then he goes on to say that the leadership roles in the worship service should be given to men (2:8–15). The leadership roles of bishop and deacon can only be given to men, but not to every man, so he sets the regulations for pastors and deacons (3:1–13). The second chapter ends with a type of concluding summary of these instructions. Here there are two bases for his argument. (1) He asserts his apostolic authority. “I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men.” This we have already discussed in connection with I Corinthians 14. (2) He argues from the creation of Eve from Adam and that therefore Eve was dependent on Adam. He mentions the fall into sin. The fall has not destroyed the relationship between male and female or their distinctive creative roles, but it has added tensions. The woman still bears children, but with pain. The man works, but with sweat. Men and woman still live together, but with enmity. To this Paul is referring when he says, “For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became the transgressor” (v. 13f.). Paul in I Corinthians has previously established the dependency of the woman on the man at the creation (I Corinthians 11:8f.)

This is not so much an argument to Scripture as it is to creation. The argument to creation is stronger than to Scripture, simply because creation is the first act of God.<sup>42</sup> Jesus used the same argument to the creation when the Pharisees tried to justify divorce on the basis of the Mosaic Law. He refers to the creation, “Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female . . .” (Matt. 19:5). What God has made may not arbitrarily be changed. In fact the written Law of God is only a reflection of the plan already established in the creation.<sup>43</sup> Paul’s reference to the fall of

42 The issue comes down basically to the matter of natural law, which according to the Lutheran Confessions, precedes the written law. Cf. Holsten Fagerberg, *A New Look at the Lutheran Confessions*. Translated by Gene J. Lund. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), pp. 64–75. Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Timothy argues not from God said but what God did.

43 Since this article was first prepared an opposing view was set forth in “The Orders of Creation—Some Reflections on the History and Place of the Term in Systematic Theology,” *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. 43, 3, (March 1972) 165–178, which maintains basically the same thesis set forth in much more abbreviated form in “The

Role of Women.” The latter article, appearing in *Advance* (Cf. note 45), has been widely used and quoted by those in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who have supported the women pastors. The more recently published article contains further argumentation and will also receive much attention. The article cannot receive the full attention here that it requires and deserves. Still the basic argument is that even though God might have established a relationship between the male and female in the beginning, these relationships are not necessarily binding today. Basic to the argument is that God is ordering the world continually and that the church can read history so to speak to determine what God is doing. The pertinent paragraph is included here:

“Because the orders as trans-individual patterns and configurations of a whole society are historical entities, they are subject to the ‘law’ (that is, the Creator’s law) of historical change. Cannot the same also be said about the pattern of relationship between the sexes from one age to another? In St. Paul’s day it appears that womanly subordination was the Creator’s order (societal placement). Today it is obvious that there has been some change since St. Paul’s time and place in this cultural phenomenon. If the Creator has continued to be the Creator during the intervening years, why cannot we admit that the present growing ‘equality’ station of women is a work of the Creator? Into what placement is God putting women now? He is not placing them into a societal web of subordination—at least not in the Western world—nor is He placing the males into a superordinate ranking. It is in this situation of equalization of ranks that men and women are called to be God’s kind of men and women. How did such a change arise? Historians and sociologists can chronicle some of the factors in the metamorphosis. Should Christians not expect that one of the abetting factors in the West may well have been Christians living their ‘life under the Gospel’ in the two millennia of the Gospel’s history in the Western world? The CTCR report is chary about acknowledging that the ‘order of redemption’ can bring about concrete changes in the ‘orders of creation,’ but is that perhaps not a sign of weak faith, rather than of theological precision? A sweeping generalization about all orders of creation will be of little help to anyone. Yet in the particular placement of women in Western society the new order of God’s Gospel has surely helped to shape some of the changes.”

The concepts involved resemble process theology or philosophy whereby God continues to create the *novum*. Man in every age is capable of interpreting these actions of God. The doctrine of creation, as taught in the Lutheran Church, is that creation is an accomplished act of God. God preserves and multiples what He has already created (Genesis 1 and 2). It is also argued that if St. Paul based his opposition to the ordination of women on the signs of his times, so we in our age where women are receiving more rights should and must be able to read the signs of our times. This kind of an argument blurs the distinction between special and natural revelation. In the sense that history or culture or the like is a bearer of revelation, this concept greatly resembles the theories of revelation held by Pannenberg and other theologians connected with the ‘theology of hope.’ Using history by itself as a vehicle of revelation is a very dangerous thing. One could conclude that in the early 1940’s that God was telling us that killing Jews was proper in that God was speaking to us through Hitler’s history. But this is the very argument offered in claiming that God in history is saying that women can be pastors. The proposed amendment to the American Constitution giving equal rights to women will surely be used. According to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession what God has established in creation is not open to change as long as we are in the present aeon. *Porro ius naturale vere est ius divinum, quia est ordinatio divinitus impressa naturae* (XXXIII, 12). The Gospel can have an effect in the changes in society which is of

Eve before Adam suggests that she unlawfully assumed the religious responsibility for that first community and in so doing violated God's established order between the man and woman. Adam bore the image of God and served as God's spokesman and intermediary between God and man. By the "theological" conversation with the serpent, Eve assumed a function which God had not given her. Adam was given the command and promise and he was responsible for all "theological negotiations." Thus the woman's assuming the man's role and his assenting to this incursion are part of the first sin. Women preaching and celebrating Mass could very well be a graphic representation of the first sin.

In regard to the Timothy passage some have concluded that if we would follow this literally then women could not be allowed to teach in any capacity in the church. The word for teach is *didaskein*<sup>44</sup> and it refers to the official and

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course contaminated with sin as the article indicates. We can agree with the statement: "Yet in the particular placement of women in Western society the new order of God's Gospel has surely helped to shape some of the changes." (*op. cit.*, p. 174) But the Gospel comes after the creation. Instead of violating the creation the Gospel endorses it. Only a Manichean concept of creation would regard creation *qua* creation as redeemable in any sense at all. It was the thought of Flaccius that somehow the human nature itself was sinful (Formula of Concord, I). The Formula of Concord, II, distinguishes four states of man: "1. before the Fall; 2. since the Fall; 3. after regeneration; 4. after the resurrection of the body . . ." Marriage or the relationship between male and female was created in the first time period. Sins connected with marriage or the male and female relationship are redeemable, but the relationship, since it is created by God, is not redeemable. The relationship between the sexes will only pass away after God has attained His purposes through them. According to Jesus, this happens at the resurrection on the last day. The same article claims that the phrases "order of creation" and the like are more Calvinistic in origin than Lutheran (though this case is hardly conclusive from the evidence presented) in discussing the male-female relationship. With such a suggestion it might be better to use the language of the Apology and call it a "natural right." "*Jus naturale sit immutabile*"—the natural right is immutable (XXIII, 12). Just as it is impossible to change the laws about marriage which is ordained by God, so it is illegitimate (against the immutable law or will of God) to ordain women as pastors. Stephen A. Schmidt presents both sides of the argument from creation in *Powerless Pedagogues*, 29th Lutheran Education Association Yearbook (River Forest, 1971), pp. 107f. without committing himself to either.

