

THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

Final Report of the Special Committee to the Commission on Theology and  
Inter-Church Relations, Lutheran Church of Australia

C O N T E N T S

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1 The Background	1
1.2 The Scope of the Study	1
1.3 Presuppositions	2
2. THE CONTEXT - THEN AND NOW	
2.1 Scriptural Evidence on the Status and Role of Women	3
2.2 Contemporary Factors	10
3. GENERAL HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES	
3.1 Basic Presuppositions	12
3.2 The Gospel as Central Hermeneutic	13
3.3 Relating OT and NT Texts	15
3.4 Exegetical Methodology	16
3.5 The Question of Cultural Relativity	18
3.6 Prescription or Description	20
4. SPECIFIC THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES	
4.1 The Equality of Men and Women in Creation	22
4.2 The Order of Creation	23
4.3 Subordination/Submission in the NT	28
4.4 The Principle of Headship	32
4.5 Grappling with the Key Texts	37
4.6 The Order of Redemption	44
4.7 Ordination and Pastoral Authority	48
5. CONCLUSION	
5.1 A Summary of Positions	52
5.2 Recommendations	54
Endnotes	56
Appendix 1: A Select Bibliography	59
Appendix 2: A Tabulation of Written Submissions	63

## THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

### Final Report of the Special Committee to the Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, Lutheran Church of Australia

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

##### 1.1 The Background

The seminal LCA statement on the ordination of women is that of the Thesis of Agreement VI,11:

Though women prophets were used by the Spirit of God in the Old as well as the New Testament, 1 Cor. 14:34,35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-14 prohibit a woman from being called into the office of the public ministry for the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. This apostolic rule is binding on all Christendom; hereby her rights as a member of the spiritual priesthood are in no wise impaired.

This statement was adopted by the Joint Meeting of the ELCA and UELCA in 1950; by the respective churches in 1956 and 1959; and by the LCA in 1966. In 1975 the LCA resolved in Convention that 'should amendments [to the Theses of Agreement] become desirable in the course of time, such amendments would have to be submitted to the entire Church after thorough theological examination and discussion'.

In response to a directive from the CTICR in April, 1986, the Executive of the Commission asked the Faculty of Luther Seminary 'to prepare a study paper on the ordination of women taking into account the relevant statements of the LCA for presentation to the CTICR' (Minutes VIII.14; 1986/3; Resolution 7).<sup>1</sup> In July 1987 the Commission adopted the Faculty's proposed terms of reference for a study of the issue (Minutes VIII.23; 1987/5; Resolution 28), and in November appointed the following to serve on the Special Committee: Ms A.J. Braunack-Mayer, Pastor P.A. Kriewaldt (Secretary), Dr V.C. Pfitzner (Chairperson), Pastor J.A. Sabel, and Mrs S.A. Schubert. Drs J.T.E. Renner and J.G. Strelan were later appointed as consultants. The Committee was formally constituted on 29 April, 1988, and held 20 meetings in the course of carrying out its task. This final report is now respectfully submitted to the Commission.

##### 1.2 The Scope of the Study

The Committee was asked to undertake a study 'to enable the CTICR, and ultimately the LCA, to make an informed, God-pleasing judgment on the question of the ordination of women'. It was given a choice: either to defend the Thesis of Agreement VI.11, or to examine all pertinent data and arguments, leading to a conclusion either for or

against the ordination of women (Terms of Reference, A). The Committee followed the second option in the conviction that it would allow a more open and unrestricted approach to the question.

In the course of our study we have attempted to be responsible interpreters of the present official position of the LCA, and to listen to strongly-held views of those who oppose the ordination of women. We have also listened to new arguments in the ongoing world-wide debate, also to those advanced by members of the LCA who maintain that the present stance against the ordination of women is wrong. Within the Committee itself division of conviction and differing exegetical conclusions have surfaced. These reflect divisions within the Church on an issue which is highly contentious and, for some, church-divisive. Where no agreement could be reached, the different positions have been stated as objectively as possible.

We have grappled with written submissions (see Appendix I) and with a representative portion of the literature which the debate continues to produce. Our central task, however, has been to search the Scriptures and to wrestle with vital hermeneutical issues in an attitude of humble submission under the authority of the Word, and asking for the Spirit's guidance.

It was clear, from the outset of our study, that the question of the ordination of women could not be discussed apart from the prior fundamental question: What is the relationship between men and women in Christ?

The debate on the ordination of women is only part of the quest in the LCA for clarity on how to express the oneness of men and women in the gospel. In hindsight, it might have been better for the church to address that fundamental matter before examining the ordination of women.

### 1.3 Presuppositions

This study presupposes certain basic tenets of the LCA. It presupposes that the Scriptures are divinely inspired and authoritative for faith and practice, and our only guide in discerning the will of God also on the question in debate. A decision is not to be made on the basis of church tradition, culture, majority vote, the feminist movement,

or anything else. We also agree that it is necessary for the church to be led by the Spirit who inspired the Scriptures to ever deeper understandings of God's will for his people and the world today. Differences in theology and exegesis should not immediately be interpreted as rejection of scriptural authority, and are not necessarily church-divisive.

Within this document we presuppose the Lutheran understanding of

- the ministry of reconciliation in which every believer participates as a member of the Body of Christ;
- the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament as the divinely-instituted public office through which the Body of Christ is nourished in the faith, equipped for good works, and prepared for ministry;
- ordination as that solemn ecclesiastical ceremony in which a pastor is publicly certified as rite vocatus.

Documentation in the form of footnotes and acknowledgments must remain limited. References have been kept to a minimum. The appended bibliography will indicate the basic secondary sources for our study apart from commentaries, which we have not listed.

## 2. THE CONTEXT - THEN AND NOW

The purpose of what follows is briefly to examine the wider context, past and present, in which the question of the ordination of women belongs. It is first important to look at data relating to the broader issue of the status of women in biblical times, and especially in the teaching of Christ and the apostles. It is then necessary to evaluate issues which are raised in the modern debate on the ordination of women. This must be done before attempting to clarify hermeneutical principles and specific theological arguments which are central to the debate.

### 2.1 Scriptural Evidence on the Status and Role of Women

#### 2.1.1 The Old Testament

OT society was patriarchal and androcentric. Nevertheless, the knowledge and abilities of women, both within and beyond the family sphere, were recognised and acknowledged.

- a) Special honour was assigned to the patriarchal mothers who receive special blessing as bearers of the promised 'seed'. Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel become coheirs, with their husbands, of the promises of God (Gen 17:15,16).

- b) Certain women were given the gift of prophecy: Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah (Ex 15:20; Judg 4:4; 2 Kgs 22:14). There may have been more. Nowhere is there a suggestion that their gift contravened a male prerogative, or that their prophecy was inferior. On the other hand, the priesthood within Israel and Judaism was limited to males. It was in paganism (eg in Baalism) that priestesses were prominent. However, two of the three prophetesses were closely associated with priests; Miriam was the sister of Aaron, and Huldah was consulted by Hilkiyah the high priest.
- c) Only one queen reigned in Israel's history, Athaliah. Rather surprisingly, she ruled over Judah in the line of David (2 Kgs 8,11). Though her six-year reign can be seen as a temporary and illegitimate usurpation, there is no negative comment on the fact that a woman should reign over Judah.
- d) The good wife of Proverbs is praised for the way in which she carried out the many and varied tasks demanded by her lifestyle.
- e) The story of Ruth and Naomi shows that women were part of God's people and used by him to fulfil his covenantal promises in the OT, and his final plan of salvation. In a male dominated world these women became a blessing to both women and men.

#### 2.1.2 Jewish Society

Jewish society was likewise patriarchal and androcentric. Women played no leading role in the cult, whether in the temple or the synagogue. Further, they were not to be taught Torah, for they were not permitted to teach it. Thus, no woman could be a disciple of a rabbi. That is why the pious Jew could pray: 'I thank you, Lord, that you have not created me a woman'. Nor was the evidence of women admissible in a court of law ('Let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex'; Josephus Antiquities VIII 15). Women from the past like Ruth, Judith, and Esther could be honoured, and there was one Hasmonean queen in the first century BC, Queen Salome Alexandra who was later much revered by the Pharisees whom she favoured. But there is no

evidence of women occupying positions of leadership within the institutions of Judaism in Jesus' day.

### 2.1.3 Jesus and Women

Considering the male-dominated culture into which Jesus was born, his attitude to women is startlingly new. It contrasts sharply with contemporary Jewish attitudes. He affirmed the personhood of women, treated them as persons of equal worth to men, related to them with love and respect, allowed them to follow him and minister to him, taught and healed them, and recognised their intellectual and spiritual capacities.

a) Women figure prominently in his ministry. They receive forgiveness and physical healing from him. Their exemplary faith is highlighted. Most importantly, Jesus broke through a cultic barrier in dealing with unclean women. He healed Simon's mother-in-law (Mark 1:31 is framed by evidence of Jesus' power over unclean spirits). He shows mercy to the Syrophenecian woman who belongs to an unclean race according to Jewish thought (see Mark 7:26 in its setting of the discussion of what is clean and unclean). He acts in the same way toward the woman who is unclean because of her haemorrhage; divine grace and faith overcome cultic and social barriers as she touches Jesus (Matt 9:20-22). Jesus even touches the corpse of a girl (v 25). He not only offends social respectability by speaking to a woman alone; she is an 'unclean' Samaritan in Jewish eyes, but not so in Jesus' view (John 4:9,27). She even becomes the first witness to the Samaritans. He allows a notorious sinner to touch him, and commends her faith in contrast to the lack of faith in others (Luke 7:36-50). The woman who anoints him for his burial performs an act which will perpetuate her memory as long as the gospel is preached in the whole world (Matt 26:13).

b) Unlike rabbis of his day, Jesus freely allowed women to accompany him and his male disciples (Luke 8:1-3). Luke notes that Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna had been 'healed of evil spirits and infirmities' (v 2). The unclean were included in his circle. A further note makes clear that they were not only providers of material things for Jesus and his male disciples. They both 'followed' (akolouthein) Jesus, and 'ministered' (diakonein) to him

(Mark 15:40,41; see also Luke 23:49). So Mary sits at the Lord's feet to learn from him like a talmid.

- c) Women are prominent in the key NT event - the resurrection of Jesus. Though the witness of women was not valid in Judaism, it is the women who followed Jesus who become the first witnesses of the empty tomb. It is to them that the Lord entrusts the privilege of carrying to the other disciples the news of his resurrection (Matt 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-8; John 20:18). The Lucan version even places the first female witnesses in a better light than the apostles who 'did not believe them' (Luke 24:11). It can be argued that the movement of witness is from the women to the apostles.
- d) Jesus' teaching on the equality of men and women extends to eschatology. In this life women are not the possession of their husbands to divorce at will. God's original and final will is equality, as shown from the fact that in the resurrection 'they neither marry nor are given in marriage' (Mark 12:25 and parallels).

#### 2.1.4 Jesus and the Apostles

The question at issue here is whether those who exercise the public office and represent Christ must be male since Ministry goes back to Jesus and the apostles who were all male.

- a) The argument that the maleness of Jesus and of the apostles is determinative for those who serve in the Ministry may be summarised as follows. As Son of Man, Son of David, and Son of God, Jesus was the fulfilment of OT prophecy which never sees God's eschatological agent as anything but male. Likewise, Jesus did not appoint a woman as an apostle, and the apostolic office remained restricted to males. The men and women who proposed candidates to replace Judas considered only men (Acts 1:14-26). Peter recalls Scripture to show that his office (that of Judas) must be taken by another male, so that the choice is between men who have been with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry, though some women would presumably have met this condition. The argument that Jesus' choice of male apostles was conditioned by the status of women in Jewish society (culture) is invalid. Even if it is to be granted that his attitude to and treatment of women was quite revolutionary, why did

he not also commission women as his authorised representatives? Thus the choice of male disciples is not determined by culture, but by his will for the welfare of the church for all ages. The male Jesus must be represented by males.

Further, women played a prominent role in the religious life of Greco-Roman culture, also as priestesses and prophetesses. If the appointment of apostles was determined by cultural considerations, why did Jesus not appoint at least one female apostle who would gain ready acceptance in the Gentile world? Male leadership continued in the early church, also in the case of elders. Paul's instruction on the appointment of an elder include the fact that he must be the husband of one wife (Titus 1:6).

- b) The following arguments are raised against making the maleness of Jesus and the apostles determinative for all who hold the public office. The undisputed maleness of Jesus belongs to the specifics of God's revelation of himself in the incarnation, as does the fact that he was a Jew of the first century. The maleness of ministers of the gospel cannot be based on the historical precedent, nor on any ontological argument that the male Jesus can be represented only by males.

Further, it would have been unthinkable for Jesus to choose women to be his first authorised eyewitnesses, even granting his revolutionary treatment of women. In the latter case he was concerned with the status of women; with the apostolate he was concerned with witness to himself as the Messiah.

That he did not appoint even one woman as an apostle for the Gentile world, for example, a female counterpart to Paul, need not surprise, since the starting point for the Gentile mission was still always the local Jewish synagogue.

Finally, and even more importantly, it is necessary to question the assumption that the authority of the public office must be derived from the relationship between Christ and his apostles. The authority of the office lies in the Word which is proclaimed, not in the person who bears the office, nor in any direct connection between himself and the apostles, and thus with Christ himself (see the discussion in 4.7 below).

- c) There is agreement that what the apostles handed on to the later church was not an office to be held by males like themselves; they handed on their apostolic witness to Christ. No person, whether male or female, can repeat the role of an apostle. By definition, the apostolate was a unique office held by people who were personally commissioned by the Lord and were his eyewitnesses (Acts 1:21,22; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:5-8). Though the number of the Twelve, representing the people of Israel, was restored before Pentecost, no replacements were made thereafter, not even after the martyrdom of James (Acts 12:2). Nor did the apostles appoint successors during their lifetime. Oversight of local churches was given to elders, not apostles. No evidence exists to suggest that they functioned only by apostolic appointment, even if the apostles did appoint deacons and elders in some instances (Acts 6:1-6; 14:23).
- d) The case against the ordination of women cannot be based on the maleness of Jesus and the apostles alone. Theological grounds must be adduced to show why Jesus appointed only male apostles.

