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An Ascension Hymn	1
The Validity of the Churchly Acts of Ordained Women David P. Scaer	3
Charismatic Renewal in the Lutheran Church Walter A. Maier	21
Admission to the Lutheran Altar: Reflections on Open Versus Close Communion John Stephenson	39
Spiritual Wellsprings for the Professional Church Worker Donald L. Deffner	53
Faculty Overtures	75
Theological Observer	87
Book Reviews	105
Indices to Volume 52 (1988)	145



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The Validity of the Churchly Acts of Ordained Women

David P. Scaer

Since 1970 *The Springfielder* and its successor publication, the *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, have contained any number of articles on the scriptural prohibitions against the ordination of women, so that there is no need to rehearse those objections here.¹ As women clergy have become common in most major American Protestant denominations, including the largest Lutheran body, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the issue among those opposed has shifted from a discussion of whether women should be ordained to one of the validity the ministerial acts by such women ministers. The issue is not whether lay persons, men or women, may on occasion perform certain sacramental and liturgical rites, but whether women may be officially authorized to hold the pastoral or ministerial office as a permanent vocation. Can the ministerial rites performed by women who claim the ministerial vocation for themselves be recognized by churches who are opposed to them holding the pastoral office? We must be very careful that we do not let the question of who may occupy the pastoral office be determined by emergency situations. Actions taken in emergency situations do not become the norm or establish principles. I am afraid that such a method has been used with good intentions by those who are convinced that women may not be pastors. If cases of emergency determine the form and essence of the pastoral office, then we should now concede that women may be pastors and end all discussion of the matter.

In a certain sense we are ploughing new ground with this question of the validity of the ministerial acts of women pastors. While this issue had to be confronted sooner or later, I am aware that at this writing a consensus in this matter cannot be expected. Such is the nature of exploratory essays. This is not, however, an exploratory essay in the sense that I am creating an issue *ex nihilo*, since the matter of ordained women is one thrust upon us within the last generation. Underlying the issue of validity is the more basic issue of the

doctrine of the ministry. The validity of certain ministerial acts in conjunction with inclusive language in the liturgy has already been questioned by Leonard Klein in an article entitled "That God Is to Be Spoken of as 'He'" in the *Lutheran Forum*.² These questions of women preachers and the use of inclusive language are inextricably bound together. Women preachers will sooner or later become uncomfortable speaking about God in purely masculine terms. Bisexual references to God as Father-Mother are not uncommon today and were used already in ancient Gnosticism, an ancient pseudo-Christian philosophical movement. Klein offers this critical assessment of feminine language in describing God: "Abandoning the male pronoun at the barest minimum is unbiblical, and that ought to be caution enough. It is always an assumption of those who deny the trinitarian name of God."³ Paul R. Hinlicky in an editorial in a later issue of the same journal goes a step further in insisting that God be understood as Father-Son-Spirit in spite of the feminist objections. "The three pillars of the New Testament's talk about God amount to nothing if not the self-revelation of God in his own triune agency accomplishing human salvation—*sola gratia*. To attack the triune name is therefore to attack the *sola gratia*, and vice versa. To say exclusively by grace alone is to take exclusively the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as God."⁴

We must take the next step beyond the use of inclusive language and address the issue of the validity and legitimacy of the ministerial acts performed by women claiming to occupy the pastoral office. While for some validity and legitimacy are separate questions, this distinction originated with Augustine and is not of biblical origin.⁵ Here are some of the questions which I believe must be addressed: Is it possible to posit the hypothesis that a church with a woman pastor ceases to be *church* in the New Testament sense of the word, at least in some sense? Is a woman's possession of the pastoral office an adiaphoron or perhaps only a minor infraction of the divine word which the church can tolerate and still be the church? Is the woman in assuming the pastoral office only affirming her rights as a member of the universal priesthood of all believers, but which the Scriptures forbid her to exercise? Should a woman's assumption of the pastoral office be

avoided, not because this office cannot be hers, but for the sake of other theological principles, such as the order of creation or apostolic prohibitions? To put the best construction on things, this question might be posed in this way: Could ordaining women into the ministerial office be compared to distributing the sacrament according to one kind, not an ideal but a tolerable situation, if the only other alternative would be that the people would not receive the sacrament at all? Thus a church with a woman pastor is at least in a better position than a church with no pastor at all. She would only be exercising a right which belongs to her and all other Christians. Though this right is forbidden her for the sake of good order and for other arguments, she does nevertheless possess it.