- 44 The word *didaskein* is inappropriately used of the functions of Sunday, parochial, and public school teachers. This word refers to the publicly sanctioned proclamation of the Gospel before the assembled worshipping congregation. It in no way forbids women from being teachers in various agencies of the church, as it is suggested in *The Ordination of Women*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Without theological or Biblical evidence, arguments used for a male clergy and hence against female clergy have been introduced into the discussion of the office of the parochial school teacher. While this entire issue must be treated at length at another time, much confusion has resulted by defining the pastor's office as "minister" and then asserting that parochial school teachers have a ministry. The implication which has become quite explicit in recent years is that pastor and parochial school teacher are equal office holders of the same ministry. Now all Christians have a ministry, but only a logical error, which St. Paul speaks against would come to the unwarranted conclusion

public proclamation of the Gospel. A teacher is one who is charged with the public proclamation of Christianity. Not even Priscilla did this type of public teaching at the Eucharist.<sup>45</sup> For example I Timothy 4 refers to Timothy's official tasks as pastor. Nothing here is said about prohibiting women from instructing children in the church, school or home. This does not disrupt the family "rights". In fact the Old Testament obligates father and mother to instruct their children, Proverbs 1:8. It would seem that instruction in church and school are an extension of such parental authority and obligation.

### 3. Galatians 3:28 Has redemption's orders superceded those of creation?<sup>46</sup>

Galatians 3:28 with the words that in Christ Jesus there is neither male or female has been used to demonstrate that God has abolished the old law

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that all possess the same office (1 Cor. 12:28ff.). The other error involved is concluding that the admonitions concerning "teachers" in the New Testament apply to "parochial school teachers." *They do not!* Teaching in the New Testament applies to the public proclamation of the Gospel, not to knowledge conveyed about secular subjects, even when done under the auspices of the church. Stephen A. Schmidt (*op. cit.*) mentions, and rightfully so, the condescending attitude shown to women parochial school teachers. They are not included in conventions for pastors and *male* teachers. They tend to receive less pay than their male counterparts and have tenure less frequently. There is no theological or Biblical reason to discriminate between male and female parochial school teachers. Conferences for pastors and teachers should include both men and women. The arguments for putting men teachers on a higher plain than women seems to be anti-feminist. True, men teachers unlike women teachers may apply for the office of pastor; however, both men and women teachers have not been certified to have the competency to pastors. Simply because men as men have one criterion, their *maleness*, that might indicate a certain potential for the office of the pastor, lacking in women, does not give them a higher position. There are other requirements for the office of the pastor than merely being a man. In the reverse, pastors judged to be competent in proclamation of the Word of God do not per se have the competence to teach other than the religious subjects in the parochial school, unless because of the religious implications of certain secular subjects. The New Testament distinguishes between different offices, so should we.

45 The vocabulary used in Acts 18:26 in no way suggests that Priscilla engaged in public teaching. *Didaskein* or any other nearly related word is not used.

46 Galatians 3:27–28 is used by both the LCUSA's *The Ordination of Women*, p. 22 and "The Role of Women in the Church of Jesus Christ" in *Advance* (October 1970), pp. 10–12, for suggesting that women can be ordained. The latter offers the view that God is now changing the orders of creation now that the Gospel has replaced the law. Perhaps Horace Hummel's comments can best rectify this. "Nor am I able to see that more sophisticated argument from 'changing orders of creation' is not ultimately vulnerable to the same charge; it seems to me to be exegetically beside the point because Paul clearly does not argue from something he considers as result of sin, and hence subject to 'redemption,' but rather from a given already preceding the Fall." "Bible and Confession," *The Springfielder*, Vol. 35, 4, 270f.

Dr. Victor Pfitzner, professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary of the Lutheran Church of Australia also makes the point that the equality of Christians suggested in Galatians 3:27f. applies only to how these Christians appear before God and has

and therefore restrictions or roles assigned the sexes have been abolished.<sup>47</sup> A careful study of Galatians 3:23–29 will quite quickly show that Paul is discussing justification of the sinner before God, *coram deo*. He states that by faith we have become justified and thus all of us are sons of God and Abraham's offspring. There are no offices, no special gifts, no economic differences, no differences based on sex, as sinners stand justified by God through faith in Christ. There is only one "advantage" that qualifies before God and that is faith. In this there are no degrees of worthiness or dignity. The three year old girl in Sunday School stands before God in the same position as the Mother of our Lord, and the Apostle Paul stands in the same relationship as the ten year old who lights the candles on Sunday morning and almost burns down the church in doing so. Paul hardly suggested that the roles are exchangeable. Paul never suggests that the role of man or female could ever be exchanged, or that Greeks would become Jews or vice versa. The things ordained by God in

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nothing to do with the ordering of the congregation. He also shows that as the demands for women pastors grow, there will be greater reliance on the concept that the pastor receives his office as an extension of the office which all members of the congregation hold jointly. C. F. W. Walther's doctrine of the ministry, which gives every baptized Christian the office of the ministry, carried to its logical conclusion does regretfully allow for the ordination of women pastors. To counter this Dr. Pfitzner's appraisal is given: "The equality that Luther speaks about is the equality of the redeemed *coram Deo*, Gal. 3:27f. But this does not immediately imply equal, in the sense of identical, functions in the church. Every member of the church has the right, not the duty, to participate in the calling of a servant of the Word, as he also has the duty to test and maintain the authenticity of the Word which is proclaimed on Christ's behalf. But there can be no confusion of offices and functions. . . . While the old *Uebertragungslehre* of the last century will hardly be repeated in the same terms, we can expect a repetition of the claim that the public office is merely a delegated authority. And as the plea for the ordination of women intensifies we can expect repeated references to this idea." "General Priesthood' and Ministry," *Lutheran Journal of Theology* Vol. 5 (November 1971), pp. 107f.

