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Theological Refractions

THE QUESTION OF ORDINATION OF WOMEN AS REFLECTED IN LUTHERAN JOURNALS

Editor's Note: The following material was gathered through the assistance of Mr. William G. Wise and prepared for publication by Mr. Kenneth Taglauer. An overview of recent articles is presented and should provide the reader with a survey and an analysis of the different opinions. The footnotes can be scanned for pertinent bibliographical material on the issue.

American Lutheranism presently faces a dilemma in the form of ordination of women that has both theological and sociological implications. Specific references to the ordination of women are scattered and rather sparse, but there is a great deal of material which is available on the general topic of ordination as evaluated by American Lutherans. The question of ordination of women is in fact presently being seriously discussed on a formal basis by the larger bodies and their convention proceedings indicate there will shortly be a spate of articles and conclusions which will set the course for women in American Lutheranism.

As you begin to study the question of ordaining women, you soon realize the complications of reaching a conclusion on a purely theological basis, for there are sociological and practical factors to be considered. For people who are accustomed to dividing research into disciplines and categories, the particular question of ordaining women is most unwieldy, for proponents base their arguments on as many sources as they can gather, while those who oppose the ordination of women meet the arguments on exegetical considerations, and many times it seems that the two are speaking without any consideration of basic issues that have been raised. We will attempt to present a summary of the proponents and opponents so that you will have some idea of the opinion of other theologians in addition to your own thoughtful analysis of this issue.

THE CASE FAVORING ORDINATION

It is an over-simplification to say that people who are concerned to have women ordained are touting equal rights. There is most certainly a concern to have the Church apply her total resources to an ever-changing social scene in a useful manner. We could certainly not deny that there is a need for the church to develop within her total structure opportunities for women to minister commensurate with their abilities. It is also apparent that men and women are becoming increasingly free of their respective roles as defined only by their sex, but are moving to a functional definition of their capabilities and talents. Proponents will go so far as to indicate that in the new relationship in Jesus Christ, there is no other course open than to work for the ordination of women.[1] After careful historical surveys are advanced to show that women were liberated from their traditional roles in the Jewish household, and that Chris-

tianity has indeed elevated the status of women throughout the ages, the inevitable question comes. "Just because women have not been ordained in the past, does that mean that they should not be ordained now? After all, women now are much freer than they were only a few years ago."[2]

Shouldn't it happen now? It already has, and often on account of social conditions that forced the trend. A general background of woman suffrage in Europe and America in the twentieth century has aided the cause. More formal education and inclusion of women in managerial and technological areas set the stage. But there were three basic factors precipitating ordination in European countries.

First was the lack of clergy due to World War II. In Germany many female theological students found service, and sometimes ordination, in war-torn parishes. Today there are some four hundred women assuming part-time or full-time pastoral duties in a parish. Many are ordained. Czechoslovakia faced a similar situation and now has more than twenty-five women ministers.

Second was the necessity for special ministries. In Denmark, prison work opened the door for women pastors, the first being ordained in 1928. By 1966 twenty-two *pastorin* served in city parishes.

Third is the imbalance of women in parishes; in many places they are the active majority. In Sweden, six women were ordained by 1962.

The sociological concerns are reflected also in the theological arguments promoting the Office for women. In general three trends may be noted. The first relates to the interpretation of certain New Testament passages, specifically I Cor. 14:33-40 and I Timothy 2:11-15. Foremost is the question: Are these culturally-determined, temporally-valid ordinances, or ordinances that are valid for all times in the New Testament Church?

Among the proponents of ordination, the general conclusion is that these passages were indeed valid for Paul's time, but are not binding today due to the different social status of women. "Theologically he (Paul) said 'yes' to the freedom and equality of men and women in Christ, but sociologically he tended to say 'no'."[3] The latter factor has changed. Progressive European countries faced such arguments early. The Swedish legislature contended for ordination of women in 1956-8. By 1958 many pastors who had earlier opposed such ordination later dismissed I Cor. 14:37 as a valid prohibition for today, stating, "consequently Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions do not forbid the ministry of women in an age when profound changes in the sociological situation have made it desirable."[4] If I Timothy 2 is to be practiced, they say, then to make it consistent, all teaching of Sunday School, instruction classes and other groups must be relinquished.

The second trend moves to a higher position and stresses the mutual aspect of the task of the Church rather than division by status. By stressing the unity of the New Testament Church, as set out by Paul in Gal. 3:28, writers hope to show that the "in Christ" formula admits either men or women to the office of the ministry. They contend that people are to be viewed in the new creation in Christ, and that creation opens the

opportunity for men and women to work together as partners to make God's creation a new creation.

There is an implicit criticism of all this equality jargon in the assertion of the created order passage in I Cor. 14, but inevitably this charge must be met and dealt with also, so there are those people who would naturally say that the created order is not one to be permanent, but that order has been superceded by the redemptive order.[5] The argument is that the new reality of redemption is binding on every generation while the order of creation found its culmination and essential end in the Incarnation. Each generation, therefore, must live in the light of this new reality. Each person must decide how this reality can best be expressed in its own time when issues such as ordination of women arise. You can almost hear the next line from this position already, for the writers who advance this particular viewpoint plead for a new outpouring of the Spirit and a greater submission to Jesus Christ.[6] Wouldn't a whole lot of other problems fit into this same category as well?

The third theological factor is the discussion of the priesthood of believers and the office of the ministry. Examples of the second and third century deaconness organizations are often cited to support inclusion of women in certain functions of the ministry as the distribution of communion. Biblical instances of witness such as Priscilla to Apollos find use for a foundation of the ministry of women, the ordination of whom should be a mere matter of custom and local concern. Notably, the sociological factor provides the overriding principle. The status or office is made for the person, not the person for the office.