As the number of women pastors increases in all major Protestant denominations, with the LCMS as the only exception, such questions as those raised in the previous paragraph hardly belong to the luxury of theological debate. The American Protestant establishment, including the ELCA, is moving closer to the feminization of its theology and liturgy, as recent issues of *Lutheran Forum* lament.⁶ Another revision of *The Revised Standard Version of the Bible* (RSV) will only confirm this situation with an edition with non-sexist language in reference to God. The ordination of women pastors is an effective cause of this feminizing trend, as confessional Lutheran scholar Peter Brunner of Heidelberg predicted more than thirty years ago.⁷

In using Dr. Francis Pieper's classification of fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines, one would hardly say that the question of the ministry belongs to the fundamental doctrines, at least not to the primary fundamental doctrines. It is nevertheless an important doctrine which reveals how one views even more or equally important doctrines. Consider the example of infant baptism. Those who deny baptism to infants are not offending against a fundamental doctrine, at least not superficially, but they do show that they are operating with entirely erroneous doctrines or concepts of original sin, man, faith, grace, and even God Himself.⁸

At this juncture one may want to apply Dr. Pieper's famous "felicitous inconsistency" to the defenders of women pastors as one might do to the deniers of infant baptism, but it does not rectify the situation that such people may have so adjusted and redefined other doctrines that they may now even have a different view of God Himself. At the surface level, it may appear that, in the denial of infant baptism, the denial of the presence of the Lord in the Supper, and the denial that only men may be ordained pastors, we are dealing with simple infractions against the divine word which may be forgiven, if they are considered of less significance than the fundamental doctrines of God, Christ, and the atonement. The stubble will be burned with fire, but the pure gold will remain during the heat of judgment. But we are not permitted such an easy way out of such problems, for even though we may not be dealing with fundamental doctrines, we are dealing with matters of fundamental doctrinal consequence. The nature of these infractions compel us to say that such organizations, in not baptizing infants, denying Christ's presence in the Supper, and ordaining women, are in these actions *not church*. They may be religious organizations, but they are not church in so far as they engage in these aberrations.

But the matter with the churches with women pastors is more serious in liturgical terms than with the churches with aberrations in baptism and the Supper. The regular liturgies of the church contain more than the commemoration of baptism and the Supper. I mean only to say that one can sit in church and observe other matters besides baptism and the Supper. One may participate in the worship of the church and never see a baptism or the Supper celebrated, as in the case of one of the daily offices such as matins and vespers. Only in isolated situations, however, will one not find a regularly ordained minister presiding. The pastor is a more visible and regular element of our church services than the celebration of the sacraments. In the regular services of the church, the officiating pastor is the dominant figure throughout the liturgy, as he is entrusted with the preaching of sermons and the administration of the sacraments. Now consider this point: When a woman is a minister, she is standing or sitting before the congregation as the president of the worshipping commun-

ity from the first hymn to the last and presuming to stand in the place of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even when she is not performing a specific liturgical function as preaching or baptizing, she is in the chancel as the liturgical leader. In New Testament terms, she presumes to be the *didaskalos*, *presbyteros*, and *episkopos*.⁹

One doctrine at stake in the ordination of women is the office of the ministry, bestowed and confirmed during the churchly rite of ordination. Thus, how one views this office will determine whether it is right to confer it on women or whether their acts are valid or legitimate in any sense. I do not think that we can improve on Chemnitz's view that the office which the congregation gives to the pastor is bestowed and confirmed in the ordination.¹⁰ The presence of the office in the congregation is not an adiaphoron but a necessity. In denying ordination to women pastors, we affirm that other kinds of hand-laying ceremonies for other church offices, such as deaconesses and school-teachers, are proper, but such rites must be distinguished from the New Testament rite of ordination, which ushers the recipient into the office of the word and sacrament.