- 47 A related argument for the ordination of women is based on the universal priesthood of all believers in *The Ordination of Women*, p. 23. It is an extremely poor one, but should be presented. "But by and large, there is agreement that the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ is not particularly a continuation of the Old Testament priesthood. The New Testament deliberately changes it. There is a 'royal priesthood' of all baptized believers (1 Peter 2:9). Christian baptism ordains all believers. Women, then are 'priests' by baptism." John Hall Elliott in his doctoral dissertation proves that this passage has nothing to do with the cultic practices of the worshipping congregation. J. H. Elliott, *The Elect and Holy. An Exegetical Examination of 1 Peter 2:4–10 and the Phrase 'βασιλειον ιερατευμα'* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966). Cf. by the same author "Death of a Slogan: from Royal Priests to Celebrating Community," *Una Sancta* Vol. 25, pp. 18ff.

To say that all baptized people are "ordained," in whatever sense *Ordination of Women* means, would spell the end for the public ministry and would reduce Lutheranism to the most barbaric form of congregationalism. This would certainly lend credence to the thesis that the ordination of women pastors as a movement is related to all forms of egalitarian fanaticism.

creation and the divisions of society which reflect to some extent the creation of God are not annulled. The church also has orders or ranks which cannot be changed. Consider what Paul says in I Corinthians 13:29: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?" The answer is no. Justification before God through faith in Christ does not abolish the relationships that men have with each other. All are equal before God, but equality hardly suggests interchangeability.<sup>48</sup>

### PART III: CONCLUSION

#### HOW BINDING IS THE 'LAW' THAT WOMEN CANNOT SERVE AS PASTORS?

As soon as the word 'law' is used we are using a freighted term, as some will say that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law and that the law has been replaced by the Gospel. Of course the Gospel does not destroy the law, but only means that God in Christ has fulfilled the law and all its just requirements. The law is not abolished, but its punishments are. The Scriptures use the concept of law in a variety of ways.<sup>49</sup>

It can refer to the ceremonial and civic law of Israel. Jesus, as is evident from his preaching was not the first to break this law. He mentions how David ate the shewbread to save his men from starvation, even though this bread was intended for priestly consumption. The Old Testament did not demand that this law be observed by non-Jews. Gentiles, who professed faith in Israel's God, did not necessarily have to obey the ceremonial or civic laws of Israel. God in His written revelation indicated when this law would apply and when it would not apply.

There is also the moral law as given by Moses and repeated by Jesus and the Apostles. This law reflects the very essence of God and was established in the world from its very creation. Man according to Romans 1 and 2 perverted this law because of his own warped nature and God had to republish it. Whenever God acts, He acts morally. He never acts amorally. In fact, He is not capable of an amoral act. All of what God does is *per se* good and just. God does not first create and then pronounce that it is good. It is good from the

48 Horace Hummel (*op. cit.*) suggests that the "egalitarian assumptions of our culture" might really be behind the movement to ordain women as pastors.

49 The phrase *lex semper accusat* taken out of context can cause confusion. The law always accuses in the area of justification, but the law functions in other areas. Before the Fall, the law did not accuse. In the state of glorification, the law will not accuse. For the redeemed child of God, the law does not accuse but presents to him the way on which a loving Father guides His children. The article "Orders of Creation" seems to overlook the Formula of Concord VI when it states: "According to Reformation theology, there is a twofold use of the Law, duplex usus legis" (*Op. cit.*, p. 173). FC VI deals with three uses of the law.

very beginning of the act and because God does it. Sex and the relationships between the sexes belong to God's creative acts.

Today there is a lot of "honest-to-sex" talk with the very valid comment that sex is not dirty but good. Unfortunately this talk does not go beyond telling teenagers and married people with hang-ups that they should not fear sex. But there is another step. Sex has been created by God and the relationship between male and female has been established by God in the creation. It is not an afterthought. Sex belongs to God's creative law and is reflected in the Mosaic Decalogue. The divine plan for the family is an outgrowth of this sexual relationship. Jesus in Matt. 19:2 and Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 and I Timothy 2 make specific reference to this. The relationship is endorsed by Jesus and His apostles and is in no way abrogated. In fact it is sanctified and presented to God as holy by His Word. In this set-up the children are to obey the parents and the wife is to be subordinate to the husband. The word "subordinate" unfortunately suggests the master-slave relationship with the crack of the whip in the background. Men greedy for power have either turned the relationship around or intensified it to the point of hatred. Subordination in nature has been placed there by God not to indicate that someone is more worthy than another or that one should be despised. Subordination is for the sake of function and welfare. The child is subordinate to the parents for the child's welfare, not to punish the child or to benefit the parents. Christ is subordinate to God in carrying out the task of salvation. This does not degrade Christ. The church is subordinate to Christ. The one in the superior or upper position exercises love to those in the lower positions. That's why Paul says that husbands should love their wives as Christ loved the church. Of course many do not model their family lives after the divine pattern and grief must necessarily ensue. Still the abuse of the divine pattern does not allow abrogation of the pattern because it is defiled by sin. Women pastors abrogate the divine pattern.