How prevalent are these considerations in American Lutheranism? One theologian is reported to have said: "We can see no valid reason why women candidates for ordination who meet the standards normally required for admission to the ministry should not be recommended for ordination."[7] Whether this is what is more or less privately held in some areas of Lutheranism in America is but conjecture. It does reflect what is overtly agreed upon in many areas of Anglican, Presbyterian, and other Reformed bodies.

But what about the application of the sociological and the theological factors in practice? Primary is the conclusion that ministers are ministers of the Word, whether they are male or female. It is the Word, the message, that is important. Following the American pragmatic approach, whatever is the best way to promulgate the Word is then the best manner of using the talents of the Church. In some circles it is proposed that American people understand the value of grouping the different members of the parish. Christians of different sexes, generations, and interests are together in parties, Sunday Schools, Bible study groups, etc. Therefore, if there is only one male pastor preaching, we have few ways for Christians to understand the truth of the Bible and what it means in the many different situations of our modern life.

A secondary conclusion is the concern over the separation of the clergy from the laity. To overcome this distance and to utilize the abilities of the women, some have pressed for a re-evaluation of ordination

and the ministerial aspects of the laity's priesthood. The World Council of Churches through the Department of Cooperation of Men and Women in the Church, Family, and Society issued a report on this in 1963. All in all, the conclusion is that ordination of women for special and general ministries would be a step toward eliminating the vast distance between clergy and laity.

In summary, the case for ordination of women recognizes that ordination is an ecclesiastical rite. As such, it should reflect the needs of the Church as it attempts to minister to changing sociological patterns. The theology behind this ministry lies primarily in the redemptive relationship as exhibited in the priesthood of all the faithful. The practice of this ministry, even ordination, should reflect the culture and times to which the Church ministers.

Now, how has the case against ordination of women been held in Lutheranism? How have the theological themes differed from the above, if they have?

THE CASE OPPOSING ORDINATION

The reader of any depth will generally note a similar concern for the ministry of the whole Church to the society and culture in the writings of those opposing ordination. The concern for the witness of each Christian impresses itself in the struggle to bring out a true witness with the use of the whole Body of Christ. Most writers concerned with this view of women's ordination and suffrage offer one basic theme: the order of creation. This theme is carried out in the discussion of the relationships of woman to man as is expressed in the worship, prophetic, and educational activities of the Church.

The question hinges on the subordination of woman to man. Inasmuch as this question reflects the creation of status by God as is set forth in Genesis 2, and in the epistles of St. Paul, it is important for the discussion of ordination of women and the subsequent activities of the woman minister. "Certainly women can teach Sunday School and lead topics in their own groups: But, you see, the real point at issue has to do with the relationship between woman and man. Paul insisted that women should not domineer over men, and he referred to God's act of creation to prove his point . . . . And God's original intention ought certainly to be reflected in the life of the church."[8] In the first issue of Concordia Theological Monthly, P. E. Kretzmann commented that in the affairs of the meeting in public, she is not to assume a role of leadership or in any way lord it over man. Every attempt of a woman publicly to influence these affairs is a usurpation of rights which cannot be squared with God's plain command and prohibition."[9]

Peter Brunner, in a very extensive study in the *Lutheran World* expresses the following conclusion:

> The subjection which is demanded of her runs counter to the act of preaching in public. When a woman preaches in the worship services she steps out of the role . . . and assumes by that act official authority over the man . . . Certainly Paul is forbidding women the right to that

> kind of preaching and teaching which depends upon deliberate preparation such as is characteristic of a sermon, in contrast to the spontaneous and inspired utterances of those who speak in tongues, of prophets, and of other charismatic personalities who depend upon the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.[10]

Brunner concludes in general that the combination of being a "woman" and being a "pastor" contradict one another in a manner which produces fundamental conflict. "The conflict roots in the fact that the combination . . . objectively and fundamentally destroys the *kephale*-structure of the relationship between man and woman and therefore also rejects the "ordering into" and "subordination to" *(hypotage)* which is demanded by God's will."[11]

The general conclusion is that Paul's concern in the Corinthian and Timothy passages was that Christians do not ignore or set aside the creative order that God Himself has established, in this instance, man's headship over woman. The very act of public speaking of women before the Church in a ministerial manner would constitute a violation of the order of creation. This conclusion is supported by American writers Luessenhop, Mueller, and European writers Sten Rodhe, Bo Giertz, and Anders Nygren, all of Sweden.

One sidelight to this question of subordination and headship comes from the Scandinavian theologians. One argument runs: the minister stands as the housefather of the congregation, hence a woman cannot be a housefather. This seemingly light argument has its roots in a consideration of the Office of the Keys. The minister stands as a representative of Christ before the congregation. Therefore, a woman cannot be a "male" representative. This argument is carried further in the example of an all-male choice of Apostles by Christ.

The above considerations of the ministry are tangent to the discussion of the priesthood and "ministry" of all believers with the selection of some for the public office. For this, many turn to Luther and the Confessions. Since the nineteenth century the secondary literature on Luther has been focused on the question of whether the special ministry, for Luther, rests on the common priesthood or on a direct divine institution. Those who derive the ministry from the common priesthood assign the ministerial functions to the whole congregation. The necessity for the special office is then based mainly on the need for "order." This is treated by some as little more than a matter of expediency. Others refer to the ministry as a special institution of Christ, arguing that the existence of the congregation itself depends on the ministerial proclamation. Arthur Carl Piepkorn in the September '69 Concordia Theological Monthly concludes, however, that the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church see the sacred ministry both as an office *(ministerium; Amt)* and as an order or estate *(ordo, Stand)* within the Church—Apol 13, 11-12; 22, 13; 28:13; SA III: 11, 1. He further asserts "The Symbolical books nowhere attempt to derive the sacred ministry from the universal priesthood of the faithful."[12] The I Peter 2:9 passage is cited only once in the Symbolical books.