With certain views of the ministry, to be sure, it would be perfectly proper to ordain women. If the ministry is viewed merely as function (i.e., activities which the church is required to carry out irrespective of the agent),¹¹ then there can be no ultimately effective argument against giving this function to any man, woman, or child. If the ministry is seen as an extension of Christian faith and sanctification and not as a unique office, then the same tolerance of any lay person is not only proper but even encouraged.¹² One may add to this view the idea that Christians are endowed with spiritual gifts which they are encouraged to discover. Each has his or her own ministry. Thus, if one's mother, wife, sister, or daughter discovers that she has the gift of leadership, she and the whole congregation with her may with good logic conclude that she may serve as minister or at least exercise some of the functions commonly assigned to this office. The problem is not helped by the lack of clarity about the word "ministry." *The Lutheran Annual 1988* uses the term "ministry" in so many ways that, if the hermeneutical principle were in place that "the annual

interprets the annual," it would be nearly impossible to determine what was precisely meant by the word "ministry." Lest there be any confusion, the Lutheran Confessions use the term only of the pastoral office. Another factor in whether one finds women acceptable as public ministers is one's view of the church. If the church just happens to be any *ad hoc* gathering of Christians gathered for devotions, Bible study, or prayer, then women leaders or pastors might be acceptable.

Thus, it is no wonder that such Evangelical groups as the Southern Baptists can really raise no effective objection to the practice of women pastors. Four hundred of their churches have women pastors, even though they recognize explicit apostolic injunctions against the practice. The Evangelicals, in spite of their devotion to an inspired and inerrant Bible, have shown themselves to be feeble allies with Confessional Lutherans in addressing the question. *Christianity Today*, with which President Robert Preus and I are associated in a more or less official capacity, has from time to time addressed the question of ordained women and has not been able to come up with a firm no, simply because they are operating with undeveloped concepts of the church and the ministry.¹³ Our allies in this matter are not Evangelicals or those who share with us the name of Lutheran but the churches of the Eastern Orthodox communion and, strangely, the bishop of Rome himself. The pope's protestations against women priests, in spite of his claim to infallibility and to being the universal teacher of the church, are not so good as to convince the proponents of ordination of women in his own flock from trying to introduce women priests and from doing their level best to feminize God so that male and female divine attributes balance each other out and neuter God.

The argument that the Son of God became incarnate as a male and that this incarnate Son chose twelve men as His apostles is not only as good as any other argument, but is perhaps the best. This issue is even more frightful than the liberal-conservative controversies of the 1960's and 1970's, simply because the Evangelicals whom we looked upon as our allies in the theological battles of those decades have doctrines of the church and the ministry which strangely enough put them on the same side of the issue as the group still generally identified as liberal.

Should a functional view of the ministry be seen as correct in the sense that the pastor is a representative not of Christ in His church, but of the church members themselves, then there is little which can be said against the validity or legitimacy of the churchly rites administered by women. The only wall left standing in the functional view preventing the introduction of women pastors are some Bible passages which hang suspended as prohibitions behind or under or over which nothing substantive exists. The biblical and confessional principle that behind the divine word of revelation there exists an even greater divine reality which supports the divine word must prevail. This greater reality is the incarnation. This view must prevail over a fundamentalist type of Barthianism which refuses to go behind the word of revelation to the reality of the incarnation.

This view that we have little more with which to operate in the ordination controversy than Bible passages is not unpopular in our circles.¹⁴ Such a view which limits the arguments against ordained women pastors to biblical prohibitions is, I submit, Barthian, as it sees the Word of God as a self-contained reality without the historical substance of incarnation or the sublime doctrine of God Himself behind it. The argument against women pastors cannot be that God simply forbids women to preach the word and administer the sacraments because He takes some kind of sadistic joy in seeing us weak humans saddled with still another negative commandment. The prohibitions against women pastors rest in a prior, deeper understanding of the incarnation and the divine reality of God Himself. Even the quite valid argument that women may not be pastors because Christ chose only men as apostles rests on the prior more fundamental reality of the incarnation. God did not choose to become incarnate in a male, as if He had a choice between male and female, but rather because He was the Son of the Father. My argument here does not minimize or make trivial the biblical prohibitions, but reenforces them by looking behind them, as they themselves suggest. The editor of the *Lutheran Forum* correctly sees that following the prohibitions against women preachers involves a commitment to the inerrancy of the Bible.¹⁵