The church is God's new family on earth. Adam's race did not qualify as God's sons and thus in Jesus a new family, the church, has been established. The New Testament uses the term "household of the church" suggesting that it is a family. In this family God's original designs are not considered invalid or outmoded or useless. Rather, in the church, God's original intentions are again revived. God has not placed the label of "NO GOOD" over His original work, but has revived it. The church is therefore bound to the proper relationship between the man and woman established by God and that it be reflected in everything the church does. The ordaining of women as pastors, leaders, guardians, bishops, yes, "fathers" of congregations is not only a deliberate breaking of not only the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, but a direct contradiction of God's plans in creation. It is going directly against

God. As C. S. Lewis says, male and female may be equal but their roles are not exchangeable. It is God who loved the church and wooed her. It is men who woo their wives and love them. The late Anglican lay theologian compares the church to a ball or dance. "Sometimes the men are bad dancers, but the solution is not that we should treat all those as neuter as if they had no sex. The solution is rather that the men should be taught to be better dancers."<sup>50</sup>

## APPENDIX I

The proponents of women as pastors are more agreed in their objective of women as pastors than they are in the basis for establishing it. The most radical proponents are simply caught up in "women's lib." *Women's Liberation and the Church* (*op. cit.*) is a good example of raw application of unproved principles. *The Ordination of Women* (*op. cit.*) intimates that there might have been women pastors in the apostolic time. Cf. p. 24. The arguments offered for this position are obviously inferior. E.g., "They minister to Jesus during his lifetime and at his death" (Luke 8:3, Mark 15:41). With such reasoning all janitors should be allowed to conduct the Eucharist. The exegesis given here is hardly worthy of the support of serious Greek scholars! The third option is that though Paul did not let women serve as pastors at Corinth, he was reflecting a cultural opinion and thus it is not binding on us. This position is offered in the "Orders of Creation," (*op. cit.*). It reduces the question of ordination of women from a doctrinal question to a practical one. The question is no longer whether ordination of women is right or wrong, but when will the Missouri Synod be ready for it. If all arguments are to stand, and the latter two have been offered in the Missouri Synod, it would be as if a man were convicted of crime for two different and opposing reasons. Such conflicting evidence would make the old procedure spurious from the start. This is the situation in which the ordination of women stands today. The two arguments that (1) there might have been ordained women pastors in the apostolic time and that (2) Paul's strictures against women pastors were valid for his time but not for ours contain elements which are basically contradictory. Both are contained in *The Ordination of Women*.

## APPENDIX II

The Lutheran Deaconess Association with headquarters at Valparaiso University has become the center of much discussion of the woman's place in the church. This is quite natural as the office of the deaconess and her duties must relate in some way to the office of the pastor. An article in *The Lutheran*

50 "Priestesses in the Church?" *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 237-239.

*Deaconess* (Vol. 48, 4) pp. 3–6 uses many of the arguments that have been discussed in this essay. The title “Woman . . . God’s Creation” already indicates the position. The title can be slightly misleading and suggests conclusions that do not do full justice to the Scriptures. Yes, woman is God’s creation but in a different sense than the man is (1 Corinthians 11:8f.) Man is made from God and woman is made from man by God. Regrettably, as the writer points out, women have been treated too frequently as second-class citizens in the kingdom. For example male teachers have permanent calls and woman teachers all too frequently get contracts. However, abuses against women—and they must be protested—should not be allowed as an excuse for allowing women to preach and celebrate communion publicly. The presentation rests heavily on ideas of Wartburg Seminary Professor, Dr. Julius Bodensiek, delivered at the Lutheran Social Ethics Seminar at Valparaiso University in December 1955. According to these ideas a woman’s place in the church may not be determined by any principles that do not give them equal responsibility, that absolutize one historical order of society, that are based on a number of isolated texts, that have been antiquated by contemporary society. But the arguments against the ordaining of women pastors are just these. God has created male and female with different responsibilities. The order established by God is absolute, unless God’s creation is capable of improvement by change instituted by men. The texts that speak to the issue are not isolated. Genesis 1–3 is hardly isolated. The procedures of any society, ancient or modern, do not determine God’s principles. Working from the standard of contemporary society, the church might have to endorse and even recommend premarital sex. Of course this is being advocated by some clergymen. This is not a far fetched analogy as the relationship between the sexes is determined by God. Any view that cites present or anticipated customs or mores operates with a source of theology other than the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures.

The article offers one argument quite similar to the LCUSA’s *The Ordination of Women* by asserting that, “Furthermore, the first Easter sermon of Christ’s glorious Resurrection was preached by women to men.” A faulty conclusion suggesting that women could then become pastors comes from using the term “preached” in a confusing way. Preaching in the church means the proclamation of the Gospel in a public way to an assembly. Sometimes the word “preach” can refer to any bringing of good news or bad. The women on Easter morning brought news about the Resurrection. They did not conduct or lead a service. Much confusion in the issue of women pastors comes through the imprecise and less than careful use of language. Too frequently using a word which can have several connotations can lead to confusion in the church.

## APPENDIX III

*Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 24, 2, (May 1972) 222–223, contains a review of *The Ministry and the Ministry of Women* by Peter Brunner (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971) written by Frederick J. Gaiser. Brunner's strictures against the ordination of women as pastors is based on Genesis 2 and 3. Pastor Gaiser offers two objections to this argument based on the orders of creation. The first is essentially the same as used in "The Orders of Creation . . ." (Cf. note 42.) "Is it not possible to say that, if the course of history is determined by the Word of God, the so-called orders of creation might also function differently at different times?" Such an argument, as mentioned above, fails to distinguish between natural and special revelation or it ascribes to man the ability to discern religious information from history or nature above the fact that God exists. According to Romans and the Lutheran Confessions man is incapable of attaining true knowledge about God and His plans from nature. The whole matter of original sin is at stake here. Pastor Gaiser also failed to distinguish the creative word of God (Genesis 1 and 2; Peter 3:5, 7) and the word which is able to bring salvation (1 Peter 1:23).

The second argument, new to this writer, is that Pastor Gaiser raises the question of whether Genesis 2 and 3 is so clear on this point as to be applied to the relationship between the sexes. "Even by using all the tools of biblical research it would be difficult to read out of Genesis 2 and 3 such an absolutely certain view of God's once-for-all desired relationship between man and woman that it could be called 'a central point with which the whole Christian message hangs together.'" (p. 31) Gaiser has criticized Peter Brunner for the very arguments that Paul has offered in 1 Corinthians 11:7–10 and 1 Timothy 2:13f. Paul in both cases argues from the creation and fall accounts. Regardless of what position the reader takes in this debate, it has become obvious that Genesis 2–3 and its interpretations are important. If there is no agreement on the creation and fall accounts, there can be no agreement on a theology of the sexes. Further application to the ordination of women pastors become impossible.

# THE OFFICE OF THE PASTOR AND THE PROBLEM OF THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN PASTORS

DAVID P. SCAER

## I. INTRODUCTION

As I have previously pointed out, the problem of the ordination of women pastors is of rather recent vintage in world Lutheranism. It sprang up for the most part in Europe after the war and the causes for its introduction were more political than theological. What is amazing is that in the course of a generation or two, the practice is seemingly recognized as acceptable in most of world Lutheranism today.