A non-Lutheran proposes: "There is little doubt in my mind that our failure to understand baptism and the priesthood of all believers contributes to the desire of many to be ordained—because it aids their self-understanding as Christians. For this reason, I would restrict appointment to offices relating to the church's common life."[11]

If in the Lutheran Church, the ministry is not seen as being derived from the priesthood of believers, then one is thrown back to the pertinent passages of I Corinthians and I Timothy when drawing conclusions on the ordination of women. The question again is: Are these passages situationally valid or valid for all times?

A rather extensive study on the relationship of I Cor. 11:3-16 to both I Cor. 14:33-30 and I Timothy 2:11-15 was made by J. T. Mueller in the 1923 *Theological Monthly*. He suggested that on I Cor. 11 the whole matter is a question of propriety and how the observing of a custom would indicate woman's subordinate position to man. If the woman then departed from the custom, the authority of man would be challenged. But on I Cor. 14, he notes the different manner of speech. Paul uses words as "not permitted," "commanded," "shame," "commandments of the Lord," and "suffer not . . . to usurp authority." Mueller concludes strongly, " . . . woman, when speaking in the congregation, not only revolts against the clear command of God, but also usurps authority over man, subverts the divine rule of order, and entails upon the Church the perils of false doctrine and general disorder and confusion."[14] This, he asserts is true of all times. Professor W. Henkel simply decrees:

> Insofar as the Apostle forbids that women speak in public because in the light of the custom of the time that appeared disgraceful, his command no longer applies; however insofar as the speaking of woman before the assembled congregation actually cannot be reconciled with her subordinate position to man, it is forbidden to women of all times.[15]

Have Lutherans always been in unilateral agreement on this question in the past? Peter Brunner notes that Flacius, in his treatise *De veris et falsis adiaphoris* publicly supported the 1549 Ministerium of Hamburg ruling that the allowance of women to preach was by a human law and not by a divine command.[16] Johann Gerhard in his Locus XXIII under No. 186 understood the instruction of St. Paul which explicitly deny women the right to hold the preaching office in the church as thus: a necessary reaction to the matriarchal tendencies of various heretical sects. Yet he concluded that no one dare conclude from this that women are to occupy the regular preaching office in the church except in cases of emergency.

The Committee on Woman Suffrage had this to report to the 1956 LCMS convention: "Our assignment is not, to present a brief on the question whether woman shall be admitted into the ministry of the Word in normal mixed congregations. In that case our brief, operating with the same materials above, (specifically I Cor. and I Tim.) would have been led to an unequivocal NO!" The 1965 Convention of LCMS Resolution 2-26, resolve #1 further stated:

> On the basis of I Cor. 14:34-5 and I Tim. 2:11-15, we hold that God forbids women publicly to preach and teach the Word to men and to hold any office or vote in the church where this involves exercising authority over men with respect to the public administration of the Office of the Keys. We regard this principle as of binding force today because I Tim. 2:11-15 refers to what God established at creation.

Theologians are often confronted with the danger of a legalistic approach to practice. One may ask if this is true on the question of women's ordination. Several factors are presented in this matter as the compelling issue of social structures and conditions face the church. What about Germany in the 1930's and 1940's? What about situations where theologically trained women may be the only major source of candidates? What about other emergencies?

William Henkel notes this problem and ascertains:

> The command of Paul insofar as it is of a moral nature, does not read . . . "under no circumstances" . . . Where man cannot be considered at all for the office of preaching the Gospel because he is a heathen, or has as good as no Christian knowledge, there woman by her public speaking does not become guilty of an infraction of the command to be subject to man—the welfare of the people is the highest law. *Where it is clear* that the welfare of the church demands it, we may set aside a precept of the moral law, in the knowledge that not the letter but the sense and spirit of the law are decisive.[17]

In his study of Luther, Peter Brunner summarized Luther's views as to whether women should be called to the pastoral office. These nine points in many ways are inclusive of much of the discussion concerning legalism and the question of ordination of women. They are:

1. All Christians have the spiritual power to proclaim the Word of God, and that includes women.
2. In the assembled congregation, only he may preach the Word who has been called to do so by the church.
3. Only he may be called, who has the ability.
4. In determining whether one possesses the ability, spiritual and natural factors must be considered.
5. The subordination of the woman to the man, as has been established in the Old Testament, has not been revoked in the New Testament; rather it has been substantiated by the Holy Spirit through the pronouncements of the apostles.
6. The Holy Ghost would contradict himself if he allowed women to preach in the services of the congregation as long as there were men present whom he has inspired thereto.
7. The *ordo*, which must be maintained here, has a spiritual character; it is the work of the Holy Ghost. The moral attitude which corresponds to this *ordo* is propriety. Neither the *ordo* nor its corresponding sense of propriety dare be violated.

8. As long as the presupposition holds true that there are men present whom the Holy Ghost has inspired to preach, it is not proper for the woman to be called to exercise publicly the pastoral office.
9. One can safely assume that the Holy Spirit, in keeping with his directives in the Holy Scriptures, will see to it that capable men are not lacking. Should this unusual circumstance prevail, nevertheless, then—but only then—must women also preach in the services of the congregation.[8]

Out of the turmoil which the Church of Sweden faced, Sten Rodhe, agreeing with Nygren and Malmestram, reflected on the various passages and the ministry of the Church at large. He said, "What is now at stake in the crisis of the Church of Sweden is much more than the question of women in the ministry. The authority of the Bible is at stake, and the Bible being the sole authority of the Church, this means that the whole understanding of the Gospel, and the whole self-understanding of the church is at stake."[9]

In the writings of those opposing the ordination of women in the U. S., the conviction is similar. The theological thrusts are more on the interpretation of Paul's epistles as they relate to the formation of the ministry and ministerial Office in the Church. Also important are Paul's words delimiting the relationships between men and women as set in creation. The discussion of the priesthood of believers, when dealing with the ordination question, enters only secondarily. Peter Brunner, who has supported the exclusion of women from the ordained ministry, has attempted some divisions of service which would still include women in assistant status. They are here listed:

The following functions can be separated from the pastoral office and can be organized into such an official assisting ministry into which a woman with theological training can be installed through prayer and the laying on of hands:[10]

1. The Christian instruction of catechumens, above all the training of groups of members, also the introduction to the interpretation of the Scriptures which takes the form of Bible study.
2. Baptizing those who have been approved by the pastor of the congregation, and the dispensing of the cup at the Lord's Supper, both with some careful early church tradition behind them.
3. Home visitations and visits to the sick with the care and counseling which is involved, in fact, individual counseling, particularly with women, and also in hospitals and prisons.
4. Devotions in houses such as retreat centers, hospitals, and charitable institutions.
5. Assisting in the training of other official orders such as catechists, congregational helpers, deaconesses.
6. Cooperating in the maintenance of correct doctrine through theological research.