The pastor stands before the congregation in Christ's stead and not the congregation's stead, as the words of absolution in the communion liturgy make abundantly clear. Where women serve as pastors, the doctrines of God and Christ are distorted, because *women cannot represent God and Christ in His incarnation*. God is of such a nature that He could not have become incarnate in a woman and He could not have chosen women to represent Him as apostles and pastors. We were all condemned in Adam's sin and not Eve's, though she sinned first. All are justified in Christ, who is the new Adam and not the new Eve. Women do not have the constituted nature to be icons of God in His creative relationship to the world or of Christ in His pastoral and redemptive relationship to the church. Paul's order of man being God's glory and the woman being man's glory cannot be contravened without losing the claim to be apostolic (1 Cor. 11:7).

Leonard Klein said that Lutheran pastors would have to begin to question the validity of baptisms performed in other churches, including Lutheran ones, because they may have been administered in the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. He notes, "If 'Sanctifier' is replaced with 'Sustainer,' as is apparently the case in some places, the God in question, as far as I can tell, could be Shiva."¹⁶ Klein finds such a usage idolatrous.¹⁷ We have always had to face the problem of recognizing as valid the baptisms of those from other groups because the wording of the baptismal rite may have been different. This is not the place to wage a battle over words, as we know of cases in the medieval and modern churches where for whatever reasons the words may have been garbled either through loss of memory or confusion. The baptisms of the Books of Acts in the name of Jesus always assumed that Jesus was God's Son who operated through the Spirit. The author of Luke-Acts was obviously trinitarian in a way which is not merely compatible with Matthew 28:19, but dependent on it. The matter of sacramental validity is not so certain in the case of churches with women pastors.

The use of a formula other than the biblical one of Matthew 28 in churches where ordained women are accepted is a deliberate attempt to present God in other than the exclusively

masculine images of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The change in the baptismal formula is not an isolated liturgical adjustment or adiaphoron, but one which is a direct result of the feminization of theology in the churches which have ordained women pastors.¹⁸ Elizabeth Achtemeier of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia repudiates the feminizing movement as "a new religion."

The issue is no longer simply whether the sacraments are valid, but whether Christ and His church are there. A church without Christ has neither word nor sacrament. When does the use of idolatrous language suggest that we are dealing with a non-Christian cult? This is the question which is already facing the church of the catholic, anti-gnostic tradition. If the argument here seems to the reader to be overstated, then reference can be made to Hinlicky's critique of Daphne Hampson. Ms. Hampson herself says that feminist theology "is not Christianity."¹⁹

The argument that churches with women pastors may still confer a valid baptism offered in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit overlooks the fact that the feminization of theology in those churches has already taken place or is currently underway. The recitation of the traditional "Father-Son-Spirit" does not annul this fact, though "feminists argue female metaphors are no less appropriate than male."²⁰ The real problem for the churches of the biblical and catholic tradition is determining how far the tide of gnosticism has flooded into particular congregations. The debate has come to this point and here the arguments should be made. Can a church have women pastors and not have a feminized theology? The answer is only evolving for Lutherans, but no gift of prophecy is needed to predict the outcome.²¹ Since the first presentation of this essay in early November of 1988, *Newsweek* published the article cited above, "Feminism and the Churches." Its by-line, "The issue is no longer equality but the thorough transformation of our religious institutions," makes it clear where the ordination of women leads. The verdict has already been rendered.