Within the last few months, *Time* magazine took time out from reporting the Missouri Synod squabbles to tell the stories of two Lutheran pastors of the Bavarian Lutheran State Church, one associated with Neuendettelsau, a small town in southern Germany where the Missouri Synod can trace some of its roots. These two pastors felt for reasons of conscience compelled to resign their pastorates because certain women theologians were given pastoral responsibilities. Such actions were considered by the pastors to be illegal, immoral, and unbiblical. One of the pastors is seeking refuge in the Roman Catholic Church. To which *Time* editorially, and maybe even accurately, remarked that even that final haven of male ecclesiasticism might fall before the onslaught of the movement to ordain women pastors. The recent 1973 autumn convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Kentucky also indicated that this issue was still a live one. The majority of the delegates did favor ordaining women priests, but because of a system of block voting that resembles our electoral college at the time of American presidential elections, the matter was rejected. In this presentation I do not wish merely to repeat

what has already been said, but to go after the issue from the concept of the pastoral office.

I can see two definite reasons why perhaps we should not even attempt to present this topic at this time. These two reasons are the unresolved, restless and unstable situation in our synod and the women's liberation movement in our country. First, it would seem to me that any resolution of current difficulties in the Missouri Synod should be done along theological lines. Secondly, the equal rights amendment (ERA) which is nearing final ratification, and the political and social movements behind it, only further emotionally clouds theological discussion. I see no necessary connection on how one stands on this constitutional issue of ERA and one's position on the ordination of women. One is a political issue, the other theological. But the history of a past generation has shown how a political posture can be theologically determinative. I cannot agree with the concept of God's speaking to us in our culture. We will simply have to wrestle with the problem and call "foul ball" if cultural mores become theological determinative for the church and her practices.

I would like to venture in on the problem from a direction which I have not previously undertaken. We can set the problem down in two questions:

- (1) Does the New Testament, recognize the office of the pastoral ministry as a separate and distinct office instituted by Christ and the apostles?
- (2) If we answer this question in the affirmative, is there any exegetical evidence which is so compelling that we can in no way permit women to enter this office and to exercise its functions?

## II. DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT RECOGNIZE THE OFFICE OF THE PASTORAL MINISTRY AS A SEPARATE AND DISTINCT OFFICE INSTITUTED BY CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES?

### A. WHAT IS MEANT BY MINISTRY?

#### 1. Contemporary use of the term

One of the major arguments for the proponents of the ordination of women pastors is their concept of 'ministry.' In general terms, this concept of the 'ministry' signifies a service which each Christian performs to others within the Christian community. There is even a 'ministry to the world.' 'Ministry' becomes an equivalent term to the phrase 'the priesthood of all believers' and baptism assures and requires of the recipient 'a ministry.'

This way of speaking has become widespread in our circles in recent years. Some of its slogans are well known. 'The pastor is a minister to other ministers.' In this phrase, the functional use of the word 'minister' is stressed to

the elimination of the concept of 'ministry' as a special office. The pastor is simply one 'minister' among many other 'ministers.' Another phrase expressing the platform of a more generalized form of 'ministry' is that, "The pastors job is to work himself out of a job." This means that the pastor's 'ministry' is to raise the members of the congregation to his level. But does this mean in regard to intellect or faith? I do not know. The second option would be crass Phariseeism. The goal of the pastor for the congregation is that members should operate or function at the same level at which he is functioning. He is the 'chief minister' 'ministering' to other 'ministers.' This generalized concept of 'ministry' has not been dogmatically finalized, but it now has wide ramifications even on the congregational level and is treated as a faith statement. With this type of philosophy the pastor sees himself as a type of 'enabler' within the congregational scene. Or to use the terminology of the business world, he becomes the executive officer of the church council which in turn is the 'board of directors' for the 'corporate stockholders' assembled as a voters' assembly. With this attitude, the pastor becomes expendable or at least replaceable by others in the body corporate. There are other officers who have a 'ministry' which can compensate individually or corporately and replace the pastoral office for a longer or shorter period of time.

## 2. Many ministers or ministries in the church

In The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the problem has become more acute because of the recent discussions of the role of parochial school teacher, both male and female. In addition to this there are the roles of the deaconess, the director of Christian education, the youth worker, and the lay preacher. There is even some discussion of the revival of the office of the deacon. To this list can be added the entire list of congregational offices from congregational president all the way to teenage helpers in the Vacation Bible School and the sexton. One point of view regards all of these as parts of a more generalized and far embracing concept of ministry, with the pastoral office relegated to the position of *e pluribus unum*. The ministry is understood as something like the body of Christ where the relationship of each of the parts to the other is determined by function. Recently a teacher at one of our terminal schools expressed this concept quite succinctly:

The concept of ministry must be clarified in the church at large. There is one ministry of Word and sacrament, and many forms of that ministry. Every servant of the Word—pastor, teacher, lay worker, deaconess, youth worker—is part of the public ministry. We need to expand the office to include all functions of the ministry as equal co-partners in God's service of Word and sacrament in the church.<sup>1</sup>

1 "The Future of Christian Education in the Missouri Synod: A Matter of Self-Understanding," *CTM* XLIV, 4, (September 1973), 281.

### 3. Pastor as one minister among other ministers

According to this concept, there is one 'ministry' with many forms. The pastor alone is not entitled to the title 'servant of the word' but he is to share this designation with others as equal co-partners. We can see how this type of definition could allow and even demand that women be allowed into the office of the pastoral ministry. Instead of looking for or determining suitability for a special office of pastor, we determine suitability for a more broadened concept of "ministry" which already allows for equal participation by the sexes. Since various aspects of the 'ministry' have become functions, these functions can even be exchanged. Our same source says, "men and women could specialize in one form of ministry but have access to the other functions."<sup>2</sup> Thus the pastoral office is *ipso facto* opened to women.

Perhaps, I could provide the following as a helpful analogy. The newer concept of ministry could be compared to a medical clinic where all the physicians are recognized as qualified medical doctors with each specializing in a field of interest or need. In their basic training they have all been adjudged capable in the general field of medicine and to maintain their competency, work in individual fields of medicine other than their particular specialty from time to time. They exchange tasks; the pediatrician becomes a surgeon, etc. In this newer understanding of ministry, the different 'ministers' could and do exchange functions.