#### 2.1.5 Women in the Early Church

- a) Women figure quite prominently in Luke's story of the early church in Acts. They belong to the small band waiting in Jerusalem for the promised Spirit (Acts 1:4,14). The miracle of Pentecost reconstitutes the people of God as a Spirit-filled, witnessing community in which both sons and daughters, manservants and maidservants are to prophesy (2:17,18). Certain females are given prominence in Luke's narrative. Tabitha of Joppa is called a 'disciple' (mathetria; 9:36). The home of Mary, the mother of John-Mark, seems to be one of the first house-churches (12:12). It is likely that she, as well as first converts like Lydia at Philippi, held important positions in early Christian communities, possibly as heads of households in which the believers assembled (16:14,15; see also the reference to the 'Greek women of high standing' in 17:12). Certainly, Lydia is singled out from other women to whom Paul spoke in Philippi, but also from the 'brethren' in that town (16:13,40). Whether she was a widow or her husband remained an unbeliever is not known. Both Aquila and Priscilla appear

as leaders of the congregation at Corinth; they accompany Paul on to Asia Minor, and at Ephesus are both involved in the further instruction of Apollos (18:2,18,26). Finally, there are the four daughters of Philip who have the gift of prophecy (21:9). In summary: While Luke never mentions a female apostle or elder, it is highly likely that, according to Acts, women held some leading positions in local congregations in the early years of the church.

- b) The basic contours of the picture are confirmed by Paul in his letters. Paul makes no distinction in service or status when referring to his fellow workers, whether male or female. Prominent women in the churches are recognised as performing valuable ministry. There is Phoebe the deacon (not 'deaconess' in the sense of an office) at Cenchreae (Rom 16:1,2) who performed a service to the church universal by delivering Paul's letter to the Romans, and whom he describes as a helper or patron to many besides himself.<sup>6</sup> Prisca (=Priscilla) is mentioned first as Paul describes her and her husband Aquila as his 'fellow-workers' (Rom 16:3). He refers to two other women, Euodia and Syntyche, as 'fellow-workers' who, with others, 'have laboured side by side with me in the Gospel' (Phil 4:3). This terminology hardly suggests that such women were merely caterers of Paul's material needs.
- c) Of related interest is the case of Junia/Junias in Romans 16:7. Translators have usually read the second name as masculine, probably on the assumption that no apostle could be female. Yet there is some evidence from the early church that the name was understood as feminine (Chrysostom, for example).<sup>7</sup> It is possible that we have a husband and wife team belonging to the wider circle of missionaries. The Pauline circle allowed for a wider circle of 'apostles' as pioneer missionaries sent out to establish churches (see Acts 13:1-3). The Corinthians apparently accepted others as apostles in this wider sense, though Paul called them false-apostles (2 Cor 11:13) or super-apostles (a sarcastic reference; 11:5, 12:11). Paul refers to Titus and two other men, sent to Corinth to collect alms for the poor in Jerusalem, as 'apostles of the churches' (2 Cor 8:23), that is, as delegated envoys.

Junia and Adronicus may have been apostles in this sense. However, the feminine reading is still not certain, and the phrase 'of note among the apostles' could be taken to mean 'people who are well known by those who are apostles'. Even if Junias is actually a woman, Junia, that fact is not as decisive as it first appears to be. Her apostleship could, at best, mean that she was a unique witness to the Lord in the Hellenistic world (note the non-Palestinian names, including that of her husband).

#### 2.1.6 Conclusions

No decisive conclusions for or against the ordination of women can be drawn from this biblical evidence. A striking change in the role of women is apparent when the Old and New Testaments are compared. Women probably were important leaders in the early church and one may have been regarded as an 'apostle' in the sense of envoy. However, while this biblical data carries some weight, eligibility for Christian ministry can not be based on biblical precedent alone. What is needed are fundamental theological principles which directly suggest eligibility of males alone, or a ministry which is open to males and females.

### 2.2 Contemporary Factors

#### 2.2.1 The Feminist Movement

- a) The secular feminist movement has had an influence on the move towards the ordination of women in churches around the world. Whether it is the dominating or even determinative factor is another question. Some feminist leaders draw a strong link between sexism in general within an androcentric society and the rejection of women for the ministry.<sup>8</sup> This connection is not always made even by those who support women's ordination. Some Christians would espouse equality of the sexes, including equal pay for the same work, equal opportunity for advancement in the work-force - yet oppose women's ordination, arguing that the relevant passages cited concern the role of women in public worship. Again, others have argued that it is just in the church, not in the sinful world, that we should find absolute equality.<sup>9</sup>
- b) Secular movements may remind the church of necessary reforms: they may even suggest an agenda for churchly discussion and decision. However, taking on questions raised by secular

movements such as feminism in no way ties the church to the ideologies of such movements. For the church, Scripture alone determines what is truth in faith and practice.

#### 2.2.2 Sociological Changes

- a) Changes in women's role and status in Western society are closely linked to the rise of feminism. Women's suffrage is now taken for granted in western societies. Women's rights are protected by law. They have taken leading positions in politics, the world of business, and in other fields. The dangers of sexual stereotyping, exclusive language, and other forms of sexual discrimination are increasingly highlighted in the secular press.
- b) Some may see a change in church practices as a matter of the church catching up with recognised social justice in the secular world. Be that as it may, change for the church should not be determined by secular change, but by God's word.

#### 2.2.3 Ecumenical Considerations

- a) The largest denominations of Christendom, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, do not ordain women to the priesthood or to minor orders. This situation is unlikely to change in the near future, despite strong pressure for change especially in Roman Catholic circles, also by theologians. It has been argued that for Australian Lutherans to surrender their traditional stance against women's ordination would mean a turning from accepted and strongly supported catholic tradition, based also on Scripture. Further, it would provide another obstacle to good ecumenical relations, especially with the Roman Catholic Church.
- b) On the other hand, by now the majority of those who call themselves Lutheran around the world have decided in favour of the ordination of women. Furthermore, whether such change has prejudiced Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue is debatable.
- c) Against both arguments, it must be pointed out that truth, whether in faith or practice, is not to be decided by majority.

#### 2.2.4 Historical Considerations

- a) The church universal, with its different denominations, has, with small exceptions (eg the Salvation Army) excluded women from the public ministry. This has been the accepted

practice for nineteen-hundred years. To go against this long-established practice is, it has been suggested, to argue that the church of the past has been guilty of error, if not heresy. Would we not have to repent of the sins of the saints in the past?

- b) For Lutherans to suggest that the church in the past cannot err is very strange, to say the least, in the light of Luther's Reformation stand that councils and synods have erred and can still err. Further, to say that past practice was wrong is not to say that it was heretical. There is constant need for the church to grow in the knowledge of God's will as it searches the Scriptures and draws conclusions from the gospel which have not been drawn before.

#### 2.2.5 Conclusions

Secular movements, changes in social attitudes, the ecumenical situation, and past practice are not determining factors in arriving at a decision on whether the ordination of women is in conformity with God's will or not. For Lutherans there is only one measure of the truth: God's revealed Word. What is required is a clear and cogent theological argument for or against.

### 3. GENERAL HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES

#### 3.1 Basic Presuppositions<sup>2</sup>

- 3.1.1 A perplexing aspect of the debate on the ordination of women is the fact that people who confess the full inspiration and authority of Scripture come to different conclusions in the debate. A reading of the literature makes clear that hermeneutical questions lie at the heart of the question of both the interpretation and application of texts cited.<sup>3</sup>
- 3.1.2 At issue is not the authority of God's Word, but how it is to be interpreted and applied today. Here it is necessary to remember that it is the Scriptures which are inspired and authoritative, not the interpreter. Nor can the Church claim infallible interpretation.
- 3.1.3 The confession that the Scriptures are the only norm of doctrine (FC Ep Rule and Norm 1; Tappert, pp 503, 504) implies that there is doctrinal consistency in their witness. No section of God's written Word may be played off against another as less inspired or as less authentically the voice of the Spirit.

- 3.1.4 Central to the Lutheran hermeneutic of the Scriptures is the principle of Christocentricity. Christ and the gospel are the heart of the Scriptures. It is God's revelation in Christ which gives unity and focus to the whole of the written Word.
- 3.1.5 The clarity of the Scriptures relates to the heart of the written Word as Law and Gospel. This principle does not mean that there are no textual or exegetical problems. Certain passages remain difficult to interpret.
- 3.1.6 Law and Gospel must be clearly distinguished without separating them. The gospel is the message of divine grace in Christ; it is always God's last word as an expression of his 'proper work'. In this sense, the saving gospel supersedes the condemning law. The law with its ethical commands remains as the will of God. So the gospel overcomes the curse of the law, but does not abrogate it as God's stated will for holy living.
- 3.1.7 The principle that Scripture interprets Scripture means that an obscure passage of Scripture should be interpreted by a clear passage. However, the meaning of one text can not be superimposed on another without reference to such things as differences in meaning of words or difference in context.
- 3.1.8 According to the Lutheran confessional heritage, all doctrinal issues must have a clear connection with the gospel. This applies also to matters of church order. This does not mean, however, that church doctrine and practice can always be derived from the gospel without reference to specific texts.
- 3.1.9 Any doctrine of the church must be based on the sum of clear scriptural evidence, and not on an isolated text whose meaning is unclear.

### 3.2 The Gospel as Central Hermeneutic

- 3.2.1 Effective hearing of God's Word, leading to faith and obedience, is finally not dependent on principles of interpretation, but on The Interpreter. The Holy Spirit leads to an understanding of God's total revelation through the acceptance of the gospel in faith. Thus, 'all Scripture must be understood in keeping with its own central content and purpose ... The Scripture which the Spirit inspired is directed to the glorification of the Son'.<sup>4</sup> Since Christ is the heart of the Scripture,

its central meaning is to be found in him.

- 3.2.2 The goal and governing principle of all Lutheran interpretation of Scripture is therefore the explication of the gospel. This principle is summed up in Luther's maxim, was Christum treibet. The gospel is the power of God for salvation, a power which frees, redeems, and reconciles. It is also the central hermeneutical principal for understanding God's revealed will in the whole of Scripture.
- 3.2.3 The gospel does not invalidate the law of God with its ethical demands. As God's ultimate revelation in Christ, the gospel removes the curse of the law. Christ is thus the end of the law (Rom 10:4) in the double sense that believers who receive righteousness as a gift live by the gospel in the freedom of the Spirit, not by the law; and that with Christ the role of the law in salvation history reaches its God-ordained goal (Gal 3:24).
- It is only those who are in Christ who can now properly understand the function of the law, past and present. Only they can affirm that it still accuses and kills even when it is being used as a guide for holy living. Only they can affirm that all their righteousness under the law is refuse (Phil 3:4-11).
- 3.2.4 The gospel also interprets the cultic law of the OT. The letter to the Hebrews shows how we must read the requirements of the old priestly and sacrificial order. They all point to their perfect fulfilment in Christ. His sacrifice establishes a new order. The old is repealed and annulled as obsolete (Heb 7:12,18; 8:13). In the light of the gospel the demand for circumcision is superseded. It is likewise the gospel which brings an end to sabbath laws, the old regulations regarding sacred festivals, and the laws on clean and unclean. There are thus laws of the OT which are superseded. Their role and purpose is past.
- 3.2.5 Central to the debate on women's ordination is the relevance of the gospel for the so-called orders of creation. The orders are primarily expressions of God's will as law. The gospel of Christ neither establishes these orders, nor does it annul or repeal them. It illuminates the orders as areas in which a gracious God is at work for the welfare of humanity. The gospel of Christ does not establish the state, nor does it

establish marriage (Rom 13:1-7; Matt 19:5 where Jesus cites Gen 1:27 as the binding law of marriage). The gospel rather provides Christians with the basis, motive, and rationale for living within the orders.

For example, Christian partners will see marriage as a gift and an opportunity for service to each other, not simply as a legal structure (1 Cor 7:7,12-16). Though Paul quotes Genesis 2:21 as regulating the divine order/institution of marriage in Ephesians 5:31, it is the gospel of Christ's love for the church which forms the basis for life within a Christian marriage.

- 3.2.6 Though there is general agreement on the principles enunciated above, disagreement arises with respect to certain specific questions. Is there an order of creation, established prior to the fall, which regulates not only Christian marriage, but the relationship between men and women generally? Is there an order of creation, one which is not affected by the gospel, according to which women must be subordinate to men? The second controverted question concerns the extent to which deductions can be drawn from the gospel as expressed, for example, in Galatians 3:28. These questions are addressed below.

### 3.3 Relating OT and NT Texts

- 3.3.1 The OT foreshadows the NT, while the NT also interprets the OT. While a denial of predictive prophecy in the OT is to be rejected, OT texts have their own meaning in a given historical and literary context. But texts of the OT can come alive with new meaning in a new situation without negating an original meaning of the text. For example, Matthew 1:13 finds in Isaiah 7:14 the prophecy of the Virgin-born Messiah, though this is not clear from the Massoretic text alone. It is a further meaning made clear in the Septuagint version. Again, the writer of Hebrews applies the figure of Melchizedek (Genesis 14) to Christ not only on the basis of the OT text, but also with contemporary Jewish interpretations of Melchizedek in mind. It is Christ who gives new meaning to texts in the OT, so that interpreting them cannot be a matter of arbitrary and subjective whim.
- 3.3.2 Problems arise where a NT text draws conclusions from an OT text without any reference to the original meaning. This may

mean that a text has two apparently unrelated meanings. For example, Paul interprets the veil of Moses in Exodus 34:29-35 in a way which is not even hinted at in the Massoretic text. A crucial example is 1 Timothy 2:13,14 which draws the conclusion that Adam=man has greater authority than Eve=woman since he was created first. Few commentators would draw that meaning from Genesis 2 were it not for the Timothy passage.