Those functions of the pastoral office which for dogmatic reasons cannot be transferred to women by canonical ruling, but which must be exercised solely by the pastor, are the following:

1. Preaching in the worship services of the congregation;
2. leading the services of worship;
3. the administration of the sacraments in the worship services;
4. the decision as to who is to be admitted to the Lord's Supper; the imposing of the degree of excommunication and its revocation;
5. the granting of absolution in the confessional;
6. the acts of confirmation and ordination.

What about the practical aspects of ordination of women? How would such ordination in the Lutheran Church be considered by the rest of the major world bodies? How have other denominations considered the question? These questions must be asked to provide a context and not to present the discussion with the implication that American Lutherans are the first to consider it. The Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists in Europe and elsewhere have ordained women since World War II and some even earlier. Part of their thinking may lie in the eschatological emphasis among these bodies, especially the severance of earthly ties, status, impulses.

The National Assembly of the Church of England in June 1968 voted (197-181) that there is no conclusive theological reason excluding women from ordination. The United Church of Canada's E. M. Howse stated in 1966 that the projected union with the Anglican Church of Canada could not proceed unless the United Church's 50 ordained women would be accepted without reservation in the new church.[21]

The Roman Catholic Church has heard overtures toward ordination of women from prominent members of its clergy in America, Archbishop P. J. Hallinan of Atlanta for one. Fr. Hayer van der Meer S.J. under Karl Rahner, in a doctoral thesis asserted no theological reasons for exclusion. Fr. Hans Kung, and Fr. George Taverd have also supported this view.[22] The World Council of Churches' publication, *L'Ordination des Femmes* approved almost unanimously the proposed ordination. However, strong opposition must also be noted in each of these circles. In 1965 the Vatican ended Fr. J. Bloma's practice of letting girls and women of his Ada, Okla. parish from functioning as acolytes.

As a general conclusion, several questions can be formulated on the complete issue of ordination of women that must be asked and carefully considered if one wishes to understand the depth of the question:

1. If ordination of men only has been the rule and tradition for nearly two thousand years, emergencies being the only exception, does such an emergency exist today that would cause the necessary, and possibly world-wide, break from this tradition? What would constitute such an emergency?
2. Will ordination create much unrest and division in the church, both in the short future and in the extended long run?

3. Will ecumenical situations be endangered as such a great change in the life of the church is taken without ecumenical consensus?
4. How is the ministry of the church to be understood? Is its function only the communication of the Gospel in such a way that male or female may perform it? Or has it other functions in the worship and educational life of the church which only a man may perform on the basis of Scripture?
5. How is the relation of the church and the society to be understood? Is it necessary that the church have the same (or different) rules than society? How can the church "incarnate" itself as an institution?
6. How is the relation of male and female to be understood? As separate beings, is there a mutuality of service? Is there a separateness that should be expressed in the organizational structure of the church?
7. Just what limitations can be placed on "teaching" in the church? Can we use an either-or, yes-no distinction validly? What about the judgment of the moment of distinction between a boy and a man as relating to Christian education?

We would conclude with the words of one who has stood in the midst of the question of ordination of women, Sten Rodhe:

> There are some voices raised in an effort to calm the storm. But it is with us and we should ride it out, not run away from it. It can help the church make clear what she really stands for in a changing world. Forced to struggle with the vital issues now at stake, she may find God in the storm—giving new inspiration and life. If the struggle is taken seriously, it could have an effect even upon the life of the world-wide church.[7]

FOOTNOTES

1. Althouse, "Ordain Women?" American Lutheran: Oct. 1966, p. 12.
2. C. Parvey, "Ordain Her or Not?" *Dialog*, volume 8: Summer 1969, p. 205.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
4. S. Rodhe, "More About the Ordination of Women Controversy" *Lutheran World* 5:1958-59, p. 400.
5. Althouse, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
7. "News and Notes:" *The Northwestern Lutheran* volume 56: Nov. 9, 1969, p. 402.
8. E. Luessenhop, "God's Creative Order for Women." *Lutheran Witness*, March 1968, p. 20, 22.
9. P. E. Kretzmann, "The Position of the Christian Woman in the Church." *Concordia Theological Monthly*, May 1930, p. 356.
10. P. Brunner, "The Ministry and the Ministry of Women," *Lutheran World*: volume 4: 1956-57, p. 261.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
12. A. C. Piepkorn, "The Sacred Ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church." *Concordia Theological Monthly* 1969, pp. 555 ff.
13. P. Schmiechen, "Mission + Function = Ordination: Office-appointment" "*The Christian Ministry*, volume 1: Nov. 1969, p. 11.
14. J. T. Mueller, "Are I Cor. 11:3-16 and I Cor. 14:33-40 Parallel Ordinances?" *Theological Monthly* 1923, p. 248.
15. W. Henkel, "The Status of Women in the New Testament Church." *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, volume 59-60: 1960-1961, pp. 214-215.
16. Brunner, *op. cit.*, p. 252.
17. Henkel, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
18. Brunner, *op. cit.*, p. 251-252.
19. Rodhe, *op. cit.*, p. 403.
20. Brunner, *op. cit.*, pp. 273-274.
21. Lauer, "Women Clergy for Rome?" *Christian Century*, Sept. 1966, p. 1108.
22. *Ibid.*
23. S. Rodhe, "Ordination of Women in Sweden." *Lutheran World*, volume 4: 1957-1958, p. 404.