Such an illustration might be a very attractive model to describe the church or the church's offices, but is it adequate in handling the Biblical data, especially on the pastoral office? Does the New Testament really know of a generalized office of ministry with many parts? An examination of the Biblical data might suggest an attitude or posture of ministry of service of all those in the kingdom or the church, but it in no way allows us to come to the conclusion that there is one general office of ministry which in some way is shared by all.

### 4. *Diakonia*, *diakonein*, *diakonos* in the N.T.

Basic to our understanding of the 'ministry' is a look at the New Testament word *diakonia*, 'service' or 'ministry' and its cognates, the verb *diakonein* and noun *diakonos*. To say that this word as used in the New Testament must have the same meaning or sense in every usage simply cannot be supported by the evidence. Each instance of the word cannot be applied without further ado to a generalized concept of ministry.

#### a) *The Gospels*

In the Gospels, the concept of *diakonia* as administering physical aid to those in distress seems to predominate. For example, the angels "minister"

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

to Jesus, who has been exhausted by His encounter with Satan (Mt. 4:11) . After she is healed, Peter's mother-in-law "ministers" to Jesus. (Mt. 8:15). One group of women are spoken of as having "ministered" to Jesus during his life of humiliation (Lk. 8:3; Mk 15:41). The use of *diakonia* as helping those in physical distress is no better demonstrated than in the final judgment scene of Mt. 25:44.

*b) Acts and the Epistles*

This idea of *diakonia* as providing aid for those who are in such physical distress that helping themselves becomes impossible is carried out in various parts of the New Testament to describe the situation of the early church. A group of seven men are chosen "to minister on tables" (Acts 6:2). Here reference is to elevating the physical distress of the Greek speaking Jews who have returned to Jerusalem from the diaspora and who have not been totally integrated with the Palestinian population. This idea of physical aid is used to describe the monetary contribution of the Antiochians for the destitute situation in Jerusalem. A similar thought is expressed in Romans 15:25 where Paul travels to Jerusalem to help out in a bad situation. In Philippians 1:1 and 1 Tm 3:8–13 a special office of *diakonos* or 'minister' seems to have been established for handling the problems of physical distress. It is not a divinely established or commended office in the sense that each church must have it, but seems to have been created for a situation of necessity. There are certain qualifications, however, for the office wherever it happens to be established.

*c) Jesus' atonement as diakonia*

There are uses of the word *diakonos* and its cognates which have deeper and more profound implications than providing physical aid. Jesus describes his work of atonement as *diakonein* and requires that his disciples follow His example by becoming *diakonos* "minister" and "*doulos*," "slave" (Mt 20:26ff). Here we see that 'minister' is used as a reference to the attitude of one who holds an office in the church and not to any specific office. Jesus has a particular office to carry out which He describes as "to give life as a ransom for many." In no way are the disciples given the task of surrendering their lives for anyone as a ransom. In the act itself of atonement, no one can follow Jesus. But they can follow the humble, servant-like attitude of Jesus in performing the functions and offices which God has given uniquely to them. Paul in Philippians 2:7ff. urges Christians to assume the same posture of humility as was evident in the God-Man during the days in which He was abused.

*d) Diakonia as Attitude*

*Diakonia* can be used not only of giving physical aid in a type of specialized way, but it can refer to the attitude in which one carries out the office which God has given him. The common attitude of *diakonia* does not mean

or even allow that offices or obligations are exchangeable. The offices are not even sub-categories under a more general type of office called *diakonia*, 'ministry.' The prophets have their specialized *diakonia* of predicting the suffering and glory of Christ (I Peter 1:12). Christ has His specialized *diakonia* of offering His life as the ransom payment. The apostles are self-conscious that their office of being apostles is their unique *diakonia*. Peter says that Judas had a share in the *diakonia* of the apostleship (Acts 1:17) and prays that God would restore this gap in the *diakonia* of the apostleship. Paul calls his entire apostolic task a *diakonia* in his address to the Ephesian pastors (Acts 20:24), (cf. I Tim 1:12).

*e) Is it in the best N.T. usage to use diakonia exclusively of the pastoral office?*

*Diakonia* or *diakonos* can refer to a service or office holder without in any way suggesting that the services or office holders are interchangeable or even for that matter necessarily interdependent. Christ is not a servant for sin (Gal 2:17) and the emperor is God's servant in carrying out justice in the civil sphere (Rm 13:1).

I am not here to defend the use of the word 'minister' as the exclusive prerogative of the pastors, though our confessions consistently use the word for pastors. Not limiting it to the pastoral office might be in the sense of the best Biblical usage. Where it has been used, it has been used as a convenient synonym for those who hold the pastoral office. But to work with a general concept of 'ministry' and then to fit the office of pastor as sub-category under it is simply not allowable by the Biblical data. It is not even suggested by the Lutheran Confessions. Those arguments for women pastors derived from such a generalized concept of 'ministry' must also prove to be totally false, because the basic presupposition cannot be supported.

## B. DOES THE N. T. KNOW OF A SPECIALIZED OFFICE OF PASTOR?

Since the office of the pastorate cannot be derived from the general concept of *diakonein*, we must ask the question if the New Testament recognizes a special office of pastor. If we can provide supportive evidence here, then recognizing particular features or characteristic qualities of the pastoral office becomes easier.