3.3.3 This specific problem highlights the fact that no general hermeneutical rule can be found to cover every problem of interpretation. Each text must be examined for its meaning within its own historical and literary context. However, the consistency of Scripture means that no interpretation is possible which says that a writer (whether in Genesis or in 1 Timothy) has made a mistake. Jewett maintains that Paul's arguments on the subordination of women are based on the rabbinic interpretation of Genesis 2 'which is palpably inconsistent with the first creation narrative'.<sup>5</sup> But the rabbinic origin of an argument does not make it invalid. That Paul can use arguments borrowed from the rabbis or from the Stoa is not at issue. The real question is: What is the force, the 'authority', of such arguments, as distinct from the goal they serve?

3.3.4 A distinction should be made between the final goal or conclusion of an argument, and the line of argumentation used to reach that conclusion. For example, in the difficult passage of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 Paul adduces arguments of various kinds: from creation, new creation, social acceptability and propriety, liturgical practice, and general church practice. Obviously, not all arguments are of equal force. What matters is the concluding statement. It is thus necessary to decide what is the central issue, one which is not negated even if supporting arguments are not seen as relevant today. This must be determined on the basis of the literary and historical context of a passage. A supporting argument (eg that from social convention) may not have the same force today, yet that in no way invalidates the central statement.

#### 3.4. Exegetical Methodology

3.4.1 God's Word enters our time and space fully and most perfectly in the person of his Son, but all revelation takes place in history. The Scriptures must be examined for meaning with

all the tools available for understanding ancient documents. What is not open to historical research is the truth of revelation.

3.4.2 Critical methods of interpretation which seek to clarify the original text (Textual Criticism), to trace its history (Form and Redaction-Criticism), and which seek to uncover the dynamics of a text (Discourse Analysis) are all in place as aids in discovering the historical-literary meaning. However, the responsible interpreter stands under the authoritative Word which is being interpreted. A radical historical criticism which lets human reason be the judge of what is true or false in Scripture is not an exegetical tool, but a presupposition, and is to be rejected as firmly as a biblicistic literalism which reads texts without regard to wider contexts, whether historical or literary.

3.4.3 Insistence on the harmony of the scriptural testimony must not lead to false processes of harmonisation. For example, it is not inconsistent with a Lutheran hermeneutic to note that there are various sources behind the Pentateuch. There is not only variety in language, vocabulary, and literary style; there is also theological variety. Such differing accents add to the richness of Scripture, and should not be smoothed over. On the other hand it is illegitimate to play one theology off against another.

The point can be made with reference to Paul's writings. There is variety and historical development in the letters of Paul. His apostolic authority is attacked, however, when his message is viewed as inconsistent and contradictory. Here the problem lies not with Paul, but with the interpreter. Once more, the onus is on the interpreter to discover the specificity of Paul's meaning in an historical setting.

3.4.4 Modern studies have suggested that certain letters of Paul, including the Pastorals, are pseudonymous. Whether that is so, cannot be debated here, but must be decided on the basis of historical and literary research. A decision whether a book was written by an apostle cannot be based merely on the fact that it is in the canon. The canon is itself a product of history, as much as we believe that the church was led to accept its contents by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

3.4.5 The position of Pastorals is not the same as that of the ancient

'disputed writings', the Antilegomena. Using theological criticism, Luther assigned some of these writings (James, Jude, Revelation, but also Hebrews) to the edge of the canon. The canonical status of the Pastorals is not in question, but we cannot ignore modern questioning of their authorship. As a result, it is wise to interpret them in the light of Paul's undisputed letters, and not vice versa.

### 3.5 The Question of Cultural Relativity

- 3.5.1 In the debate on the place of women in the church much discussion has centred on whether certain texts are culture-specific, and hence not forever binding on the church, or whether they are binding on the church for all ages and in no way reflect a temporary situation. The following is an attempt to work at some basic principles, working with the definition of culture as the total of inherited ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge and institutions which form the basis of social action.
- 3.5.2 Every text is culturally bound in the sense that it is written in the language of a certain people, using symbols, arguments, thought-forms and contemporary references which convey significance because of familiarity. Incarnational theology will, indeed, stress the close relationship between revelation and a specific culture in history.
- 3.5.3 Every interpretation of Scripture is culture-specific since we can not read without pre-understandings and assumptions, whether true or false, which we inherit from our own culture or subculture. Christians have read into Scripture the permanence of slavery to support an existing social system. They have read into 1 Corinthians 11 the rule that women must wear hats in church, because that has been church custom. The need to identify our own cultural assumptions is as critical as the need to identify cultural factors in the Scripture.
- 3.5.4 Biblical cultures are the 'swaddling clothes' of revelation, but revelation and culture are not synonymous. Revelation is not identical with any specific culture, nor can any specific culture be 'canonised' or made normative. God revealed himself to and through chosen people in specific cultures. His revealed will affected how Israel lived as a community. It established social institutions which became central in its life. But Israelite culture also adopted syncretism from its surrounding

world. Revelation and sinful culture stand as opposites, especially in the message of the prophets. God's Word attacks whatever is sinful in any culture.

Further, some aspects of Israel's culture, though regulated by the law, cannot be regarded as permanent. God ordained the building of a temple, but that has been replaced by Christ. Circumcision, the sabbath, and other sacred festivals are fulfilled and superseded. Slavery was also a part of Israelite culture regulated by the law, but is now rejected by God's people as inconsistent with the gospel. Finally, while God still requires order in public worship, the expression of that order reflects cultural factors, today as in Paul's day (1 Cor 14:33,40; 11:2-16). What was once 'disgraceful' is not necessarily so today.

3.5.5 Certain questions must be answered in determining whether an apostolic directive is of universal validity and still binding, or whether it is culture-specific:

- a) Is there some word or reference in the text which makes clear that a specific action complies with cultural norms and conditions (eg how people are to dress, wear their hair; see 1 Cor 11:2-16 and 1 Tim 2:9)?
- b) Is there a specific statement in the text which clearly identifies a command as binding? In the case of 1 Corinthians 14:34 it must be determined what the word 'law' means, and in verse 37 it is crucial to determine what is referred to by the phrase 'command of the Lord'.
- c) The relevance of historical and cultural contexts of specific texts must be evaluated in the light of clear statements of Scripture which reveal a truth that is clearly independent of specific expression. For example, it cannot be argued that the understanding of Christ's death as a sacrifice in Hebrews is only relatively valid, a culturally limited expression of a truth, one expression with which we can dispense today in a society which does not know animal sacrifice. That Christ's death was an atoning sacrifice belongs to the heart of the gospel.
- d) Whether a command is binding or not, must finally be determined on the basis of the total witness of Scripture. This is said in order to avoid two errors: either a sweeping dismissal of an injunction as culturally conditioned (eg

the call for women to maintain decorum in public worship in 1 Cor 11 and 1 Tim 2), or a legalistic interpretation of a text (eg arguing for slavery on the basis of 1 Tim 6:1-2 while forgetting the law of love).

- 3.5.6 In general, it is more helpful to concentrate on the specific historical circumstances of a text dealing with the status and behaviour of women in the church, than to judge its relevance for today on the basis of cultural questions. For example, we do not know enough about the status of women in society at either Corinth or Ephesus to make definitive judgments about the cultural dimensions of either 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 or 1 Timothy 2:11-15.
- 3.5.7 Christians are saints and sinners, living in the old eon and the new. The church lives in a variety of cultures, but does not identify itself with any one culture. It is called to witness both to the law which condemns all that is sinful in any society, and to the gospel which transforms relationships within society. The way in which the gospel is understood and lived must be culturally relevant and culture-specific.

### 3.6 Prescription or Description

- 3.6.1 We have already referred to the fact that a biblical line of argumentation need not be prescriptive (see 2.3.4). To cite a further example, Paul's allegorical treatment of the Hagar story in Galatians 4 is not prescriptive. Nor does it give us the only and final meaning of that story. It is necessary also to ask what criteria are to be applied in determining whether a biblical statement is descriptive or prescriptive.
- 3.6.2 The principle that everything must relate to the gospel helps to clarify many questions. For example, the command to eat and to drink in connection with the Lord's Supper, clearly prescribes the specific way in which the grace of God in the Lord's Supper is to be received. It is a gospel imperative, like the command, 'Be baptised!', or 'Believe the gospel!'.
- 3.6.3 Precedent alone does not prescribe. That Jesus washed his disciples' feet does not constitute a command for the action to be repeated, though the church is free to repeat the symbol of self-giving love. That early Christians met in the Porch of Solomon, or even in synagogues does not mean that the church must always do so. Neither do we have to meet in house-churches,

exchange the kiss of peace, or reconstruct, to the best of our ability, early forms of worship. What is prescribed (because the cause of the gospel demands it) is that Christians worship and express love for each other in their worship. The way in which this is done may vary; the principle and central truth remains.

- 3.6.4 What is descriptive and prescriptive must also be determined with reference to God's will in Christ. The new covenant means the end of the old, and therefore the end of things like slavery, temple worship, hierarchical and Levitical orders. Everything must now be related to the gospel as the central hermeneutical principle (see 2.2).
- 3.6.5 The public Ministry is established by God to proclaim and teach the gospel and to administer the sacraments so that saving faith may be created (CA V). Thus the ordering of Ministry in the Lutheran Church is determined by the gospel, not by precedent, whether in the form of patterns of Ministry in the NT or developments in the early church (eg presbyterial or episcopal orders). Care must therefore be taken not to read various serving functions described in the NT (including those of women) as prescriptions for the ordering of the public office today.
- 3.6.6 Paul's decision not to use his right to receive payment from the Corinthians likewise does not establish any precedent. He cites Deuteronomy 9:4 ('You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain'), as well as the Lord's command (see Matt 10:9,10) to support his right to receive pay. Without citing another word of Jesus ('Give without pay'; Matt 10:8), he then claims another right, not to accept support, one that is given with his obligation to preach the gospel free of charge (see 1 Cor 9:8-18). There is freedom to order the Ministry within the boundaries of obligation to preach the gospel as Christ's servants.

#### 4. SPECIFIC THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

##### 4.1 The Equality of Men and Women in Creation

- 4.1.1 Both man and woman are created in the image of God (Gen 1:26,27; 5:1,2), and thus bear the divine image. 'Adam' is here collective, including man and woman. The Genesis 1 passage moves from the singular to the plural, to the singular, to the plural! Though woman is created from man (Gen 2:21,22), she is not an inferior emanation from him.
- 4.1.2 The plurality of humanity does not derive from a plurality within God. Nor is the image of God a combination of maleness and femaleness so that the image is reflected in male and female together as the whole representation of God.<sup>10</sup> This theory cannot be entertained because:
- a) it precludes Jesus from being the 'exact representation of God' (Heb 1:3);
  - b) human sexuality does not belong to the image of God;
  - c) both man and woman individually reflect the divine image.
- 4.1.3 The suggestion that Eve=woman derives the image of God from Adam=man has no foundation in the creation narrative.<sup>11</sup> Paul's statement that 'man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man' (1 Cor 11:7) must be interpreted in its own context, and in the light of Genesis 1:26,27. Paul does not deny that woman is the image of God. He does not refer to that fact because the relation of woman to man, not to God, is under consideration.
- 4.1.4 Attempts to limit the extent of the divine image in woman are not supported by Scripture. Hauke argues that, at the level of representation, man bears a greater similarity to God than woman because of his "'eccentric" predisposition' which is oriented towards mastery.<sup>12</sup> Bacchiocchi states that man images God in marriage and worship in a way in which woman cannot.<sup>13</sup> Such views cannot be derived from the concept of the image of God itself. As bearers of the image, both male and female are equal in value, potential, and destiny. There is no justification for the theory that woman is inferior to man in her creatureliness.<sup>14</sup>
- 4.1.5 Genesis does not describe all that is included in the image of God. Certain things are implied. God is the archetypal pattern after which man and woman are made. Humanity is thus elevated above the rest of creation to reflect God's own glory, while God allows himself to be mirrored in human dimensions.

Man and woman are each in a personal relationship with the Creator, and each are responsible to him. Further, human creativity reflects God's own creativity. Procreation is an expression of the divine image.<sup>15</sup> Finally, God has given both man and woman a joint authority to rule over his creation (Gen 1:26). They serve God by serving his creation.<sup>16</sup>

- 4.1.6 In this discussion there is no need to define further the meaning of the image of God. The Lutheran Confessions understand it primarily in the sense of the gifts of knowledge and fear of God, and trust in God (Apology II, 18). The divine image has also been understood as suggesting capacities which place human beings above other creatures: speech, intelligence, will, dignity, authority, personal relationship, creativity, as well as all that which belongs to the state of integrity before the fall: innocence, righteousness, wisdom, perfect communion with God, and immortality.
- 4.1.7 Male and female equally reflect the glory of their Creator in his original design. They are equally guilty in rebelling against their Maker, wanting to be more than his image (Gen 3:5; Rom 3:23). As a result, their relationship to God, to each other, and to the whole created world is disrupted (Gen 3:14-19; Rom 1:18-32).
- 4.1.8 Whether the divine image is seen as lost or marred depends on how it is defined. Luther and the Lutheran orthodox dogmaticians stress the loss of the image in terms of the loss of the original state of innocence and full relationship with God. Yet the interdict against murder (Gen 9:6) shows that the image is not totally destroyed by the fall (cf Jas 3:9). Even fallen humanity reflects something of the glory of the Creator.
- 4.1.9 It is in Christ, the perfect image of the invisible God (Col 1:15; 2 Cor 4:4) that the image of God in fallen humanity is being restored. Believers are conformed to the likeness of God's Son (Rom 8:29). The new self in Christ is 'being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator' (Col 3:10; see also Eph 4:24; 2 Cor 3:18).

#### 4.2 The Order of Creation

- 4.2.1 The question to be addressed here is whether equality of men and women means that they must have the same function. Is

redemption in Christ, by which also woman is restored in the divine image, the charter for her exercising the same function as man? In this context the central argument against the ordination of a woman is that the divine order of creation assigns her a subordinate role to man, one which in no way detracts from her equality in creation and in Christ. This order of creation is not annulled by the order of redemption.