WHO RUNS GERMAN CHURCHES—MEN OR WOMEN?

The Lutheran synods in America still have not faced having women as pastors and church administrators. This is not the case in Germany. The United Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) has 55 members in church leadership roles, known as "synod members", *Synodale*. Of these 55 members, 6 are women. In the governing synodical church boards of all territorial churches there are 2,067 members and of these 128 are women. In the governing synodical church boards of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD) there are 120 members, 8 of whom are women. In the United Lutheran Church of Germany 33% of the women serving on the synodical church boards are full time church workers, including ordained women pastors. At the present time there are 13,700 professional clergymen serving the Lutheran, Reformed, and Union denominations of the Protestant Church in West Germany, and 370 are women. There are 10,099 male pastors and 153 female pastors in charge of congregations. In specialized work there are 1,140 male pastors and 153 females. In the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hannover, which is the largest Protestant Church in Germany with nearly four million members, 46 female pastors are active.

Numbers are inconclusive, but it might be interesting to watch the learned journals to see if there are articles which deal with proper manners at convocations for clergymen, which could definitely indicate that the feminist school is on the rise. However, on second thought, proper manners for clergy at convocations could just turn out to be valuable, and not only for German Churches.

D. P. S.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE STUDY PAPER

1. Involved in the debate concerning woman suffrage in our churches is above all else the matter of the proper use of Holy Scripture. It is significant that the most important passages which speak to the issue of the woman's role in the life of the Church are so clear that even one who is not schooled in exegesis should not falter. The "then and there" meaning of the Biblical texts in question are so obvious as to be hardly debatable. How can one debate the "then and there" meaning of I Cor. 14:33-36 or I Timothy 2:8-15?

2. Thus the center of the problem lies not in the area of exegesis but in the area of hermeneutics . . . that is, by what principles should one interpret the Scripture, not only as to what the text meant back "there and then" when it was originally written, but also as to what it means "here and now." This is at the very center of the controversy. Certain questions arise:

1. Does the Bible speak relevantly to us today?
2. Is the application of Scripture dependent upon the message itself as somehow universally applicable or upon the social customs and structures in which the message is wrapped?
3. Do the two references in I Cor. 14 and I Timothy 2, when they speak of a law and an order of creation, supercede any "Sitz in Leben" (local historical situation)?
4. If the Scripture does not speak about a specific issue (Voters' meetings which are run according to parliamentary procedure), how far may we push an inference?
5. What is timeless and what is contingent upon the first century situation?

3. Somehow the debate must deal with Jesus' attitude toward the role of women. The story of Mary and Martha notwithstanding, it has to be admitted that the circle around Jesus is a circle of men. Jesus called twelve men to be His disciples. We may criticize His choice and even complain that it was tempered by His Jewish mentality, but the inescapable fact remains that Jesus called no woman to be an apostle. And it is also interesting that the disciples followed the same tradition when they put forward the names of two men before casting lots for a replacement for Judas.

4. This is not to say that Jesus or His disciples had no regard for women, or that they did not have a prominent place in the New Testament witness. Our Lord's mother was a woman; but even though Jesus had high regard for her, it was necessary for Him to put her in her place on more than one occasion. St. Luke mentions the prophetess Anna who witnessed to the redemption of Jesus. It was a woman who annointed the feet of Jesus . . . mothers who brought their children to Jesus (note how the disciples were rebuked by Jesus) . . . while the disciples were nowhere to be found. St. Luke tells us that women cried and wailed as Jesus carried His cross to Calvary. The women were the first to find the

tomb empty (St. Luke 24:1-12), and yet their function was only intermediary. They were told by an angel to carry the resurrection news to Peter and the rest of the disciples. We also note with interest that St. Paul fails to mention any women in his list of those who had witnessed the resurrection (I Cor. 15). "He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve" (I Cor. 15:5). Question arises why? Was it just a throw-back to the Jewish law which said that women are not competent to be reliable witnesses or something further? . . . *Summary*: Although Jesus showed a concern for the rights of women (St. Matt. 5:32 and St. Mark 10:2-12). He did not give them a prominent place in His ministry. That fact has to be faced.

5. It is really in the Epistles that St. Paul indicates the essential reason for the subordination of women. The reason is grounded in the creation story and the story of the Fall. In I Timothy 2:11-15, St. Paul connects the subordination of women with the fall of Eve and the pain in childbirth which is woman's lot and therefore the "vocation" through which she will be saved if she continues in faith and love and holiness with modesty. The Scripture thrust comes from Genesis 3:16 which is evidently the Scriptural basis St. Paul has in mind when he says that "they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as also the *Law* says" (I Cor. 14-34). The words of the law (no doubt, Genesis 3:16) are applied to women's activity in the congregation and St. Paul's reference to the fact that it is shameful for her to speak in the congregation implies, as does I Cor. 11, that as a woman she cannot appear uncovered, not only concerning her head but also her words. In the congregation, silence is the woman's veil. There must have been some controversy concerning the question, for St. Paul gives even more credence to his argument by indicating that it comes as a command from the Lord. (Whether or not St. Paul has a specific command in mind is debatable) . . . *Summary*: The role of women in the church, or in the home, or anywhere else for that matter, is the story of the creation and the fall. In the order of creation, woman was made to assist man and help him. Rather than helping him she became the agent of Satan in the temptation of her husband. The result of the fall is clearly recorded in Gen. 3:16. Her husband shall rule over her.