### 1. The preaching of Jesus

In His earthly ministry, Jesus approaches people in two different ways. There is the invitation to faith which is offered individually and collectively. In addition, there is the invitation into a professional type of discipleship or apostleship, as it was later known. The requirements to each group and the response of Jesus to each are different.

a) *Jesus and believers*

The first group is recognized as believers in Jesus. The centurion has a faith unequalled in Israel (Mt 8:5-13). The woman with the issue of blood evokes a favorable response from Jesus (Mt 9:20ff.) as does the Caananite woman (15:21-28). The cases of the paralytic (9:1-8), Jairus and his daughter (9:18-26), and blind men (20:29-34) could all be listed. They believe, are forgiven, and whatever malady is the center of the pericope is corrected. What is lacking in these pericopes is perhaps just as important as what is included. Those who believe or who are acted upon do not join the company of Jesus on a permanent or "professional" basis, and they are not asked to. In some cases, they go home and stay there. There is no interruption in their usual pattern of living. In the case of the Roman centurion, it is possible that he never met Jesus face to face. There is no call to 'ministry' in the sense of their having been given offices or functions in the church.

b) *Jesus and the Twelve*

There is on the other hand a group of men who Jesus does pick out deliberately and for a specialized task they receive the training and instruction. This group was recognized, and recognized themselves as something special both during the ministry of Jesus and after His resurrection and ascension. This is not to say that their self-estimation and self-esteem were at all times properly self-comprehended, but it is to say they held a special office of which they were rightly self-conscious. To the Jews in general, the command was to "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 4:17, 23), but only to certain men He gave the command to "follow" Him (Mt 4:18-22; 9:9). Jesus' recruitment for the special office was recognized as different from the general call to faith and some would-be applicants approach Jesus concerning the matter and are rejected (Mt 8:18-22). Unlike believers in general, they are required to give up the ordinary pursuits of life, as Peter forsook fishing and Matthew tax collecting, and to devote their lives full time to the cause of Jesus. Theirs is a profession or life-time vocation. Luke in Acts seems to concur in this observation as Peter says that the replacement for Judas must have accompanied Jesus from the time of His baptism to the ascension. There are several reasons for this. The apostles are the official guarantors of Jesus' teaching and thus had to be instructed personally by Him over a longer period of time. This is the message of Matthew. They also had to be witnesses of His resurrection as described in Acts, but which is even more basic to the arguments of John's Gospel (20:30f.). The point here is that Jesus did Himself establish a distinction between believers in general and church leaders. This difference was one of instruction and training and not necessarily faith. On the contrary, if the selection to the apostleship had been on the basis of faith alone, all of the apostles would have to have been replaced by the women,

Gentile centurions, and others. But the fact is they were not replaced, except in the case of Judas who used his office to destroy the kingdom with which he had been entrusted. The question of "great faith" does not play a role of Matthias.

## 2. The Early Church

If there is a distinction between the apostles and believers in general during the ministry of Jesus, may it not safely be assumed that this type of distinction was maintained in the early church?

### *a) Apostolic self-awareness*

The dominance of the apostolic office is evident. They are the church's leaders. They are the instructors. They conduct missions. They are aware that their apostolic office has two parts: witnessing to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and pastoral care of congregations. Being aware of their own mortality, they preserve the life and message of Jesus in the Gospels. They apply that message in the epistles. Being aware of their own mortality, they also make certain that their pastoral duties, which also belonged to the office of the apostle are preserved in the church after their death by appointing pastors. The Pastoral Letters are directed to this problem. The New Testament writings do recognize one special office, established by Christ and the Apostles, with general supervision of the congregation in regard to the preservation of the truth and the proclamation of the Gospel. This office which is called by Paul in Ephesians (4:11) the office of "pastors and teachers" and was exercised by Jesus Himself in His messianic office and by the Twelve in their apostolic office. There is to be no homogenization between the office of Christ, apostle, and pastor today, because the first of these two offices is distinct and absolutely non-repeatable. Jesus was the atoner. This was not the apostolic task. The apostles were the eye witnesses of the resurrection. This 'once and for all' historical observation cannot be passed along or even be repeated by faith. There can be no apostolic succession in this sense. But there is a succession from Jesus, through the apostles to pastors today and this succession is one of shepherding and teaching.

### *b) The office of congregational care as held by Christ, the Apostles, and Pastors.*

To sketch this line of pastors and teaching from Jesus to pastors is hardly difficult. In fact, if needed, it can be traced to the Old Testament where Ezekiel inveighs against the false shepherds. For our purposes it is sufficient to confine ourselves to the New Testament. John attributes pastoral qualities to both Jesus and the apostles. Chapter 10 presents Jesus as the shepherd who vicariously gives His life for the sheep (v. 11). Three times Peter is given the specific responsibility of feeding the sheep of the Good Shepherd (21:15ff.). Maybe it is not necessary to note that "shepherd" in John and "pastor" in

Ephesians both translate the same Greek word, *poimen*. Any claim that the thought of Jesus as shepherd and pastor as only a later theological contribution of the church found in John does not measure up to the evidence available in the Synoptics. John's treatment of the pastoral office of Jesus is more lengthy but not necessarily more profound than Matthew's. Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7 in application to Himself, "I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered (26:31)."

Even in Matthew, Jesus sees the pastoral office as something which is carried by others. In 9:35–38, the crowds are described as "sheep without a shepherd." This statement is immediately followed by the lament that the laborers in the harvest are few. Here we have analogies of shepherding and harvesting in such close proximity that it suggests that the task of the pastor or shepherd is also that of working in the harvest. Paul would later use the term 'worker,' *ergatas*, for a pastor (I Timothy 5:18). As previously mentioned, Peter is specifically given the pastoral functions exercised by Jesus. In his first epistle (5:1ff.), Peter addresses the pastors, *presbuteroi*, in special regard to their own pastoral functions. These functions they are to exercise in the light of the eschatological appearance of the 'Chief Shepherd,' *archipoimenos*. I can find no better place to succinctly trace the pastoral succession. He greets the pastors as a special group of people. With the words 'fellow pastor,' *sumpresbuteros*, he reminds them that together they share the same responsibility of pastoral care and congregational supervision. Peter reserves for himself the title of *martus*, because he as one of the Twelve, was specifically appointed to be legal witnesses of the Lord's suffering. This is a unique function of the apostolic and not the pastoral office. As Jesus had once told Peter to feed His flock, so Peter entrusts this responsibility to the pastors, reminding them that the flock is not Peter's but God's. They are responsible to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd. Paul in his farewell to the Ephesian pastors admonishes them about caring for the sheep and feeding the church over which the Holy Spirit has appointed them overseers, *episcopoi*.

### 3. The pastor as "teacher" in N.T.

The pastoral office involves the two functions of pastoring and teaching. By teacher and pastor *only one* office is intended. With little difficulty a succession of teaching from Jesus, to the apostles, to pastors can be established. Jesus' preaching is really teaching. The conclusion to the sermon on the mount settles the issues "For he taught them as one who had authority." (Matthew 8:29). It was God's own authority (21:23–27; 28:18). Jesus regarded Himself as a Teacher, as did His contemporaries.