- 4.2.2 The origin and definition of the term 'order of creation' is the subject of much debate.<sup>17</sup> Both terms, 'order of creation' and 'order of redemption', were popularised by Emil Brunner.<sup>18</sup> Luther used the terms Stand and Beruf to describe how each person is assigned a place in the world, the family, and the church. Werner Elert speaks of the created order as referring not to what God created once upon a time, but to what he continues to create. The order of creation refers to God's continuing act of ordering human life.<sup>19</sup> The 1985 LCMS statement on Women in the Church adopts the following definition for the 'order of creation':

This refers to the particular position which, by the will of God, any created object occupies in relation to others. God has given to that which has been created a certain definite order which, because it has been created by him, is the expression of his immutable will. These relationships belong to the very structure of created existence.<sup>20</sup>

We return later to the question of the meaning and immutability of the so-called order of creation (4.2.6). It is first necessary to examine the biblical data which is cited in support of a divine order, one which places women in subordination to men, also in the church.

- 4.2.3 The argument for the abiding subordinate role of women according to the order of creation, begins with Genesis 1-3. The role and function of men and women, as well as their relationship to each other, is regulated prior to the fall, and confirmed after the fall.<sup>21</sup>

a) Man is created first, and so - like the first-born in Israelite society - receives special authority (1 Tim 2:13). The sequence man-woman is integral to the account of Genesis 2.

- b) The name Adam for the man (not the woman) also describes the whole human race. The headship of man is thereby implied, since Adam embodies the whole of humanity.
- c) Adam exercises his special authority in the naming of the animals (2:19,20). His special authority is also evidenced by his naming of Eve (v 23).
- d) Eve is created as a helper for Adam, not vice versa (Gen 2:18,20). She has her origin from him, is created for him.
- e) This primeval order is ratified by the apostle Paul: 'For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man' (1 Cor 11:8,9). Again: 'For Adam was formed first, then Eve' (1 Tim 2:13).
- f) Eve sinned first; she was the one deceived. From this Paul draws the conclusion that woman is to be subordinate (1 Tim 2:14).
- g) The curse after the fall (Gen 3:16) does not establish the subordinate role of woman. That role is now infected by sin.

4.2.4 The validity of these arguments has been disputed, especially by those who question the existence of a pre-fall subordination of women in a hierarchical order.<sup>22</sup>

- a) The climax of the creation account is the creation of Eve who is part of Adam's very being (Gen 2:23). Indeed, she can be seen as the pinnacle of creation.
- b) Care should be exercised in drawing conclusions from 'Adam's' masculinity. Adam as male is incomplete without a relationship to his female counterpart. He is not truly human when alone. The question of gender and of the relationship between male and female can only arise when there are both male and female. Adamic humanity continues to be made up of men and women (Gen 5:1).
- c) Naming certainly suggests authority. Yet dominion over creation is given by God to both man and woman (Gen 1:26,27). Further, while the naming of animals certainly expresses dominion, this element of the narrative must be read together with the naming of Eve. No animal is a suitable partner for Adam; Eve is. Adam names the animals, but he does not name Eve. Rather, he joyfully recognises that she is 'woman', and his given partner.

- d) The Hebrew word ezer (helper) appears nineteen times in the OT. Fifteen times it is used of God who comes to the aid of his people. Yet he is not subordinate to them. The meaning of the term must be seen in context. In Genesis 2:18,20 the complementing word neged suggests that the woman is the man's equal counterpart. She is his partner, since she fully corresponds to him. Mutual help is suggested, not the role of subordinate assistant.
- e) Care must be exercised in deducing doctrine from the NT reference to the priority of Adam as man, and the derivation of Eve from Adam (1 Cor 11:8,9; 1 Tim 2:13). Adam is formed from the ground (adamah), but is not thereby subordinate to it. In biblical argumentation that which comes first may have greater standing (eg the order of Melchizedek over the order of Levitical priesthood - Heb 7; the Abrahamic covenant over the Sinaitic Gal 3:17). Yet what comes later in the divine plan can also be greater and supersede what precedes it (eg the new covenant over the old - 2 Cor 3). The force of the NT references to the created order must be seen in the context of the total argument which they serve. With reference to 1 Corinthians 11 it must also be pointed out that Paul himself shows that the argument of sequence is not absolute: 'Nevertheless in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman' (vv 11,12).
- f) Genesis 3 does not suggest that Eve was, by nature, more susceptible to the serpent's wiles, or that she was more culpable. Both man and woman sinned, and both receive judgment. If greater responsibility is predicated of the man, he could even be seen as more guilty than the woman. He allows himself to be seduced into sin by her, his supposed subordinate! Not even 1 Timothy 2:14 can relieve Adam of guilt (see Romans 5).
- g) The rule of man over woman is a result of the fall (Gen 3:16). God does not curse Adam and Eve (as he does the serpent). He describes what will now ensue as they are driven from his presence. God's words are descriptive, not prescriptive. They state a sad reality, a perversion of the divine order. Where there was once equality, there

is now dominance of one over the other. No fixed order is prescribed. We have a picture of what will be, not what must always be (thus humankind can work to alleviate the pains of childbirth, and struggle to eradicate weeds; vv 16,18).

4.2.5 In working with the Genesis account we are presented with difficulties perceived also by the Reformers. Calvin noted the tension in seeing Eve as being created for a serving role and then being punished for her sin with that same role. 'These two statements are somewhat contradictory, that the subjection of woman is the punishment of her transgressions and yet it was imposed on her from creation for thence it would follow that she was doomed to servitude before she sinned.'<sup>23</sup> Luther also gives a mixed interpretation, but generally sees the subordination of woman as a result of the fall. 'Nature and God's creation' show that women should keep silent in church, yet the passage cited is Genesis 3:16. He concludes with the comment, 'The gospel ... does not abrogate this natural law, but confirms it as the ordinance and creation of God'<sup>24</sup>. His Genesis commentary contains the following remarks: 'The wife was made subject to the man by the Law which was given after sin ...' In Paradise 'the management would have been equally divided' (137,138). 'Eve has been placed under the power of her husband, she who previously was very free and ... was in no respect inferior to her husband. This punishment, too, springs from original sin' (202). 'If Eve had persisted in the truth, she would not only not have been subjected to the rule of her husband, but she herself would also have been a partner in the rule which is now entirely the concern of males.' Subjection is a burden, so women 'naturally seek to gain what they have lost through sin' (203). Commenting on 1 Timothy 2:14 he remarks: 'Here Paul appears to gather arguments with considerable concern on behalf of man's dominance ... The ordinance of God continues to stand as a memorial of the transgression which by her [sc Eve's] fault entered into the world'.<sup>25</sup>

4.2.6 The problem of defining what is meant by an 'order of creation' has been already referred to (4.2.2). It is not a biblical term, but a theological construct. Certainly, God created human beings to live in ordered relationships within society, in marriage and the family. But are the orders fixed and static?

Edward Schroeder has argued that the concept of static orders, as made popular in Lutheran circles by Fritz Zerbst,<sup>26</sup> owes more to Calvin than to Luther. It has tended to picture God as ruling with a static law, rather than as the Lord of grace who is to be known chiefly in his fatherly mercy. It gives the impression that God's act of creating belongs to the past and is not open to change and growth. The 'order' thus comes across as a policeman's demand, rather than as what Luther understands as Beruf and Stand.<sup>27</sup> Schroeder argues from Luther and Elert that the orders of creation concern God's continuing regulative activity in the present, not a finished act of creation in the past. Since this regulative activity also involves the gospel, Schroeder's argument must be taken up in discussing the 'order of redemption'.

4.2.7 The discussion of whether the subordination of women belongs to an immutable divine order, established prior to the fall, cannot be limited to a discussion of Genesis 1-3. Most of the evidence for such an order is cited from the NT. Though the material overlaps, we arrange it for the sake of convenience in the following order:

- a) the NT teaching on subordination/submission;
- b) the headship of man;
- c) the central texts in the debate.

#### 4.3 Subordination/Submission in the NT

4.3.1 The call for wives to be subordinate to their husbands is part of a pattern in the NT epistles, requiring Christians to act in submission to others, viz,

- a) people in a subordinate social and legal relationship to their social and legal superiors:
  - wives to husbands (1 Cor 14:34,35; Eph 5:22,24; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1,5; 1 Tim 2:11);
  - children to parents (Heb 12:9; cf Luke 2:51);
  - slaves to masters (Titus 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18);
  - citizens to rulers (Rom 13:1; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:13).
- b) Christians to each other:
  - Christians to each other (Eph 5:21);
  - members of the congregation to leaders (1 Cor 16:16; 1 Pet 5:5; cf Heb 13:17).

c) Christians to Christ (Eph 5:24).

4.3.2 The argument against the ordination of women cites the pattern of the subordination of women to show that the order of creation is not negated but rather confirmed in the church. The use of the verb hypotassesthai suggests that those who are called upon to be subordinate are to behave in conformity to a certain order (taxis). The subordination of wives to husbands confirms the order of marriage, that of children to parents confirms the order of the family, that of citizens to authorities confirms the order of the state. It is the law of God (1 Cor 14:34) which establishes the pattern of subjection of wives to husbands.

4.3.3 The subordinationist argument grants that mutual subordination in loving service is expected of all Christians (Eph 5:21). Yet subordination of wives to husbands (Eph 5:22,24), not of husbands to wives, is explicitly enjoined. Further, this 'order' is exemplified in the subjection of the church under Christ (Eph 5:24), just as Christ is subject to the will of the Father, both in the incarnation and at the End (1 Cor 11:3; 15:28).

4.3.4 The subordination argument is to be evaluated in the light of the following considerations:

a) The middle form of the Greek verb hypotassesthai does not suggest acting according to a divinely ordained social taxis or predetermined station within it. With the obvious exception of the demons who must submit (Luke 10:17,20), it means voluntarily placing oneself under another in the surrender of one's own will.<sup>28</sup> The use of taxis in 1 Corinthians 14:40 does not point to an order of creation, since Paul is talking about good order as opposed to indecent confusion (see v 33; cf Col 2:5).

b) The NT pattern of subordination clearly presupposes the order of marriage and the family, as well as that of the state. Yet the injunction for slaves to be submissive to their masters presupposes no divinely established order of slavery. This further shows that the maintenance of fixed social structures is not the concern of the NT injunctions on subordination.

c) The appeal for submission indicates a new order of community in Christ which is not based on the exercise of power but on service. The apostles call on those in dominant positions to act towards dependent persons in ways which go beyond

any legal or accepted moral requirements. Hence, husbands are to give themselves in love to wives (Eph 5:25-28; Col 3:19) with due attention to their needs (1 Pet 3:7); fathers are not to provoke children to anger (Eph 6:4; Col 3:21); and masters are to treat slaves fairly (Col 4:1) to the point of serving them (Eph 6:9; Phlm 16).

d) The motivation for submissive behaviour is not the law, in the form of an order of creation, but the gospel. Motivation is reverence for Christ (Eph 5:21; Col 3:22), the desire to please the Lord (Col 3:20; 1 Pet 2:13), to follow his example (Phil 2:3-8; Eph 5:22-33; 1 Pet 2:21-24), to live the new life in him (Col 3:18; Eph 6:1), and to serve him (Eph 6:6, Col 3:23,24). Submission to fellow Christians is submission to the Lord (Eph 5:22; 6:5). It serves as a witness to the gospel, and as a testimony to others of its power (Titus 3:5,10; 1 Pet 2:12; 3:1-6). Such behaviour is a consequence of Christ's work of salvation (Titus 2:9-14; 3:1-7).

e) The NT champions a reversal of social values. The Tables of Duties are Christian adaptations of contemporary patterns of ethical behaviour. What is new is that they also address those without legal status as free agents with the capacity to make decisions for themselves and for others. As Christians, wives, slaves, children, and citizens of the state have a new status and worth which frees them from the necessity of conforming to the old order as a power/authority structure. The ideal social role is no longer that of a master, but that of the servant. Paradoxically, a person is most free when a slave to God and to fellow humans beings (1 Pet 2:16).

4.3.5 The traditional argument for the subordination of women concentrates on conclusions to be drawn regarding the behaviour of women in worship. It is therefore necessary to ask which women are being addressed in the texts which refer to a church/worship setting.

- Of the 38 uses of hypotasso in the NT, 4 clearly relate to a church/worship setting (1 Cor 14:32; 14:34; 16:16; Eph 5:21).

- Of the 4 uses of hypotage in the NT, 3 relate to a church/worship setting (2 Cor 9:13; Gal 2:5; 1 Tim 2:11).
- In 2 of the 7 passages dealing with worship it is gynaikes who are called on to be subordinate or to submit. The context suggests in each case that it is actually wives who are being addressed. This is clear in 1 Corinthians 14:34, since the next verse speaks about their husbands. It is natural to assume that the gyne of 1 Timothy 2:11 is also a wife, since she is seen as childbearer (v 15). A literal interpretation of these two texts would thus preclude only the ordination of a married woman who is living with a Christian husband.

Whether this conclusion is convincing can be debated in the light of the following:

- The relationship between husband and wife in marriage is a paradigm for all relations between men and women.
- Wives, not women, are addressed, since it can be assumed that most, if not all, adult women were married.
- Though the passage speaks of headship (see below) rather than of subordination, 1 Corinthians 11:3-12 is also relevant at this point in that it refers to women in worship, not merely to wives. Granted that verse 3 speaks of the husband as head of the wife, the following verses seem to speak of man and woman generally without reference to marital state.

4.3.6 It is necessary to be more precise on the reasons given for the submissive behaviour of women (? wives) in the six relevant passages. In one case the appeal is to what is 'fitting in the Lord' (Col 3:18). In two cases, it is a matter of good witness (Titus 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1; cf with reference to slaves, Titus 2:10), so that the Word is not discredited and an unbelieving partner may be won by the gospel. Yet a creational basis is given in the three other passages:

- women (? wives) 'should be subordinate as even the law says' (1 Cor 14:34);
- women (? wives) are to 'learn in silence with all submissiveness ... for Adam was formed first, then Eve' (1 Tim 2:11-13);

- wives are to be subject to husbands 'for the husband is the head of the wife' (Eph 5:22,23).