6. How is the order of creation related to the order of redemption? What is the relationship between the authority of men over women and the new unity in Christ which is created through baptism? Perhaps for most who debate the issue in our churches these questions get at the very heart of the matter. How does St. Paul's instruction at I Timothy 2:8-15, relate to St. Paul's declaration that we are all emancipated in Christ (Gal. 3:26-28)? The one order (that of redemption) does not supercede the other order (that of creation). Both exist side by side and both orders serve God and the purposes of the Gospel. C. K. Barrett, quoted in the Synodical study paper . . . "The oneness of female and male in Christ does not obliterate the distinction given in creation." It might also be added that the same would hold true concerning the relationship

in marriage. The oneness which God creates in marriage does not destroy the separate functions which God calls each partner to perform.

7. It seems that the proper role of men and women in the church is one of function. Each functions in different capacities with different gifts and talents given by the Holy Spirit to serve the total cause of Christ.

8. We should face the distinction between charismatic and deaconate gifts.

1. Charismatic gift: The special and immediately endowed gifts of the Holy Spirit as exercised by Deborah and Esther in the Old Testament and in the New Testament by Anna and those who spoke in tongues in the Church of Corinth.
2. Deaconate gift: A gift of the Holy Spirit by which the Holy Spirit works in the heart of believers through the means of grace in a "natural" way, by empowering believers to serve Christ through their natural talents.

9. Another issue, which reaches farther than woman suffrage, must be faced and that is ordination. If woman suffrage is right and women are to hold the same authority in the Church as men, then there is no valid Biblical reason not to ordain women. *Stendahl:* "Ordination cannot be treated as a 'special' problem since there is no indication that the New Testament sees it as such." If the Gospel supercedes the order of creation, then there is no reason to deny ordination to women.

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Editor's Note: This paper was originally presented to the Central New York South Circuit Pastoral Conference of the Eastern District and was submitted for publication by Pastor G. Waldemar Degner.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENS AT GERMAN CHURCH CONVENTIONS

Professor Walther Künneth of Erlangen did not see much positive hope for confessional concern and revival in the German churches, according to his description of the "German Protestant Church Convention" written in the August, 1969 issue of *Lutherische Monatshefte.* The convention was held in July and was attended by representatives of all the officially state recognized Lutheran oriented churches of West Germany. The two day convention was virtually given over to the questions of social issues. Thirty-one resolutions on church involvement in economic and political issues were presented and passed by the delegates. The floor committee for theological issues, entitled "Streit um Jesus", "The Controversy on Jesus", was not able to present any resolutions to the convention for adoption. In connection with the economic and political resolutions there were thirty demonstrations on the floor of the convention. Here are some of the resolutions passed. An end was called

to what was called the misuse of the word "Christian" in the Christian Democratic Party. Britain was condemned along with Nigeria because of the Biafran situation. Normal relations with Cuba were urged. There were also requests to democratize church administrations and for total abolishment of all regulations concerning attendance at Holy Communion. "We do not ask our church leaders for open communion; but we demand it from all for all, who understand their life and future in the hope that was made visible in Jesus." This statement reflects the somewhat revolutionary theology of Moltmann with his "Theology of Hope."

Many of these political concerns can be related to his theology. In a large stadium before 30,000 people placards were carried spelling out "Streit um Jesus Streit um Kaisers Bart." It is a type of mockery suggesting that to argue over the person of Jesus is like arguing over the emperor's beard. Another read "Jesu geh voran gegen Wilhelm Hahn." The first words of the slogan are taken from Zinzendorf's hymn "Jesus, Lead Thou On." (Lutheran Hymnal, No. 414). Wilhelm Hahn, the cultural minister of Baden-Württemberg, does not believe in changing the regulations of the theological schools in the face of student revolutionary demands. "Jesus Lead Thou on, against Wilhelm Hahn" is the translation. Künneth believes that the existential theology of Rudolf Bultmann still dominates and hence also confuses the German Lutheran theological scene. A description of German church convention makes this quite self-evident. It is amazing that the church can speak so authoritarianly in matters of politics and economics and has such a difficult time coming to any conclusions about Jesus Christ. If the convention thought that the word "Christian" was misused in regard to the Christian Democratic Party, it might also give thought if the word is misused when applied to the Christian church of Germany. After all, if they cannot pass a resolution on who "Christ" is, how could they ever possibly define "Christian"?

D. P. S.

WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT

A FEW NOTES ON TRANSLATING THE *APOSTLES CREED*

With the translation of the New Testament into the Revised Standard Version after the last World War, there has been no lack of new attempts of making the Bible more understandable to the people. No longer does the pastor read Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, but he reads these Gospels prefaced with the information that he is reading from Good News For Modern Man, the Beck Translation, Phillips Paraphrase, the Cottonpatch Version, and so forth ad nauseam. It would come as no surprise if the new liturgies would allow in the announcing of the Gospel for some space in telling the congregation what version is being read. "The Holy Gospel for the Feast of the Nativity is written in the second chapter according to St. Luke and J. B. Phillips . . ." Only an ardent medieval-

st would dare read from the King James Version. Some teenager hearing the KJV for the first time might drool all over the pew just in hearing the beauty of the archaic language for the first time. In any event, new translations are here to stay and the church is richer for it. If the New Testament writers could quote the Old Testament with total abandon in regard to translation, we should also be allowed the same freedom.

There should be no amazement that the church should publish a new translation of the creed. What is more amazing is that there are not more translations. (Excluded here are these pseudo-creeds which are hardly more than Socialistic-Marxist manifestos with Christian overtones. These are not even paraphrases. They are only distortions of New Testament truth). The creed in the *Worship Supplement* may be considered the "RSV" among the translations of the Apostles Creed. While it purports to be new and may be exciting, it is disappointing in any kind of an revolutionary way. The same critique is frequently leveled against the RSV. In spite of all the claims to speak to the modern man, it drags behind it some of the clumsy shackles of the Old King James Version. The new translation of the Apostles Creed suffers from the same schizophrenic approach to reality. This statement is not made without at the same time recognizing the need for improvement in credal formulation and without denying that the new translation provides some needed improvement. For example "conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit" is better than "conceived by the Holy Ghost." The older form could possibly suggest that the Holy Spirit was the father of Jesus. The word "Ghost" has more connotations with Halloween than it does with religion.