A baptism administered by a woman pastor can hardly be subsumed under the category of emergency baptism. It is one

administered without benefit of regular clergy, but it is not performed in an emergency situation. Without benefit of clergy cannot be equated *ipso facto* with an emergency baptism. A baptism administered by a doctor or a nurse who is a Jew or an atheist at the request of Christian parents or authorities in an emergency situation is valid because of an explicit or implied authorization in specific circumstances. Such an authorized person acts for the church in carrying out its responsibilities in regard to that *one* specific act. The believer or unbeliever (whatever the case) is not allowed then to go around administering the sacrament. The authorization applies only to the designated case.²² The non-clerical person does not by that action become a minister. A layman asked to lead the service during the pastor's absence does not become a pastor by that act, although I suspect many lay persons somehow think themselves in the office by having assisted the pastor. The use of the functions of the pastorate does not bestow the pastoral office. Emergency baptisms are not only divine acts but churchly ones and as such they are to be ratified or confirmed in the church by the pastor to demonstrate that this baptism was within the catholic tradition of the universal church and was not some sort of sectarian act performed in a corner.²³ Without churchly endorsement or acknowledgment, such baptism remains schismatic. Even if the baptisms of a woman pastor were to be recognized as valid under the provisions of emergencies—a point we do not grant—such baptisms would still remain unratified and hence schismatic.²⁴ Luther even suggested that a mother who gave her child emergency baptism should, if the child lived, tell no one, so that the child could receive baptism according to its ordinary procedures. The administration of the sacraments and, for that matter, the public preaching of the word are not within the purview of any Christian, but belong to the church or congregation to be administered by the officially recognized pastors. The public preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments are not the acts of individual Christians, but of the church. Ordination may be viewed as the official and public authorization of the pastor to preach and administer the sacraments.²⁵

The question is whether a woman may be so officially authorized by ordination in the congregation. It may help to provide an example which deals with those receiving baptism and not those administering it. At first glance it may appear humorous but, because of the gravity of the subject, the consequences are serious. I remember reading many years ago a tale told by one of the cynics of the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment—perhaps it was Voltaire or Rousseau. Some intoxicated monks land in the Antarctic and mistakenly identify a flock of penguins as human beings and proceed to baptize them. There ensues in heaven a discussion between God and the angels, I believe, about the fate of the baptized penguins, since according to an inadequate understanding of the longer ending of Mark, the baptized are saved.

The situation of ordained women is not so far removed from baptized penguins. The former act is deliberate and the latter not. Here they are dissimilar. In both cases, however, nothing of divine or permanent significance happens. Ordination, unlike baptism, does not offer the grace of salvation, but it is at least a sacred rite, one performed by the church following the example of St. Paul, in which the care of God's church is entrusted to the ones who are being ordained. Ordination can hardly be an empty ceremony, comparable to one conducted in a Masonic temple. But when the office of the pastor is conferred on a woman or by a woman on a man or woman in the rite of ordination, nothing happens. The office is not bestowed. The divine language is improperly used. It is a ritual for the sake of ritual and thus borders on the Masonic.

Now we cannot beg ourselves out of this question by pointing to Article VIII of the Augsburg Confession, which says that the sacraments are valid when they are administered by impious or evil men, unbelievers (*falscher Christen und Heuchler; per malos*) impersonating true confessors of the faith. The women receiving ordination are not passing themselves off as men. They may be clerically garbed, but they are not clerics. Their clerical garb contradicts their real role. This situation is not similar to the case of a woman passing herself off as a man and having herself consecrated as pope, something which is said to have happened when the keepers of Peter's chair were less than fully alert. She was ordained

as a man and not as a woman. With the women now being ordained as pastors, no subterfuge or deception is involved, because they are going before God's sacred altar not as men, but as what they truly are—women—to receive an office which was not intended for them. The words and laying on of hands for the ordination may be in order according to apostolic liturgy and church customs, but *nothing takes place*.

Children often attempt to baptize their siblings in the bathtub or attempt to “play church” with Holy Communion, but *nothing takes place*. We Lutherans do not believe in sacramental word magic. A woman may undergo the ceremony of ordination, but by that act she is not authorized to carry out the office. The phrase “ordained woman pastor” is self-contradictory, an oxymoron, an *Unding*, a non-reality. A congregation with a woman pastor has no pastor at all. If the case of emergency baptism is invoked to support the validity and legitimacy of her acts, her baptisms like other emergency baptisms would require church confirmation by the church's properly recognized pastors. But unlike those administering emergency baptisms, she has received no authorization at all in a formal or informal sense. No properly qualified pastor confirms her sacramental activities. Her ordination was no ordination, and thus she possesses no authority.