The argument for the subordination of women readily agrees that the prime motivation for submissive servanthood is provided by the gospel, but insists that these last three passages still show that such behaviour is also to be followed within a divinely ordained order of male-female relationships.

We will focus on the two key passages (1 Cor 14:33-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-14) after first discussing the headship principle.

#### 4.4 The Principle of Headship

4.4.1 The relevant biblical data is as follows:

- God is the head (kephale) of Christ, as Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife (1 Cor 11:3);
- Christ is the head of all rule and authority (Col 2:10);
- the exalted Christ is head over all things for the church, his body (Eph 1:22,23);
- he is the head of the church, his body (Eph 4:15,16; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:19);
- the husband is the head of the wife (Eph 5:23).

4.4.2 Though the exact meaning of the kephale concept in these passages continues to be hotly disputed, there is agreement that it cannot indicate superiority. That is clear from 1 Corinthians 11:3. Christ cannot be 'under' God the Father in any sense which negates his own full divinity and oneness with the Triune God. A false subordinationist anthropology (with reference to women) is as much out of the question as a heretical subordinationist Christology which rejects the second article of the Nicene Creed.

4.4.3 The argument against the ordination of women sees in the headship of man over woman a further confirmation of an order of creation which prescribes a subordinate role to women under the authority of men. The definition of Peter Brunner is precise and clear. 'The man is the head of the woman; Christ is the head of the man; God is the head of Christ. The "head" is that which is prior, that which determines, that which leads. The head is the power that begins, it is principium, arche'.<sup>29</sup> With this

definition, both 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Ephesians 5:25 are understood as assigning to men and women a distinctive function in their relation to each other, one that has its origin in creation. Granted that there is lack of clarity in the specific application of the principle in the difficult passage of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (is it a matter of head-dress, or the style of hair-dress by which a clear distinction is to be drawn between the sexes?) the principle of male headship must be distinguished from its application in custom and practice. The former is permanently valid.<sup>30</sup>

- 4.4.4 Since 1954 there has been an attack on the assumption that kephale means authority when used of the 'headship' of man or of Christ. Bedale, who first advanced the argument that kephale means 'source', concluded that

in normal Greek usage, classical or contemporary, kephale does not signify "head" in the sense of ruler, or chieftain of a community. If kephale has this sense in the writings of St Paul (it certainly has it nowhere else in the New Testament) we must suppose it to have been acquired as a result of the LXX use of the word to translate ro's.<sup>31</sup>

- 4.4.5 The lexicographical data is too large to assess in detail, but brief reference can be made to basic conclusions drawn from it. Catharine Kroeger cites Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria as understanding kephale to mean arche in the sense of 'source', in keeping with ancient secular usage, also in NT times.<sup>32</sup> As the physical head is the source of supply for the body, so the father is head of the family as procreator and progenitor, Adam is the head of the human race, and the head of a river is its source or starting-point.<sup>33</sup> It is not denied that there is a metaphorical use of 'head' in Greek to mean a high-ranking person or leader, but that is rare in Greek literature. Though the Hebrew word ro's could quite normally carry this meaning, the Greek translators of the OT rarely used kephale to denote a leader,<sup>34</sup> though they did use that word when the Hebrew referred to the physical head. Thus the metaphorical meaning was regarded as the exceptional and not the normal meaning.

- 4.4.6 The conclusion that 'head' in Greek normally means 'source' has not gone unchallenged. Bacchiocchi remains totally uncon-

vinced, citing Wayne Grudem's lexicographical survey.<sup>35</sup> Of the 2,336 uses covered by Grudem, 49 are said clearly to denote 'authority over'. From these instances it is deduced that kephale cannot mean 'source' or 'origin'. Clearly, a metaphorical meaning in the sense of 'leader' can be found. Yet for reasons stated by Fee, the argument that kephale normally suggests authority is very much open to question: 12 of the 49 examples cited are in NT texts where the meaning is under debate; 18 are from Greek translations of the OT which provide exceptions to the rule; in the other 19 examples it is by no means clear that 'authority' is the proper meaning.<sup>36</sup>

4.4.7 Lexicographical evidence can establish a normal and an exceptional meaning. The crucial question is whether NT usage of kephale reflects the first or the second - or even both.<sup>37</sup> In some cases the normal meaning of 'source' makes good sense: Christ is the head 'from whom' the church as his body grows; he is the source of its life and nourishment (Col 2:19; Eph 4:15); he is the 'head of all rule and authority', and 'head over all things' (Col 2:10; Eph 1:23) since both the fulness of deity and fulness of life are found in him. Certainly, Christ is the Lord enthroned in glory who possesses power and dominion, but the concept of headship itself suggests that he is the origin of both life and authority. He is the head of the body because the church has its beginning (arche) in him as the first-born from the dead (Col 1:18). He is the originator of the church; that is the reason for his pre-eminence.

4.4.8 More contested is the meaning of kephale in two remaining texts which also speak of man/husband as 'head'. It is these passages which, for some, clearly prove that 'authority' is meant.

- In 1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul is seen as establishing a hierarchical ordering: God is the head of Christ, Christ is the head of man, and man is the head of woman. The woman who wears a veil (or a certain head-dress), when praying or prophesying, acknowledges that she has been placed in a God-given order. It is only when her behaviour reflects compliance with this order that she can be herself recognised as having authority (exousia) to speak, possibly with a special sign of such authority on her physical head (v 10). Headship

implies authority, but the woman possesses no authority in her own right as a woman.

- In Ephesians 5:23,24, the meaning is even clearer since 'headship' is linked with subordination. 'The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church ...' Headship is here seen as meaning authority since the wife is to be subject to her husband on the analogy of the church's subjection to Christ. One can certainly understand how Christ is the head/source of the church, but how is the husband the source of his wife?

4.4.9 Others debate whether kephale must mean primarily 'authority' even in these passages.

- In the first passage the normal meaning is still in place; the concept of authority has to be read into 1 Corinthians 11:3 from verse 10. Paul's statement there means that the woman does have exousia on her head, and thus the authority to pray and prophesy in her own right. Certainly she stands in an order, but that order is not one of hierarchy but of origin. God is the head of Christ in the sense that Christ's messianic mission (not his being as the Son) issues from God the Father. Christ is the head of man in the sense that he is the agent of his creation. Though the woman also owes her origin to Christ in this sense, she occupies a special position since she was 'made from man' (vv 8,9). Man is her source in the sense that Eve was created from Adam. Paul is thus using kephale in the normal sense. Woman is to act as she was created - as woman. That Paul is not talking about one having authority over the other is underlined in his reminder that every man now comes from woman, and that in the Lord men and women are dependent on each other (vv 11,12).
- In Ephesians 5:23,24 Paul is not talking about male/female relations in general, but of the relation of husband and wife within marriage. This is cited as an example of mutual submission which is enjoined on all Christians out of reverence for Christ (v 21). A wife is derived from her husband and made for him in the sense of Genesis 2:18-24, so the husband is head 'because only in him ... can the wife realise the goal of her creation'.<sup>38</sup> The specific point made by Paul

is that, just as Christ's headship is based on the giving of his own life for the church, so the headship of the husband is based on the original gift of life to her and on the ongoing gift of selfless love (v 25). Headship here denotes sacrificial giving, with the husband made responsible for such giving in a special way. Subjection is not bending to authority, but willingly submitting to the service of love. The traditional code of domestic behaviour, with its theme of subjection, is here transformed by the gospel.

4.4.10 The specific connotations of headship in these passages continues to be debated. For some, the kephale-concept is a further proof that women must be subordinate to man within an established order of creation. Others, while recognising that the headship of man recalls Paul's theology of creation, deny that he is talking about an order of authority. They rather stress that, for Paul, the head and body form a unity. Headship implies initiative in service.

Finally, there are those who hold that kephale primarily means 'source' or 'origin', but that it gains the added connotation of authority. Stephen Clark adopts both meanings:

A person who is a head does more than govern. He is actually the source or origin of the kind of unity which makes many into one .... Paul sees Adam and Eve in their union as the model for the family and the body of Christ - the two ways to be one person (Eph 5:31).<sup>39</sup>

4.4.11 If headship does imply authority it is the authority to take the initiative in loving service. Among Christians in general there is to be no lording it over others (kyrieuein in Luke 22:25,26; Matthew 20:25 and Mark 10:42 use the even stronger verbs katakyrieuein and katexousiazein). Elders are not to domineer (katakyrieuein) those belonging to Christ's flock (1 Pet 5:3). In the same context Peter calls on wives to be submissive to their husbands, just as Sarah showed the spirit of obedience by calling Abraham kyrios. But as 'lord' the husband has the duty to give honour to his wife as his equal, as a joint-heir of grace (3:5-7).

Paul makes clear that husband and wife do not rule over (exousiazein) their own bodies but are to serve each other (1 Cor 7:4). This mutual interdependence extends beyond sexual

relationship (1 Cor 11:11,12). Paul never quotes Genesis 3:16 (LXX: kai autos sou kyrieusei), and seems to avoid the use of kyrieuein for husband/wife relations. That verb suggests a disordered relationship, not the ordered relationship of creation. Paul's use of kephale for the husband, and not kyrios, indicates an insistence on love, service, and giving of honour, rather than on rank, standing, and authority.

#### 4.5 Grappling with the Key Texts

4.5.1 As shown above, the evidence adduced against the ordination of women is cumulative, picking up a number of themes in a variety of texts. Yet the two passages of Scripture cited in the Theses of Agreement (see 1.1) remain central in the ongoing debate. It is in 1 Corinthians 14:34 that we have the explicit injunction that 'the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says'. Though none of the texts which deal with the headship of man and the subordination of woman expressly mention 'authority', 1 Timothy 2:11,12 says, 'Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent'. These texts seem to be conclusive since they both mention:

- a) the subordination/submission of the woman;
- b) silence as an expression of that submission;
- c) public worship as the arena in which it is expressed;
- d) a supporting argument (the law and a command of the Lord in the first text; a scriptural argument from Genesis in the second).

##### 1 Corinthians 14:33a-36

4.5.2 The discussion of this passage is complicated by questions repeatedly raised against its authenticity. Verses 34,35 are commonly viewed as a later insertion, possibly as a gloss originating from the same circle which produced the Pastorals (understood as non-Pauline in origin). There are two reasons for this view:

- a) Most MSS of the eastern tradition have verses 34,35 in their present, accepted position; the western tradition,

up to the Vulgate, places them at the end of the chapter, after verse 40. It is easy to understand how a later gloss could have been added at two different places. Less comprehensible is how an original text, written in one place, could have been later transferred to another.

b) The tension between chapter 11 of this letter (where women may speak in public) and 14 (such speaking is prohibited) can be explained as a later attempt to modify Paul's statements in line with 1 Timothy 2:11,12.<sup>40</sup>

4.5.3 Both displacement (eg John 7:53-8:11) and interpolation (often in western texts) occur in the NT textual tradition. Such possibilities cannot be totally ruled out in this instance. Yet it remains difficult to understand how the western text's reordering of verses creates a more comprehensible text. Nor is it necessary to posit a gloss to save Paul from contradicting himself. The text as it stands is not so totally incomprehensible as to demand the removal of verses. The fact remains that verses 34 and 35 are not missing from any manuscript, even where the order is changed.

4.5.4 The verses dealing with women intrude somewhat into the flow of Paul's argument in chapter 14, since they do not deal directly with the use/abuse of spiritual gifts. Yet they are linked to the preceding verses by the repetition of the call for certain people to keep silent (vv 28,30,34). In the case of those speaking in a tongue or prophesying, keeping silent means waiting one's turn to speak. In the case of wives, silence must mean something else. They are not to 'speak' at all, but to ask questions of their husbands at home. Paul is not talking about absolute silence, but of refraining from taking a lead in public worship as the Word is preached, taught, and discussed. Put simply, Paul's teaching is the same as that in 1 Timothy 2:12: not speaking means not teaching.

4.5.5 How can this be harmonised with 11:5 where women are allowed to speak in public? The attempt to remove this difficulty by positing that 11:2-16 deals with the behaviour of women in private, hardly merits consideration. Paul is here insisting that women be seen as women and behave as women in public assemblies (see vv 16-18). A more plausible explanation is

that Paul allows a woman to use her charismatic gift in public because she is acting as God's mouthpiece, but she is to keep silent where any explication of revelation is involved. This suggestion is not without difficulty in that teaching is also a charismatic gift (1 Cor 12:28,29; Rom 12:7; Eph 4:11). Another suggestion is that Paul is simply prohibiting a certain kind of speaking such as strident assertion, argumentative challenge, or continuously disruptive questioning on the part of certain wives.

4.5.6 The last explanation sees Paul's teaching as necessitated by a situation of disorder. His fundamental concern is for good order in public worship (vv 32,40). As with his words on speaking in tongues and prophesying, he is dealing with the abuse of the right to speak. The women have been caught up in the spiritual fervour at Corinth, and are contributing to charismatic excesses. The unbridled enthusiasm of certain women threatens to bring the young church into disrepute. The counter-view is that certain factors suggest that Paul's teaching is fundamental, and not merely designed to correct a local aberration. The real disorder is not disorderly speaking, but any speaking which is inappropriate for a woman and which contradicts

- a) the subordinate position of women (v 34)
- b) the teaching of the law (v 34)
- c) the command of the Lord (v 38)
- d) accepted practice in all the churches (v 33b).

4.5.7 If we knew what Paul meant by nomos it would be easier to determine whether he is referring to a fixed order of subordination or giving regulations to address a specific problem. It is often assumed that the apostle is referring to Genesis 2:18-24 or 3:16, but Paul seems to avoid the second passage (see 4.4.11). Other suggested references are even less probable (such as Lev 12; 27:1-8; Num 30; Eccl 7:26,28; Isa 3:12). Paul does not make general appeals to 'the law' in supporting an argument, but cites precise texts (see 1 Cor 9:8; 14:21). Because there is no precise appeal here, S. Aalen suggests that Paul is here referring to the torah of Jewish oral tradition.<sup>41</sup>

Others understand nomos in the sense of custom or prevailing usage.<sup>42</sup> In this case the apostle would be insisting on an ecumenical rule, determined by accepted practice, as in 11:16.