What is so disappointing is that the writers of the new English translation of the creed were too conservative in their translation and not radical enough. The two English translations, both the older and newer version, fail to grasp the full impact of the original creed in Latin and Greek. Something is lost in both translations that need not be.

First a few simple strictures should be made. Translating "Deum patrem omnipotentem" in two different ways seems highly artificial. In the first clause it is translated "God the Father, the Almighty" and in the second "God the Almighty Father." The second rendering is more natural and less clumsy. In regard to the session, it should simply state "at the right hand of God", leaving out the reference to "Father" and "Almighty." This is not only simpler, but reflects the older Roman Creed. The addition of two words "Almighty" and "Father" is only liturgical accretion. A stronger case could be made for "Maker" than "Creator", simply because the words "to make" is more frequently used in English and is Saxon in origin. Old Saxon and not the Latin based Norman is the language of the people today. This ought to give "Maker" a slight priority. But all this is not too exciting.

It is in the next two articles of the creeds where the translators could have enriched the older version, and saved us from some of its flatness. In most cases unimaginative phrasing is replaced by phrasing with even less imagination. Being a martyr in making a significant con-

tribution is one thing, but being a martyr and contributing little is another. Under the latter category belong the translators of the new creed.

Why wasn't the phrase "Jesus Christ" transposed to "Christ Jesus." There are two good reasons for such a transposition. First, "Christ Jesus" is undoubtedly the older New Testament way of speaking. The words so arranged clearly indicate that Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel's hopes. "Jesus Christ" puts the weight more on the person of Jesus and less on His office. Secondly, "Jesus Christ" is common profanity. "Christ Jesus" would be the church's possession and people would have to think before using it.

The word "only" in the phrase "his only Son" is the sleeper in the creed. Here is one point where the new translation had an opportunity to shine forth and muffed it. "Only" translates the Latin *unicum* and what is more important the Greek *monogenes*. *Monogenes* is applied to Jesus only in the Johannine prologue and conjures up all kinds of thoughts of Deity. It is just as strong as *logos* in teaching our Lord's eternity and deity. Jesus for example is called the only, *monogenes*, Son or God, depending upon your use of the critical apparatus, who is in the bosom of the Father, John 1:18. Then why not substitute for "his only Son", "the Father's eternal Son."

Why the new translation feels compelled to capitalize "He" in reference to Jesus but reverts back to "his" in reference to the Father is slightly mystifying. That the translators want to teach that the Son is superior in deserving upper case is an absurd suggestion of this writer. Perhaps divinity exists only in the nominative "He" but not in the genitive "his" is another suggestion not to be taken seriously. In any event we'll be waiting for the theological answer to this one. Replacing "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried" with "He suffered and was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He was dead and buried" seems artificial at best. Either form is in keeping with the New Testament. This would seem to be a change merely for the sake of change. For those who committed the older form to memory, and this would include at least three million Missouri Synod Lutherans, not to mention the rest of the English speaking Christendom, we can only predict the highest degree of awkwardness in realigning these words.

In the last issue certain theological concerns in connection with "He went to the dead" were discussed. Just one more comment on this. After closer examination "He went to the dead" should also be avoided not only because of the confessional commitment of the Lutheran Church to Augsburg Confession and the Apology, Article III, and Formula of Concord, Article IX, but also because of proper translation. The verb "morior" or its derivatives are used three times in the creed. It is used for Christ's death, His resurrection from the dead, and His return to judge the dead. It is the most frequently used verb in the creed and should of course always be translated the same way. The word "dead" in the phrase "He went to the dead" translates "inferos" of "inferna" and not a derivative of "morior." This is sufficient reason to exclude having "dead" translate two different Latin words.

The elimination of "from the dead" in regard to the Lord's resurrection is not too significant one way or the other. The older form of course translates the Latin form of the creed as well as the ancient Roman Symbol which goes back to the second century. The newer form however is an adequate reflection of I Corinthians 15:4, which states only "that he was raised on the third day."

In the last issue passing mention was made to the elimination of "up's" and "down's." To list the biblical material here would be superflous. Jesus is taken up into heaven according to Acts I and the Christian is to "seek those things which are above", Colossians 3:1. Paul in Ephesians 4 says quite a bit about Jesus' going up and down, ascending and descending. Bishop Robinson's dislike of the three story universe is not really adequate reason for emasculating the liturgy with the substitutes "He *went* to the dead" and "He *entered* heaven." The English language among the Western languages is sufficiently impoverished without further surgery. "Living" is a welcome substitute for "quick." "Quick" was frightfully archaic. "If God is going to judge the 'quick', will He also judge the slow?" is a natural question.

Comment was already made on the inclusion of the Holy Spirit for Holy Ghost. Good! The word "ghost" desires something. To say that he is a "spiritual" man leaves something to be desired. To say that he is a "ghostly" man suggests that the poor fellow is jaundiced.

"Catholic" in "the holy catholic church" is fine, if properly understood. After all it is found in the Athanasian Creed through which most of our people tumble once a year on Trinity Sunday. But the Lutheran Church cannot forget that Luther substituted "Christian" for "catholic" and not without good reason. Regardless of all Lutheran protestations that "Lutherans" are "catholics", *i.e.*, members of the body of Christ, the term is most commonly used for Roman Catholics. The Lutheran interpretation of "catholic" as "Christian" was not even in vogue the fourth century. The term "catholic" referred to that great church which was larger than the sects. We certainly do not use it this way. The background of the word "catholic" is still misty and a confusion is bound to continue to the present day. And just out of ecumenical love, we ought to let the Roman Catholics use it. Also "catholic" is not a biblical term and can be surrendered without great pain.