The Lutheran Church knows of the tradition of questioning the validity of sacraments, as the Formula of Concord denies that the Reformed have the Lord's Supper, at least in the sense that Christ instituted it. Thus the question of the validity of the ministry exercised by women pastors is not alien to Lutheran theology. We have here no recapitulation of the Donatistic heresy, were the sacraments administered by priests who had succumbed to denying of their faith in the face of persecution where considered invalid by the Donatists. The historical precedent for the current situation is Gnosticism, whose churchly rites were never recognized by the church catholic. This reaction was not simply a matter of determining whether the right words were spoken and of identifying the ministrants of the sacraments, but one of total theology, as Klein and Hinlicky have maintained in the *Lutheran Forum*.

Resolving the difficulty by saying that the women pastors have the word and sacraments is at best a superficial and finally an inadequate judgment, because such a resolution of the problem looks at rites by their outward appearances and not as integral parts of the whole of the church and its theology. The Formula of Concord in denying the Supper to the Reformed at least alerts us to the possibility that what looks like a sacrament may indeed not be a sacrament. Preaching, just because something is being proclaimed, is not necessarily the word of God. Speaking and performing ritual acts inside of a church building do not necessarily qualify as word and sacrament. Here is a case in which what looks like a duck, waddles like a duck, flies like a duck, eats like a duck, and swims like a duck may indeed not be a duck after all. Gnostics simply were not Christians, though they called themselves Christians and engaged in what appeared to be certain New Testament rites and were Bible scholars. Ordained women pastors are not a phenomenon isolated from the remainder of a church's theology.

Categorically stating things can be dangerous, but there is no church with women pastors that does not have at least the roots of feministic theology, and in some cases the harvest is already being reaped. A few stray voices are being raised in the ELCA, but here the protest is against the result in the feminine references to God and not its cause in the ordination of women. It is certainly not the church's first or even secondary task to go around proclaiming who has valid preaching, sacraments, and ministry. We might hesitate in making this judgment now about women pastors, but Leonard Klein has the courage to say, "Much of feminist talk about God is blatantly idolatrous."²⁶ If what Klein calls the blatantly idolatrous feminist talk about God is blasphemous, can we be less courageous in our critique of women pastors?

Many who have been baptized in other churches where they were served by women clergy will soon be coming into our churches. We cannot be confident, because there was something there resembling sacramental actions, that the sacraments were actually there. We can be confident, however, that

the feministic theology which inevitably follows ordination of women is not that of the New Testament, as Klein and Hinlicky clearly and forthrightly show. Leonard Klein in *Lutheran Forum* has raised the question of the validity of certain baptisms, when perhaps we of a more pronounced confessional heritage should have done so first. Preaching and the administration of the sacraments do not float around in the church like detached hydrogen balloons bouncing against the ceiling of the nave. These are not non-malignant growths in the body which is the church of Christ. The ministry, according to Augustana V, exists for the sake of the word and sacraments, and this is not a casual connection but one of divine necessity and command: "institutum est ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta." This point has been made by the president of this seminary.²⁷ Unless the office of the ministry is understood in the full dimensions of its divine institution as necessary for the church, women pastors may become a reality in the LCMS sooner than some would suspect and sooner than many would like.

Postscript: Since preparing this essay as a requested presentation to the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Barbara Harris' consecration as suffragan bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Boston has put both the question of the ordination of women and the feminization of theology into the domain of public discussion. Whereas I first thought that my thesis that the sacramental rites of ordained women are invalid might be considered radical by some, after reading the responses to the ordination in the public press, I now find that I am not alone in my assessment of the seriousness of the situation. *National Review* (March 10, 1989), in referring to the Barbara Harris case, says that the question of whether she is a bishop is really the question of whether she was ever a priest. "About that Christians are in disagreement, and many have yet to make up their minds." The editorial ends with the prediction, "The long march [of the feminization of American religion] through the institutions proceeds apace."²⁸ A much franker assessment comes in the *Newsweek* article, "Feminism and the Churches." Not only are the names of the three divine persons compromised, but God becomes "'God-ess' to underscore [Ruether's] belief that divine reality is best understood as an empowering 'Primal Matrix,' the great womb

in whom we live and move and have our being.” “Achte-meier criticizes mother metaphors for God because they resurrect the Near Eastern fertility goddesses whom the authors of the Hebrew Bible reject in proclaiming a Creator who is qualitatively different from his creation.”²⁹ Jesus is not untouched and goes from being the Son of the Father to “Wisdom’s Child,” since the words for “wisdom” in the Hebrew and Greek are feminine. For Christ some even make the blasphemous substitute of “Christa.”³⁰ These observations support the view that the ordination of women goes beyond infractions of scriptural prohibitions against the practice; it is an affront to our Lord’s selection of men as His twelve apostles, the incarnation, the divine triune essence, and God as creator.