The appeal to the 'command of the Lord' in 14:37 is different from that in 7:10,25 and 9:14 where there is clear reference to the teaching of Jesus. Further, it is not immediately clear to what the command refers.<sup>43</sup> We have no teaching of Jesus on the silence of women. More probably, Paul is here referring to all that he has said about good order as the will of the Lord. As spiritual people, the Corinthians should know that Paul is an apostle of the Lord, and also possesses his Spirit (reading verse 37 with 7:40).

- 4.5.8 In summary, some continue to find in this famous mulier taceat passage clear teaching on the subordination of women which is to be expressed in public worship by silence. Such silence represents a willing acceptance of the order which assigns men a leadership role in worship. The acknowledged exegetical problems are not such as to place Paul's meaning in doubt, for his words are consistent with the teaching of other passages on the role of women assigned to them according to the order of creation. The counter-view holds that there are too many exegetical uncertainties to allow a simple application of this passage to the question of the ordination of women.

1 Timothy 2:11-14

- 4.5.9 The case against the ordination of women has its strongest biblical basis in this passage. The reasons for this are the following:
- a) Verse 8 shows that the context is that of public worship. It is men (andres) who are to pray in a certain way, presumably taking the lead in this activity. They are to do so 'in every place', understanding topos, like the Hebrew maqom, to denote a place of worship (as in 1 Cor 1:2).
  - b) While verses 9-10 can also be seen as general ethical instruction on the decorous behaviour of women (as in 1 Pet 3:3b), they also relate to behaviour in worship. Dress reflects an attitude of the heart.
  - c) The central statement of verses 11 and 12 comes in two parallel sentences which interpret each other. The key

concept is that of women's silence (hesychia); it stands at the beginning and end of the statement. Such silence is (as in the case of the verb sigan in 1 Cor 14:34) not absolute wordlessness, but a reserve which signifies an attitude of submissiveness (hypotage). The practical consequences are stated: women are to learn in quiet receptivity; they are not to teach. What is meant is a formal, public proclamation of the Christian faith.

- d) The verb authentein explains what kind of teaching is meant. Women may teach other women (or children), but they are not to teach men, for this would involve exercising authority over them. Authentein does not mean to 'domineer'. In the context it must mean the usurpation of any authority which would be the opposite of submissiveness.
- e) There is nothing in the text or the immediate context to suggest that the passage is dealing with a crisis situation, for example, false teaching on the part of certain women, gnostic enthusiasm, or general disorder of women in the congregations being addressed. The teaching is absolute, and remains binding for all times and all situations in which the church lives.
- f) This passage complements, and is consistent with, the teaching of the Pastoral Epistles that ministry is a governing function. Elders are to rule both their own households and their congregations (1 Tim 3:4,5,12; 5:17 - the verb is proistemi). The only women who are mentioned as ruling their own households are widows (5:14).
- g) The injunction to silence is supported by two arguments from Genesis 2 and 3. 'Adam was formed first', and thus has the rights and special responsibility of primogeniture. Just as Christ has pre-eminence as the first-born of all creation (Col 1:15-18), so Adam has authority over Eve, man over woman. Since Eve derives from Adam, her source, she is to be submissive to him, as children are to respect the authority of parents from whom they are derived.<sup>44</sup> Secondly, Eve was deceived, not Adam. This does not mean that women are more gullible than men. Eve suffered this fall as a result of asserting her independence from Adam. Typologically, Eve represents all women who break the God-

given order and thereby become susceptible to deception. Women, as her heirs, are therefore disqualified from leading men, or exercising authority over them. Genesis 3:16 probably also stands behind 1 Timothy 2:15; the pain of childbearing is a result of Eve's sin.

4.5.10 Much of the above interpretation is beyond dispute. The ongoing debate centres on the historical and literary context of these verses, and the precise meaning of a few key words. Before looking at these matters a preliminary comment on the supposed 'non-Pauline' character of the passage is necessary. Theories on authorship do not alter the fact that the Pastorals belong to the canon. The vital question can only be whether they, and the passage in question, belong to a specific stage of the church in its struggle against error.

4.5.11 The following points have been raised against viewing this passage as a permanent veto against women taking a leading role in worship:

- a) The section 2:8-15 mixes admonition on prayer with general ethical admonition. It is natural to assume from the mention of prayer in verse 8 that the words concerning women also relate primarily to public worship. Yet they reach beyond this setting and are thus more radical and far-reaching than the parallel in 1 Corinthians 14:33-36. This raises the question of the historical setting which made this teaching necessary.
- b) Nothing in the immediate context suggests a situation of disorder, but the wider setting of 1 Timothy must be taken into account. The Pastorals counter the threat of false teachers (1 Tim 1:3), possibly in an early gnostic form (5:20). Women, especially widows, are identified as especially susceptible to the deceptions of the false teachers at Ephesus (1 Tim 5:11-14; 2 Tim 3:6-9). 'No other book of the New Testament devotes such a high proportion of its content to problems specifically related to women as does 1 Timothy (note especially 2:9-15; 4:7; 5:2-7,9-16). The continuity of the problem as specifically tied to the false teachers is evident from 2 Tim 2:16-17.'<sup>45</sup> With respect to the text under discussion, it is suggested that a false enthusiasm was leading women to offend against

conventions of decorum, also in worship. This meant a breakdown of the Jewish practice where only men recited prayers in the synagogue, a practice inherited by the early church.<sup>46</sup>

- c) The exact meaning of the verb authenthein continues to be strongly debated. While the simple meaning 'to exercise authority over' has also recently been reasserted,<sup>47</sup> Philip Payne has documented the possibility of at least five lexically valid meanings of authenthein in 1 Timothy 2:12 when taken as qualifying the verb didaskein:

- to teach autonomously, acting on one's own authority;
- to teach in a contentious manner, or pushy way;
- to teach in a domineering manner, or highhandedly;
- to teach in such a way that virtues are destroyed;
- to teach in a way that murders (the truth).<sup>48</sup>

Payne, who thinks that any of the first three meanings are possible in the sole use of this verb in the NT at 1 Timothy 2:12, maintains that 'we do not have one undisputed case of authenthein used to mean "to have authority" before or during the time of Paul'. While granting that Paul may have intended this meaning, he contends that 'we do not have adequate comparative evidence to conclude this with even a modest level of confidence.'<sup>49</sup>

The most common connotation is that of forcefulness (authenthes means a murderer!), so it is difficult to assume that Paul is using the verb in anything but a negative sense.

- d) A further question is the relation of the two verbs didaskein and authenthein, taking into account the oude which connects and correlates them. Payne provides evidence to show that 'Paul typically used oude to join together elements which reinforce or make more specific a single coherent idea'.<sup>50</sup> The second verb thus qualifies what kind of teaching is rejected. The text does not say that women must not teach or exercise authority in a domineering way, but that teaching is not to be of a domineering kind.
- e) Finally, there is the question of the cogency of the supporting arguments from Genesis referred to above (see

3.3.2-4). Are these binding interpretations of the Genesis narrative which must for all time determine the function of women, or are they supporting arguments whose force is convincing only in that specific situation? Paul elsewhere traces the fall to Adam as the father of disobedience (Rom 5). Furthermore, it would be problematic to make the argument of primogeniture valid in all cases, God gave Joseph authority over his older brothers.

4.5.12 Whether all these objections to the immediate application of 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 and 1 Timothy 2:11,12 to the ordination of women are equally cogent or not, recent debate has highlighted significant exegetical problems which cannot be ignored.<sup>51</sup> Yet the debate is far from closed simply by arguing that Paul in these texts is taking specific measures to combat local problems. The pro-ordinationist position must offer theological arguments why women can or should be ordained. We now turn to an evaluation of the main arguments raised for the ordination of women.

#### 4.6 The Order of Redemption

4.6.1 The term 'order of redemption' is used to describe the restored oneness with God and with each other which his people share on the basis of their redemption in Christ and their reconciliation with God himself. A new creation has been inaugurated by the Christ-event. This new order, like the church itself, is an eschatological reality apprehended by faith, not sight. Yet just as the church is not invisible but has its external marks, so the new order is not intangible, but seen in the transformation of relationships belonging to the old created order.

4.6.2 This view is not based merely on a number of proof-passages, but on the gospel itself as God's message of liberation from sin, guilt, and distorted relationships which belong to fallen humanity. The gospel is more than a promise of eschatological salvation. It is a power which changes, here and now, the lives of those who are in Christ. Certain NT texts show the process for drawing deductions from the gospel for the new ordering of human relations:

- In Christ there is a new creation; the old has passed away and something new has come as a result of God's act of reconciling the world of fallen humanity to himself (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15).
- In the Lord, men and women are not independent of each other, but are one in their interdependence under God (1 Cor 11:11,12).
- A new, united humanity has been created by God in Christ, so that old walls of hostility are broken down (Eph 2:11-22).
- 'In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:26-28; NRSV).

4.6.3 Galatians 3:28 has become something like the Magna Carta of the pro-ordination argument, and thus requires special consideration. It probably recalls a baptismal formula (as in 1 Cor 12:13 and Col 3:11).<sup>52</sup> This is supported both by the reference to baptism (v 27) and by the mention of slave/free and male/female which are irrelevant to Paul's argument at this point. The formula may well allude to the ancient Jewish prayer in which the pious Jew thanked God that he was not born a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.<sup>53</sup> In verses 23-25 Paul speaks on behalf of Jewish Christians ('we'); he then addresses both Jewish and Gentile Christians ('you'), reminding them that union with Christ means union with each other. Old divisions and distinctions do not determine one's standing before God. Paul is thus asserting the unity of all believers in the one Body of Christ, no matter what their natural situation may be. From this it can be deduced that all believers share an equality as children of God.

4.6.4 The debate over Galatians 3:28 concerns the extent to which practical conclusions can be drawn from it regarding the ordering of relationships. Put differently, is this unity and equality only a faith-reality which belongs to the hiddenness of life in the new eon, or does it mean a change in social relationships?

a) The traditional view holds that previous religious, cultural, social, and sexual differences indeed do not determine one's standing before God; however, equality does not mean

sameness of function. The proper interpretation of how Christians are to live in community is to be found in other texts. This text does not advocate the abolition of social differences, as little as it abrogates the difference between male and female. It is the law - specifically, the order of creation - which orders human relations, not the gospel.<sup>54</sup> To read Galatians 3:28 as a blue-print for a new order is to turn the gospel into law, and to bring this text into conflict with others which speak of an original created order which cannot be repealed.

- b) At the other extreme is the position that 'Paul's statements have social and political implications of even a revolutionary dimension'.<sup>55</sup> The early church began to draw such revolutionary implications from the gospel, but the process must be completed with reference to the relationship between men and women. Potential contradictions with other NT texts are handled in either of two ways. Either one must say that Scripture does not agree on this issue (and Gal 3:28 should be accorded priority), or that the differences are more apparent than real. In either case, a literalistic, law-orientated reading of texts which prevents the liberating force of the gospel to be heard and experienced means a diminishing of the power of the gospel.
- c) A mediating position is held by those who argue that 'Gal 3:28 changes Christian relationships, but does not abolish all role differences'.<sup>56</sup> This is clear especially with reference to the distinctive biological roles of male and female. It also remains true that there is equality in Christ even where there are lasting cultural differences, or differences in social status. The gospel does not immediately create social equality or identity in terms of functions.

4.6.5 The view that Paul is pointing to a new order with his reference to 'male and female' begins with the observation that his formulation takes up the wording of LXX Genesis 1:27, and breaks the previous, twice-repeated construction 'neither ... nor ...'. A new order replaces an old created order. According

to Stendahl, 'man and woman remain what they are; but in Christ, by baptism and hence in the church - not only in faith something has happened which transcends the Law itself and thereby even the order of creation'.<sup>57</sup> Schroeder argues in similar fashion: 'The clear consequence of the Gospel is that the orders of creation are nonpermanent'. If the gospel 'violates' the old orders it does so in the same way that it 'violates' God's way of dealing with sinners under the law. But no order is violated where the church uses the current changed order of creation in which God places women so that they exercise the ministry of the gospel to the glory of God.<sup>58</sup>

- 4.6.6 It is clearly dangerous to speak of the order of redemption as repealing orders of creation. As saints and sinners, Christians live in the old order and the new. We cannot deduce from the gospel the specific roles of men and women, the order of marriage, or ordered life in human communities. Yet behaviour of Christians within the orders is informed and motivated by the gospel. Thus Paul draws certain conclusions from the gospel for the relationship between men and women (1 Cor 11:11; 7:4; see also 1 Pet 3:7). Marriage is no longer an arena for asserting power and personal authority, but an opportunity for service.
- 4.6.7 That the principle of equality in Christ had social implications for Paul can hardly be denied. Firstly, from Galatians 2:11-14 it is clear that he took a strong stand on the integration of Jews and Greeks because the gospel could not be seen to depend on practices which were now irrelevant. He espoused freedom in the gospel, yet could renounce this freedom for the sake of the gospel. Thus Titus was not allowed to be circumcised, but Timothy was (Acts 16:1-3). Secondly, Paul did not set out to remove the institution of slavery (1 Cor 7:21 sees slavery as a divine vocation in which one can witness to the gospel). Any attempt to overthrow the institution of slavery in the ancient world would have been doomed to failure, and such a revolutionary message would have obscured the true message of the gospel. Instead, Paul prescribed a new relationship between a Christian slave and master since they were both one in the Lord (Phil 15-20 - there is no question

here of an older order of creation being repealed, since slavery is rather a distortion of an original good order). Thirdly, the gospel did mean a new ordering of male/female, particularly husband/wife, relations in that social rank is replaced by mutual service.