There is very good reason to state that the phrase "communion of saints" originally referred to the Holy Eucharist. See Werner Elert's excellent treatment of the issue in "*Eucharist and Church Fellowship*. The phrase "communion of saints" is redundant standing next to the article on the church. A similar complaint was made about the phrase "He went to the dead." It tells you no more than that Christ died and is therefore also redundant. The phrase "communion of saints" should be replaced with the "communion of Christ's body and blood." This can be treated at further length in a future issue. But this suggestion would fit very well with the phrase "forgiveness of sins" which refers to Baptismal regeneration. If the creed refers to Baptism, why should it not also refer to Holy Communion? This might very well have been the in-

tention of the early congregations who used this phrase. Here the translators really had a chance to make a contribution and didn't.

It is not my purpose to join the liturgical innovators, but for the sake of liturgical renewal in accordance with the Sacred Scriptures and a Lutheran understanding of it, I would like to offer the following translation.

> I believe in God the almighty Father, Maker of heaven and earth.
> I believe in Christ Jesus, the Father's eternal Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate. He was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended to hell to triumph gloriously over Satan. He rose again from the dead on the third day and ascended into heaven. He is seated at the right hand of the God. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
> I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian church, the communion of Christ's body and blood, the forgiveness of sins through Baptism, the resurrection of the body and the life eternal. AMEN.

This rendering of the creed is just a first attempt of one person and is hardly the result of a committee of theologians gathered in solemn contemplation. If there are to be changes in liturgy, they should strive for clarity, bringing forth the rich biblical material which they intend to confess.

D. P. S.

PILGRIM'S REGRESS

MUSINGS AND AMUSINGS ON *WORSHIP SUPPLEMENT*

Editor's Note: The following contribution joins the tradition of O.P.K. at Valparaiso University with his Campus Commentary *and Eutychus I, II, III in* Christianity Today. *The writer submits all his material without signature and perhaps with good reason. After reading it, you might conclude that occasionally the church needs an impious soul just as a type of catalyst. Since the author is anonymous, we will be forced to send all correspondence addressed to him to "Dead Letter Office" here in Springfield; and that's pretty dead.*

It was purely coincidental and not deliberate that in the last issue of *The Springfielder* the *Worship Supplement* was compared to an Edsel. Maybe our Dean of the Chapel was prophesying concerning the *Worship Supplement* on the basis of the Heilsgeschichte of the Edsel, which like Abraham Lincoln, belongs to the past.

For a person who still scrambles around with Matins on page 32 of the old blue hymnal, *Worship Supplement* is absolutely revolutionary. I know people who dedicated their entire ministry to teaching their congregations the *Venite* and the *Te Deum*. Now that after twenty-five years their congregations have them down pat, they will be faced with a new

nge. [Please remember that the one writing this still is looking ›rse 7 in the *Venite*. Only a computer could figure out the verse ar- ments.] Now with *Worship Supplement*, I am confused and lost be- all hope of salvation. When the pastor announces the Apostles Creed, t know if he means the standard form, the unaltered revised standard or the altered revised standard form. Sitting in the pew, I have so worship documents in my hand, I can scarcely read the church in to find out where the Couples Club is going bowling.

Vhen I got my hands on the new red back version, which I received of charge, I wanted a refund on my money, since my copy seemed the work of a sloppy printer. There were ink marks all over the ins. Being an expert in heiroglyphics, I soon discovered these mark- represented the position of the human body in worship. I breathed h of relief when I found out that none of the marks were horizontal, ugh my more recent thought yearns to include such marks. It is diffi- enough to get my bulky form on its knees without laying it prone ıe floor. Future generations will find these markings as enigmatic e "Selah" at the end of the psalms. Who knows, we might be giving to a whole new school, called the "School of Criticism of Worship lement." Imagine the learned papers that will be written on those :s.

Jne of the most frustrating experiences in my life was when I wor- ›ed in England in that Anglican Church and tried to follow their hip forms. The whole problem was the word "or." For about forty s I raced through an infinite number of "Or's" to find out which one the real, existential "or" of the worshiping congregation. If there is place where the church should be dogmatic, it is in the worship life ıe people. There should be no "or's" or "Turn to pages 95-99!" The on is simple enough. With fewer and fewer people going to church, ı miracle of divine grace just to teach them one form without getting ı confused with multiple forms.

One of the things that will be very successful is Holy Eucharist, I, II, III, which I heard one Walther Leaguer call "The Peter, James, and ı Services." Any other play on these numbers might border on the phemous. Not that their wording is superior, but their brevity will ı great relief to congregations who have made the supreme sacri- of sitting in church for an hour and twenty-five minutes of the old ɜ 15 service.

Something must be said about nomenclature. When one of my parish- :s saw the word "Cantor" listed in the *Supplement*, he thought that Missouri Synod had taken the supreme ecumenical leap. Fellowship ı the ALC is one thing, but with the local synagogue is another.

The hymns in the supplement are an entirely another matter. The ial paragraph in the forward made me enthusiastic. There were some ds there about updating liturgy for a new generation. Somehow I must e gotten the wrong book. When I paged through the hymns, I ran out- › that the word "Lutheran" was still in between "Trinity" and urch." I felt like a thirteen year old boy who all of a sudden found

himself locked in a monastary. I couldn't believe it. There was one hymn that read, "O Paris caritas, O Nati lenitas, Sin our soul staining Per nostra crimina, Came the Christ regaining Caelorum gaudia. O that we were there!" I was terrified. But on second thought, I thought that somebody at the publishing house had made by mistake, and printed an old New York States Regent Latin examination for the third year high school students.

I leave it to the reader to judge what will happen to *Worship Supplement*. It might get so gummed up with lick on "paste-ins," as one colleague in the St. Louis faculty wrote to the *Lutheran Witness Reporter*, that all the pages could get permanently glued shut. However, I could still take the *Supplements* out on Saint's days. The red covers would go nicely with the red paraments.