A brief digression here would be helpful. The term "teach," *didaskain*, in the New Testament does not suggest teaching in the sense that we use it today i.e., what a person does in a classroom. It is not a matter of primary, secondary

or higher education. ‘Teacher’ in the New Testament rather designates a person who has been entrusted with the divine doctrine, *didache* or *didaskalia*, and is committed not only to teach others, but to commit it to designated individuals so that it will be preserved intact. The word ‘teach’ as used by Jesus and Paul does not really involve the duties and functions usually associated with parochial school teachers or others engaged in the tasks of Christian education, as we think of them today.

Jesus is the teacher without peer, not so much in regard to His superb educational methods, but rather in regard to His embrasive comprehensive knowledge of what God wants. But He does not regard Himself as the only teacher, as there are others, including false ones. There will be false prophets (7:15). More to the point is 5:19 in Jesus’ warning that, “Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and *teaches* men thus shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus’ warning is not against an erring faith, but specifically and only against erring teachers. The words are specifically addressed to the disciples, but the general use *hos an* makes it applicable to anyone assuming a teaching office, Messiah, Apostle, or Pastor. Jesus here is speaking of a special office and not of believers in general. James, which I consider quite early, also singles out the office of teacher with the same type of eschatological warning (3:1). There are several places that could be selected where Jesus passes the teaching office to the apostles, but the one which is situated in a position of climax is Matthew 28:20. Jesus begins by asserting that teaching authority has been given to Him by God. He now commissions the eleven (28:16) to go to the nations and make them disciples by teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. All Christians have the command to believe but only a few are entrusted with the teaching task. This passage is reminiscent of 5:19 where Jesus gives the warning about breaking the least commandment. Now Jesus takes it from the top down and says all commandments and each individual one must be kept. We can speak of an apostolic obsession of preserving what Jesus had taught. For this reason the apostles gave us the New Testament and appointed pastors. John’s ending to His Gospel is just as forceful as Matthew’s (John 20:30f.; 21:24f.)

It was a sense of their mortality that motivated the apostles to assure, in some way, that the teaching of Jesus would be preserved. The Gospels stand as living testimony today of this devotion. In addition, they appointed ‘teachers’ to stand in their place. James (3:1) speaks of a situation where there were many applicants for the office. Paul in Ephesians (4:10) speaks of their being “pastors and teachers” as one office in his time. At the meeting of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:6), the pastors are present as a separate office along side of the apostles. As Paul and Barnabas left the churches in Asia Minor to return to Jerusalem, they appointed pastors, *presbuterous* (Acts 14:23).

As long as the apostles were alive, the pastors were subject to the apostles. The apostolic supervision was exercised through personal visits or through letters. Paul visits the Ephesian pastors (Acts 20:17). Peter, as mentioned, has special instructions for pastors in his first epistle. Most convincing is the existence of pastoral epistles which are specifically addressed to pastors in their office. I am still of the opinion that they are to be attributed to Paul and that these letters are preparing for that time when Paul knows that absence and death will make it impossible for him to exercise direct apostolic episcopal supervision. He is not permitted to pass on his apostolic office in its entirety, a thought he shares with Peter. His teaching obligations, the preservation of the teaching and the assurance that there be a succession of teachers or pastors, must remain in the church. As Peter called himself a fellow pastor among other pastors, so Paul calls himself a 'teacher,' 1 Timothy 2:7, 2 Timothy 1:11. Both Timothy and Titus are to 'teach' (1 Timothy 4:11; Titus 2:1). What they are to teach is the 'teaching' or the 'doctrine' *didaskalia* (1 Timothy 4:13; Titus 2:1). Timothy is given the task of preserving the pastoral office in the church (1 Timothy 5:22). Paul's instructions to Timothy in the third chapter of the first epistle certainly indicate that Timothy is now to be entrusted with the task of screening men for the pastoral office. After all isn't that a purpose of the pastoral letters?

### III. DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE PERMIT US TO APPOINT WOMEN PASTORS?

I have gone to great length to show that the office of teaching and pastoring is established by Jesus and the apostles and was indeed exercised by them. This office is given to specifically designated, trained men. It is an office that is no way to be equated with the general category of the priesthood of all believers or some generalized concept of 'ministry.' Having established this, then it will perhaps be easier to accept the qualifications and limitations connected with this office. Not every male may assume the office. Jesus did not give the office to every office seeker. James wants to turn some away. Paul is quite lengthy in laying out the qualifications.

Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12 clearly denies the pastoral office to women. "I do not permit women to teach." Throughout the pastoral epistles the term 'teach' is used in the sense of receiving, preserving, and passing along the doctrine. Paul's prohibition specifically forbids women from assuming this office. Yes, the New Testament knows of Priscilla giving instruction to Apollos (Acts 18:26) and women prophetesses, but never does the NT ascribe to them the activity of teaching, *didaskein*. In fact, it forbids them to do it.

The Timothy passage is recognized as a commentary on the prohibition in 1 Corinthians 14:34-36. Here the word *lalain* to talk, and not *didaskein* is

used. The type of talking that is prohibited the women is not the mere use of the vocal cords. The Greek word for that is *lego* and not *lalain*. In the crucial passage in Matthew 28:18, Jesus officially speaks to them as the 'teacher' so Matthew uses the word *lalain*.

If we say negatively that women are prohibited from this office, then we say positively that the office can only be given to men. This is essential for the "pastoral teaching" succession. Peter says that the successor for Judas must be male, *aner*, (Acts 1:21). So also in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6, the bishop must be an *aner*, a male.

There are many problems within the church which have focused on the issue of the ordination of women pastors. There is the issue of whether or not the Scriptures are culturally limited and should we use the "eye" of the Gospel to pierce through these limitations. There is the issue of whether or not the Holy Spirit is speaking through the church today with the same force as He did through the apostles. There is the issue of whether the Scriptures are binding only in regard to what is called the Gospel and not the Law and other matters. There is also Paul's deliberate connection between his prohibition against women pastors and the accounts of creation and the fall. In the Missouri Synod I see the matter of women pastors as intimately connected with our understanding of the office of the pastor. If we accept the Biblical evidence that the office has been divinely created with special requirements for entrance and special obligations, we must follow the tradition of our church, the church throughout the ages, the early church, and the apostolic church and continue to resist ordaining women into the pastoral office.