Endnotes

1. The first of these was *The Springfielder* XXXIII: 4 (March 1970), which contained essays by Martin J. Naumann, Bo Giertz, Peter Brunner, Raymond F. Surbug, Walter A. Maier, Jr., and James Weiss.
2. *Lutheran Forum*, XXII (Pentecost 1988), pp. 23-27.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
4. “Grace Alone,” *Lutheran Forum*, XXIII (Lent 1989), p. 5.
5. The Reverend Charles Evanson of Fort Wayne, Indiana, alerted me to Luther’s surrender of the medieval distinction between legitimate and valid acts, a distinction first made by St. Augustine. Pastor Evanson said that he obtained information from Dr. Norman Nagel of Saint Louis, who in turn came upon a reference to Martin Brecht’s *Martin Luther* (II, Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1986). I have searched the Brecht volume for the specific reference but as of this writing have not found it.
6. Editor Paul Hinlicky provides this morsel from *Word and World*, a journal of Luther-Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul. A certain Daphne Hampson “argues acutely that ‘while there can be no incompatibility between feminism and being religious, feminism comports ill with Christianity. This is particularly the case when we consider Christianity in its Lutheran form.’ ” XXIII (Lent 1989), p. 5.
7. This point is lost on Paul Hinlicky of *Lutheran Forum*, who for all his good intentions in opposing the introduction of an alien feminine language in describing God, insists as an “evangelical

- catholic" in defending the ordination of women. Ibid. His usually clear line of reasoning escapes me at this point.
8. I am astounded at the conservative Lutheran fascination with Evangelicalism, notwithstanding its allegiance to an inspired and inerrant Scripture. Evangelicalism with its twin denial of baptismal regeneration, especially as it applies to infants, and of the Lord's presence in the Supper is simply not New Testament Christianity. Its influence on Lutheranism would have a negative influence on all doctrines, including incarnation, atonement, and justification. I am not singling out Evangelicalism for a special censure, but I am saying that disregard for the sacraments and the ministry ought to be considered with equal seriousness as disregard for the Scriptures as the Word of God.
 9. Lutherans see these New Testament terms as applicable to all pastors. The Anglicans limit the *episcopos* title to bishops. For this reason the ordination of Barbara Harris as bishop coadjutor of Boston on February 11, 1988, was just as significant a break with tradition as was the ordination of women priests or ministers in other denominations including Lutherans.
 10. Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, tr. Fred Kramer (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), pp. 693-694, says of ordination that it is "signified by this visible rite that God approves the calling which is done by the voice of the church, for just as God chooses ministers by the voice of the church, so He also approves the calling by the attestation of the church. Thus the calling of the deacons [in Acts] was approved (Acts 6:6). And thus it comes about that God bestows grace through the laying on of hands." Cf. p. 695: "Many also, like Judas, indeed receive and have the grace of ordination but do not have the grace of reconciliation or the forgiveness of sins."
 11. The position is put forth by Ken Schurb, "Melanchthon's View of the Ministry," S.T.M. Thesis, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana (March 1988), p. 86.
 12. David P. Scaer, "A Lutheran Response to Evangelicalism: The Ordination of Women," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, LI: 2-3 (April-July 1987), pp. 104-105.
 13. Kenneth S. Kantzer, "Proceed with Care," *Christianity Today*, XXX: 14 (October 3, 1986), pp. 14-I to 15-I.
 14. Schurb takes exception to my view expressed in *The Springfielder*, XXXVI (September 1972), p. 105, n. 45, and states that the apostolic prohibitions are sufficient arguments for keeping