- 4.6.8 It is quite possible that Paul would not have been happy with the contrasting of an order of creation with an order of redemption. He was certainly not concerned with regulating human society outside the church. For him, order (also in worship) had to do with ensuring that the gospel would be heard as clearly as possible, and ensuring that the cause of the gospel would not be impeded. The freedom of the Spirit could not be allowed to degenerate into disorder. The specific injunctions concerning the behaviour of women in worship, and the inclusion of traditional tables of duty, with their call for women to be submissive, were also necessary to defend the church against any possible charge of subverting socially acceptable behaviour. On no account was the gospel to be brought into disrepute. The question to be answered is whether the cause of the gospel in our day is to be advanced with the continuing subordination of women in the church, or whether that is itself a cause for offence, not simply because of changes in the social status of women in our society, but because the church fails to draw conclusions from the gospel of equality in Christ.

#### 4.7 Ordination and Pastoral Authority

- 4.7.1 The question to be addressed here is whether the nature of authority as exercised in the pastoral office forbids or allows women to be ordained. The Lutheran confessional understanding of pastoral authority as vested in the Word and not the person has been proposed to provide a solution to the impasse which remains after an examination of specific texts and theological principles has failed to provide a clear answer in the debate on the ordination of women. This brief discussion seeks to provide some basic biblical data, confessional perspectives, and an evaluation of the arguments.

- 4.7.2 Absolute authority (exousia) belongs to God alone. His power and authority are one; he has the right to exercise absolute authority and he has the power to do so. Divine power and authority are exercised by Jesus during his earthly ministry, and confirmed as his by his exaltation to the right hand of God in glory.
- 4.7.3 Jesus gave his disciples authority to act in his name (Matt 10:1). After the resurrection he called and authorised apostles to speak and act in his name and with his full authority. The authority of the apostles was a derived authority. Yet the characteristic way of speaking about ministry in the NT is not to speak of authority. Paul certainly reminds his readers that he is an apostle called by Christ to speak on his behalf with full authority. Yet he understands his ministry as diakonia, himself as doulos. He speaks of his apostolic exousia only when defending himself against the 'super-apostles' who claim greater authority (2 Cor 10:8; 13:10), and when claiming his apostolic rights and freedom of action (1 Cor 9:3-12). Perhaps the apostle avoided the term exousia because the term carried with it the connotation of personal rights and freedoms. He instead stressed his call to servanthood which left him no choice but to preach the gospel (v 16).
- 4.7.4 Paul carefully distinguished between authority and power in his struggle with the enthusiasts and false-apostles at Corinth. The latter saw their authority as grounded in personal power, and questioned Paul's authority because he was weak (1 Cor 10:10). They boasted of their strength, Paul boasted of his weakness, gladly confessing that his powerlessness and incompetence allowed divine power to be made manifest (3:6; 12:9). His authority came with his commission (2:17); the power always remained that of the gospel, and the Spirit at work in it (1 Cor 1:2-5). From start to finish, there was nothing in his own person that authenticated his ministry.
- 4.7.5 Through the Spirit the ascended Lord has given to the church a variety of ministries (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11,27-30; Eph 4:8-12). Every member of the body is gifted for service. Apart from the probable exception of the apostolate, there is no evidence of gifts being assigned according to social

status, cultural background, age, or gender. The Spirit is poured out on all believers so that male and female, old and young, prophesy - in the sense of proclaiming the mighty works of God in Christ (Acts 2:11,17,18). The assignment of gifts by the Spirit cannot be controlled or regulated. In the new creation there is no longer a Levitical priesthood consisting of males without blemish, but a priesthood of all believers - male and female baptised and cleansed in Christ (1 Pet 2:9).

- 4.7.6 Ministry is not an exercise of power over others, but self-giving service, empowering others for service. Dominating others is the antithesis of the perfect model of servanthood found in the Good Shepherd - whether such domination is by men (1 Pet 5:3) or by women (1 Tim 2:12).

Given the nature of all ministry as the service of God's holy people, and the fact that authority, power, and gifts for ministry all come from God, can we conclude that women can also hold the public office of the Ministry?

- 4.7.7 Two observations show that the solution is not quite so simple. In the first place the public office does not derive its authority from the priesthood of all believers. Pastors have authority as those called by Christ to speak and act in his name. The church calls; Christ gives the authority to the person who is rite vocatus.

Secondly, purely charismatic legitimisation of Ministry poses problems. Not every person with the required gifts is called to the Ministry. It is for this reason that this study does not include a consideration of whether women have the necessary personal qualities to exercise the public office. That is the wrong question. If Ministry were merely a matter of possessing gifts there would be no reason to debar women from ordination. In any case, the issue is not ordination itself, but the exercise of authority. 'A uniform practice ... akin to what we call ordination is not to be found in early Christianity, let alone a "theology of ordination".'<sup>59</sup>

- 4.7.8 Lutheran writers have recently argued that the confessional understanding of pastoral authority does allow a woman to be rite vocata. Reumann points out that such authority is not vested in the person or in personal qualities, but in what

is administered. Ministry is valid when it expresses and conforms to the gospel, where it advances the good news. 'Those ordained are set apart to proclaim the glad tidings for the community. Functional fulfilment of that task legitimates ministry.'<sup>60</sup> Ministry is there where the gospel is rightly preached, and the sacraments administered in accordance with the gospel (CA VII). Thus, ordained Ministry is validated by the gospel. Pastors are certainly to 'rule' God's people (1 Tim 5:17), but such rule is not the exercise of personal authority or power. Ministry is service, not a source of privilege, prestige, or power. 'The holy ministry is not lord over the congregation (2 Cor 1:24), nor is the congregation lord over the ministry (Gal 1), but rather both have above them the one Lord in whom they are one.'<sup>61</sup> Thus, women holding pastoral authority would not be wielding her authority over men, but serving the Lord by his authority.

4.7.9 In similar vein, Mark Chapman asserts that women's ordination is 'not a question of justice or equal rights ... for ordination is not a "right" but a calling and a privilege'. The church is free to call only men, but 'it legitimately can be expected that God would call women to be his ministers, since fitness for the ministry is not dependent on the person of the minister'.<sup>62</sup> The functions performed within the Ministry are 'done not by human power but by God's Word alone' (CA XXVIII 21). Further, if the efficacy of the means of grace is not affected by the moral qualities of the pastor (Large Catechism, Sacrament of the Altar 17) it is difficult to see how the means of grace should be rendered invalid by the gender of a pastor.

4.7.10 In Lutheran theology, the pastor functions in persona Christi. Pastors do not represent their own person, but the person of Christ (Apology VII and VIII 28). But they do so not in the same sense as in Roman Catholic theology, where there must be an ontological relationship between Christ and his representative, the priest. If, as he offers the sacrifice of the Eucharist, the priest is fully to represent Christ, he must be male and celibate. The tradition in Eastern Orthodoxy is similar: as the icon of Christ, the priest must be male. By contrast, the Lutheran position is that 'it is the Word, not the person, that makes a sacrament .... The Minister of

the sacrament still embodies Christ, is still the image of Christ, but is so not bodily but orally, not by one's physical self, but by one's proclaiming the gospel rightly'. Authority to represent Christ is based in the authoritative Word, not in moral character, physical characteristics, or in gender. 'There is no reason inherent in the gospel ... that would prohibit women from speaking the gospel ...'.<sup>63</sup>

4.7.11 This argument, that pastoral authority is not linked to the person but the Word, is clearly the most difficult to rebut. Zerbst thus concedes that the nature of the pastoral office does not exclude a woman from ordination.<sup>64</sup> His objection is that it is not the nature of the office but the nature of woman, which disbars her from the office. Ministry is not only service; it is also an order, and woman's subordinate role disqualifies her from that order.

David Scaer nevertheless insists that only a male can represent Christ. 'Where women serve as pastors, the doctrines of God and Christ are distorted, because women cannot represent God and Christ in his incarnation .... Women do not have the constitutional 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.'<sup>65</sup>

Objection has also been raised against conclusions drawn from the confessional statements that moral defect does not invalidate pastoral authority which is vested in the objective Word. The argument is that sinfulness is accidental, and does not have its own substantial being - as in the case of women versus men. Nor can legitimacy of authority be derived simply from function. Though a minister's authority is divine, it is regulated by the teaching of Scripture which assigns to women a subordinate role.

## 5. CONCLUSION

### 5.1 A Summary of Positions

5.1.1 This report has not attempted to present all the detailed argumentation which the debate on women's ordination has produced. It has sought to clarify the major issues involved in the debate. Even those who hold a clear position do not necessarily accept or give equal weight to every argument.

The following summaries are thus meant to provide nothing more than a resumé of the most-commonly adduced points which contribute to a consistent picture.

- 5.1.2 The rejection of women's ordination rests on three main pillars: the need clearly to distinguish between law and gospel; the explicit teaching of Scripture that women are not to take the lead in worship; and the development of a consistent theological principle which undergirds this teaching - the subordinate position of women according to creation.

The function which is assigned to women is set out not by the gospel but the law of the created order. This is not an order after the fall, but precedes the fall. It is the Creator's gracious will that man functions as the head in a leadership role, and that the woman maintains a subordinate position. The fall only perverts this order so that leadership can become domination. The coming of Christ does not change the order. While Jesus gives new dignity to women, he affirms the order in calling only male apostles. Paul, likewise, confirms the order in speaking of the headship of man, and calling on women to be subordinate. This order is not an expression of arbitrary will on the part of God. His order not only serves to preserve human society; it also serves the spread of the gospel.

The rejection of God's order has dire consequences which will include a change in the concept of God.

- 5.1.3 The acceptance of women's ordination as God's will likewise rests on three pillars: the need to interpret Scripture from its heart and centre, the gospel, and to draw lessons from the gospel; the understanding of the Ministry and its authority as grounded in the gospel; the need to understand specific biblical statements on the role of women within an historical perspective.

Here it is maintained that the subordination of women is a result of the fall. The NT statements which call for submission on the part of women in worship are injunctions which must be read in the light of specific situations in the early church. Only a legalistic reading of these texts leads to the conclusion that there is a static created order. The church today needs to order its Ministry in such a way that the cause of the gospel is not impeded, but promoted. It is the gospel itself which

provides the authority of the public office. Pastoral authority is not the exercise of personal authority, but of divine authority.

This is not a question of female rights, but of affirming the gifts which God has given to all his people, male and female. If there is one place where the freedom of the gospel should rule it is in the church. It is a strange anomaly that women may take leading positions in the world, but not in the church. If the subordinationist argument is valid, then the church should protest against women assuming positions of leadership in government and business. The tradition of a male clergy is a long one. The Spirit is certainly a guarantor of tradition. The Spirit is also the dynamic for change in the light of the gospel. Tradition and gospel should not be in conflict. 'A tradition competes with the gospel if, by that tradition, persons are alienated from the gospel rather than drawn to the gospel.'<sup>66</sup>

## 5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 The committee is aware of the fact that this report will disappoint those who want a clear-cut conclusion as to whether women may or may not be ordained. Some will see the open-endedness of this report as a sign of unfaithfulness to the clear teaching of Scripture. Others who say that women should (not may) be ordained will see it as a failure to draw courageous conclusions from the gospel.

5.2.2 We believe that the report has

- a) clarified the major issues, allowing for a more informed discussion;
- b) demonstrated that the debate is not as simple as some would maintain;
- c) highlighted the fact that the central issue is a hermeneutical one: How do we read the Scriptures?
- d) shown that other Lutherans (and other Christians) have not ordained women simply to keep up with trends in society, but have done so out of deep theological conviction.

5.2.3 Obviously not all the arguments presented above can be equally valid. It is possible that no clear consensus can be reached immediately on the basis of the evidence available to us. This report can do no more than mark a stage in the discussion toward a God-pleasing conclusion. Meanwhile, the debate should

continue on a theological, not a personal, level. Positions may be held with passion, but there must be love and respect also for those whose stance is rejected. It is clearly injurious to the cause of the gospel to shift this debate into the secular, public arena where it is readily misconstrued merely as a debate about social justice.

5.2.4 Those who hold that the theological question is clear, and are convinced that women may be ordained, should ask the other equally important question: Must we ordain women in the LCA now? If it is true that the church has freedom to order ministry according to the gospel, it is also true that gospel freedom may dictate that a conclusion is not acted upon out of loving respect for those who passionately hold a different position. Here also everything must be done in love.

Similarly those who hold that women may not be ordained need also to be sensitive to the concerns of those who hold the opposite view.

5.2.5 We applaud the action of the President of the LCA in providing a forum for women's concerns to be heard and discussed. There are women in the church who are hurting, not because they cannot be ordained, but because they see themselves treated as second-class citizens of the Kingdom. The pressing need in the LCA is to see that its liturgical language and its ordering of ministries allows women to participate in the full ministry of the priesthood of all believers.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Committee:  
Dr V.C. Pfitzner, Chairman  
Pastor P.A. Kriewaldt, Secretary  
Ms A.J. Braunack-Mayer  
Pastor J.A. Sabel  
Mrs S.A. Schubert

15 April, 1991

END NOTES

1. Other relevant statements are, 'Statement on Rights of Women to Vote at meetings of the Congregations', and 'The Role of Women in the Church', Doctrinal Statements and Theological Opinions of the Lutheran Church of Australia, F 1-3.
2. The following discussion takes into consideration the stated publica doctrina of the LCA on the Scriptures in the 'Theses of Agreement I and VIII', as well as other statements on the Scriptures (see DSTO, A2,3,17-19; B1-5,9-14).
3. See, for example, K. Stendahl, The Bible and the Role of Women: A Case Study in Hermeneutics, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1966, and W.M. Swartley, Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women: Case Studies in Biblical Interpretation, Herald Press, Scottdale Penn., 1983.
4. "A Consensus Statement on Holy Scripture, Attachment I, 1b' (DSTO, B12).
5. Paul K. Jewett, Man as Male and Female, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1975, 119.
6. For the argument that Phoebe is to be understood as 'president', see Ray R. Schulz, 'A Case for "President" Phoebe in Romans 16:2', Lutheran Theological Journal 24:3, 1990, 124-127. Quite apart from the lexicographical problem, it is difficult to understand how Phoebe could have been president over Paul.
7. For a recent plea for the feminine reading see Ray R. Schulz, 'Romans 16:7: Junia or Junias?' Expository Times 98, 1986-87, 108-110. The suggestion of a feminine form was made as early as 1932 by C.H. Dodd in his Romans commentary. Most commentators still opt for the masculine form.
8. See especially Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins, SCM, London, 1983.
9. Stendahl, 40.
10. Against Jewett, 13,14,36.
11. See Vernon S. Grieger, Earthly Images of the Heavenly Bride: Women and the Church, Luther Rose Publications, Doncaster Vic, 1988, 7, and R.J. Rushdoony, 'The Doctrine of Marriage', Toward Christian Marriage, ed. by E. Fellersen, Nutley NJ, 1972, 14.
12. Manfred Hauke, Women in the Priesthood? Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1988, 349.
13. Samuele Bacchiocchi, Women in the Church, Biblical Perspectives Berrien Springs, 1987, 70.
14. Against Jean Hering, The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, Epworth, London, 1962, 106.
15. See J.T.E. Renner, 'Women in the Old Testament', Lutheran Theological Journal, 9:3, 1975, 91.
16. See Stephen B. Clark, Man and Women in Christ, Servant Books, Ann Arbor, 1980, 12.
17. See Edward H. Schroeder, 'The Orders of Creation - Some Reflections on the History and Place of the Term in Systematic Theology', CTM 43, 1972, 165-178.
18. The Divine Imperative, Lutterworth Press, London, 1949.