- women out of the office (op. cit., p. 88). His argument based on the LCMS refusal to ordain women is diminished by a strong movement in the Synod to allow it. Such an argument from experience and history is never conclusive.
15. "The Missouri Synod's unconscionable sexism notwithstanding, even the reactionaries among them can hardly be blamed for holding the line when they survey the spectacle that obtains in the ELCA. That a Church which once prayed in the Collect for the Word to 'abide faithful in the confession of Thy Name to the end' now routinely entertains a *sustained, deliberate and cogent* assault on biblical language about God is enough to convince even moderates in Missouri of a domino theory of Christian apostasy that begins with the fall of the 'inerrancy' of Scripture." *Lutheran Forum*, XXIII (Lent 1989), p. 4.
 16. Op. cit., p. 27.
 17. The February 13, 1989, issue of *Newsweek*, in "Feminism and the Churches," offers the triad "Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter." A more radical substitution offered by Sallie McFague of Vanderbilt University would be "Mother, Lover, and Friend" (p. 60).
 18. Peter Brunner predicted that the ordination of women inevitably would require the feminization of theology, and here the term "theology" refers to the specific doctrine of God. This prediction was not spun out of thin air, but enjoyed for historical support Gnosticism, an early church plague, which produced both male and female clergy and a male and female god. The god with two genders is not the Father of our Lord Jesus, God's only Son, attested in the New Testament.
 19. "What is at issue in Hampson's feminist repudiation of the actuality of God, this rejection of faith in his coming reign and this disclaimer of God's justifying judgment? Feminist theology wants a religion of the Self, a vision of immanent cosmic harmony to be attained through 'human spirituality' where 'the starting point for the knowledge of God becomes the knowledge of ourselves.' But this Hampson rightly states 'is not Christianity,' " *Lutheran Forum*, XXIII (Lent 1989), p. 5.
 20. *Newsweek*, op. cit., p. 60.
 21. One way used in our circles to recognize the validity of churchly rites administered by women clergy is to invoke the example of emergency or non-clerically administered baptisms. Calvin allowed only clerical baptism, not because he had a high view of the clergy, but because he did not see baptism as necessary to salvation and in regard to the sacraments he was predictably

“a law and order” man. His concern was that everything be done decently and in order and not that the dying child needed the salvation of baptism. The words of Jesus apply to Calvin: “The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath.” If Lutherans adopt Calvin’s model that women should not be pastors for the sake of order, then there can be really no objection to the practice. All that needs be done is to change the order.

22. Avery Dulles and George Lindbeck find this to be the position of the Augsburg Confession. “The unexpressed premise, however, is that the ministerial office is necessary to preaching and the sacraments.” “Bishops and the Ministry of the Gospel,” in *Confessing One Faith*, ed. George W. Forell and James F. McCue (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), p. 156.
23. A biblical parallel may be found in John and Peter’s ratification of Philip’s baptisms of the Samaritans by the imposition of hands. They were sent by the apostles in Jerusalem to perform this ratification and thus they confirmed these baptisms (Acts 8:14-16).
24. The position put forth in this essay goes beyond that of H. Sasse (*We Confess the Church* [Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1986], p. 601); for him “baptisms done by....[women pastors] stand as those done by a midwife.” Sasse may not have made the necessary connection between women’s ordination and the feminization of theology. Bishop Bo Giertz remained in the Church of Sweden when ordination of women was adopted. Sasse is critical of Giertz for adopting casuistic rules for occasions when priestesses would appear in church. Sasse himself may be open to criticism in judging the acts of women pastors as being valid in any sense.
25. It is official because it is performed by the consent of all the congregations which are in communion with each other and share a common faith. By ordination a pastor serves one congregation, but the other congregations in communion with each other recognize the validity of his ministry. It is also public, so that the entire church and the community may be able to distinguish the pastor from those who do not hold this office.
26. *Lutheran Forum*, XXII (Fall 1988), p. 27.
27. Robert D. Preus, *Getting into the Theology of Concord* (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), pp. 59-60.
28. “The New Time Religion,” *National Review* XLI: 4, pp. 16-17.
29. *Op. cit.*, p. 61.
30. *Op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.