19. The Christian Ethos, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1957, 77-135.
20. Women in the Church, 21 (II B).
21. See Clark, 23-28.
22. See Kevin Giles, Created Woman, Acorn Press, Canberra, 1985, 11-22.
23. Jean Calvin, Commentary on 1 Timothy, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1964, 217.
24. 'On the Councils and the Church', Luther's Works, American Edition, Vol. 41, Concordia, St Louis, 1966, 155. The page references which follow refer to Luther's Works, Vol. 1.
25. Luther's Works, Vol. 28, 278,279.
26. Fritz Zerbst, The Office of Women in the Church, Concordia Publishing House, St Louis, 1955.
27. Edward Schroeder, 'The Orders of Creation - Some Reflections on the History and Place of the Term in Systematic Theology', CTM 43, 1972, 165-178.
28. See G. Delling, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 8, 40,41.
29. Peter Brunner, The Ministry and the Ministry of Women, Concordia Publishing House, St Louis, 1971, 25.
30. See the 'Excursus on Headcovering : Principle and Custom', Section II C of the LCMS statement, Women in the Church.
31. See Stephen Bedale, 'The Meaning of kephale in the Pauline Epistles', Journal of Theological Studies 5, 1954, 211. For a good bibliography on the recent debate, see G.D. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1987, 502 note 42.
32. Catherine C. Kroeger, 'The Classical Concept of Head as "Source"', Serving Together: A Biblical Study of Human Relationships, ed. by G. Gaebelin Hull, New York, 1987, 268.
33. Kroeger, 270-274.
34. The exceptions are Judg 11:11; 2 Sam 22:44; Ps 18:43; Isa 7:8,9; Lam 1:5.
35. See Bacchiocchi, 110-118, and W. Grudem, 'Does kephale ("Head") mean "Source" or "Authority over" in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples', Trinity Journal n.s. 6, 1985, 38-59.
36. Fee, 502 note 42.
37. For the following see B. and A. Mickelsen, 'What Does Kephale Mean in the New Testament', Women, Authority, and the Bible, Marshall Pickering, London, 1987, 97-110, especially 105-110.
38. John Strelan, Ephesians, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1981, 73.
39. Clark, 180.
40. See the discussion by Fee, 699-705.
41. See S. Aalen, 'A Rabbinic Formula in 1 Cor 14,34', Studia Evangelica 2/1, ed. F.L. Cross = Texte und Untersuchungen 87, Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 1964, 513-525.

42. See Conzelmann and Barrett on 1 Cor 14:34, and the quotations they cite from ancient sources.
43. In the western textual tradition the command of the Lord cannot refer to vv 34,35, since these come after v 40.
44. Bacchiocchi, 78.
45. Philip B. Payne, 'The Interpretation of I Timothy 2:11-15: A Rejoinder', What Does Scripture Teach About the Ordination of Women? A Study Commissioned by the Committee on Ministerial Standing, The Evangelical Free Church of America, Minneapolis, 1986, 98.
46. See John H.P. Reumann, Ministries Examined, Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1987, 90.
47. George Knight III, 'Authentein in Reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2:12', New Testament Studies 30, 1984, 143-157.
48. See Payne, 108-110, for a detailed analysis. The study by Catherine C. Kroeger in Women, Authority, and the Bible (see note 37 above), 229-232, is rather speculative; she suggests the meaning 'to teach ritual or sham murder' as was done in the Artemis cult at Ephesus!
49. Payne, 110.
50. Payne, 105.
51. For a handy listing of exegetical problems in 1 Cor 11:2-16, 14:33a-36, and 1 Tim 2:8-15, and the varied answers to scholars to them, see Sanford D. Hull, 'Exegetical Difficulties in the "Hard Passages"', Serving Together (see note 32 above), 251-265.
52. Dieter Betz, Galatians, ad loc.
53. Clark, 145-149.
54. Swartley, 164-165, provides a summary of the views of those who argue this way.
55. Betz, 190.
56. Clark, 155.
57. Stendahl, 34.
58. Schroeder, 175,176.
59. Reumann, 79.
60. Reumann, 119.
61. H. Sasse, 'The Ministry and the Congregation', The Lutheran Quarterley II:4, 1949, 113.
62. Mark E. Chapman, 'The Ordination of Women: Evangelical and Catholic', Dialog 28, 1989, 134.
63. Chapman, 135.
64. Zerbst, 105.
65. David Scaer, 'The Validity of the Churchly Acts of Ordained Women', Concordia Theological Quarterly 53:1-2, 1989, 7.

## Appendix 1

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHYA. Official Reports

- 1964 - Concerning the Ordination of Women. Department on Faith and Order and Department on Cooperation of Men and Women in Church, Family, and Society, WCC, Geneva.
- 1970 - The Ordination of Women. A Report Distributed ... through the Division of Theological Studies of the Lutheran Council in the USA, condensed by R Tiemeyer. Augsburg, Minneapolis.
- 1983 - Women in the Ministries of the Church. LWF Studies, Geneva.
- 1984 - The Ordination of Women in Lutheran Churches: Analysis of an LWF Survey. LWF Documentation 18.
- 1985 - Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice: A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, St. Louis.
- 1987 - God's Women for All Generations: A Report of the President's Commission on Women. Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, St. Louis.
- 1988 - Women in the Uniting Church of Australia. Social Responsibility and Justice Committee, Uniting Church of Australia, St. James, NSW.
- 1989 - Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Communion and Women in the Episcopate. Anglican Consultative Council, London.
- 1990 - The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: A Digest of the Second Report by the House of Bishops. General Synod of the Church of England, London.
- 1990 - Why Does the Uniting Church in Australia Ordain Women to the Ministry of the Word? Social Responsibility and Justice Committee, Uniting Church of Australia, St. James, NSW.

B. Monographs

- Bacchiocchi, S. Women in the Church. Biblical Perspectives, Berrien Springs, 1987.
- Balch, D. Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter. Scholars Press, Chico, Cal., 1981.
- Bristow, JT. What Paul Really Said About Women. Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1988.
- Bruce, M and Duffield, GE (eds). Why not? Priesthood and the Ministry of Women. Appleford, Marcham Manor, 1988.
- Brunner, P. The Ministry and the Ministry of Women. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1971.
- Burke, C. Through a Woman's Eyes: Encounters with Jesus. Collins Dove, Melbourne, 1989.
- Cartwright, RC, Women's Rights: A Historical, Theological and Apologetic Survey from a Biblical Perspective, Simon Greenleaf School of Law, 1987.
- Clark, EA. Women in the Early Church. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, 1983.
- Clark, S. Man and Woman in Christ. Servant Publications, Ann Arbor, 1980.
- Danielou, J. The Ministry of Women in the Early Church. Faith Press, London, 1961.
- Dowell, S and Hurcombe, L. The Dispossessed Daughters of Eve. SPCK, London, 1983.

- Fitzer, G. 'Das Weib schweige in der Gemeinde': Ober den unpaulinischen Charakter der Mulier-taceat-Verse in 1 Kor. 14. Chr. Kaiser, Munich, 1963.
- Foh, ST. Women and the Word of God. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1980.
- Franklin, MA (ed). The Force of the Feminine. Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1986.
- Giles, K. Created Women: A Fresh Study of the Biblical Teaching. Acorn, Canberra, 1985.
- Greeley, AM. The Mary Myth: On the Femininity of God. The Seabury Press, New York, 1977.
- Grieger, VS. Earthly Images of the Heavenly Bride: Women and the Church. Luther Rose Publications, Doncaster, Vic, 1988.
- Gundry, P. Neither Slave nor Free. Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1987.
- Hauke, M. Women in the Priesthood? A Systematic Analysis in the Light of the Order of Creation and Redemption. Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1988.
- Hayter, M. The New Eve in Christ: The Use and Abuse of the Bible in the Debate about Women in the Church. SPCK, London, 1987.
- Ide, AF. Woman as Priest, Bishop and Laity. Ide House, Mesquite, Texas, 1984.
- Jewett, PK. Man as Male and Female. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1975.
- MacDonald, DR. There is no Male and Female. Harvard Dissertations in Religion, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1987.
- MacDonald, M and Wainwright, E. The Question of Women and Ordination. WATAC, Townsville, 1988.
- Massey, LF. Women in the New Testament: An Analysis of Scripture in the Light of New Testament Era Culture. McFarland and Co. Jefferson, NC, 1989.
- Meer, H van der. Women Priests in the Catholic Church? Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1973.
- Mickelsen, A (ed). Women, Authority and the Bible: An Evangelical Breakthrough on the Biblical Debate. Marshall Pickering, London, 1987.
- Moloney, FJ, Woman, First Among the Faithful. Dove Communications, Blackburn, Vic, 1984.
- Moltmann-Wendel, E. Liberty, Equality, Sisterhood: On the Emancipation of Women in Church and Society. Fortress, Philadelphia, 1978.
- Neuer, W. Man and Woman in Christian Perspective. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1990.
- Otwell, JH, And Sarah Laughed. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1977.
- Parvey, CF (ed). Ordination of Women in Ecumenical Perspective: Workbook for the Church Future. WCC, Geneva, 1980.
- Prenter, R. Die Ordination der Frauen zu dem überleiferten Pfarramt der lutherischen Kirche. Lutherisches Verlagshaus, Berlin, 1967.
- Reumann, J. Ministries Examined. Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1987.
- Ruether, RR and McLaughlin, E (eds). Women of Spirit. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1974.
- Ruether, RR. New Woman New Earth. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1975.
- Ruether, RR (ed). Religion and Sexism. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1974.
- Russell, LM. Feminist Interpretation of the Bible. Blackwell, Oxford, 1986.
- Ryrie, CC. The Role of Women in the Church. Moody Press, Chicago, 1970.

- Schultz, NC. Neither Male or Female: Towards a Theology and Practice of Equality of the Sexes in the Lutheran Church of Australia. D.Min.Thesis (unpublished). St. Paul, Minnesota, 1981.
- Schüssler-Fiorenza, E. In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins. SCM, London, 1983.
- Spencer, AB. Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry. Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 1985.
- Stendahl, B. The Force of Tradition: A Case Study of Women Priests in Sweden. Fortress, Philadelphia, 1985.
- Stendahl, K. The Bible and the Role of Women: A Case Study in Hermeneutics. Fortress, Philadelphia, 1966.
- Swartley, WM. Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women: Case Studies in Biblical Interpretation. Herald Press, Scottdale, Penn., 1983.
- Thrall, ME. The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: A Study of the Biblical Evidence. SCM, London, 1958.
- Tiemeyer, R. The Ordination of Women. Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1970.
- Trible, P. God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality. Fortress, Philadelphia, 1978.
- Tucker, RA and Liefeld, W. Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministries from New Testament Times. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1987.
- Wagner, S. Women and the Australian Churches: Our Changing Role. WATAC, Townsville, 1987.
- Wetherell, D. Women Priests in Australia? The Anglican Crisis. Spectrum, Melbourne, 1987.
- Williams, D. The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church. Regal Books, Ventura, Cal. 1977.
- Wilson-Kastner, P. Faith, Feminism and the Christ. Fortress, Philadelphia, 1983.
- Witherington, B. Women in the Earliest Churches. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988.
- Witherington, B. Women in the Ministry of Jesus. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984.
- Zerbst, F. The Office of Women in the Church. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1955.

#### C. Articles

- Allison, RW. 'Let the Women be Silent in the Churches (1 Cor 14:33b-36) What did Paul Really Say and What did it Mean?', Journal for the Study of the New Testament 32, 1988, 27-60.
- Aalen, S. 'A Rabbinic Formula in I Corinthians 14:34', in Studia Evangelica 2/1 = Texte und Untersuchungen 87. Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 1964, 513-525.
- Bedale, S. 'The Meaning of kephale in the Pauline Epistles', Journal of Theological Studies 5, 1954, 211-215.
- Brown, RE. 'Roles of Women in the Fourth Gospel', Theological Studies 36, 1975, 688-699.
- Brooten, B. '"Junia ... Outstanding Among the Apostles" (Romans 16:7)', in L and A Swidler (eds), Women Priests. Paulist Press, New York, 1977, 141-144.
- Chapman, ME. 'The Ordination of Women: Evangelical and Catholic', Dialogue 28, 1989, 133-136.

- Croeger, CC. 'The Classical Concept of Head as "Source"', in Gaebelin, G (ed), Serving Together: A Biblical Study of Human Relationships. Hull, New York, 1987.
- Giles, K. 'The Ordination of Women: On Whose Side is the Bible?', in Franklin, MA (ed), The Force of the Feminine. Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1986, 38-48.
- Grudem, W. 'Does kephale ("head") Mean "Source" or "Authority over" in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples', Trinity Journal 6, 1985, 38-59.
- Gärtner, B. 'Didaskalos: The Office, Man and Woman in the New Testament', Concordia Journal, 8:2, 1982, 52-60.
- Hamann, HP. 'The New Testament and the Ordination of Women', Lutheran Theological Journal 9:3, 1975, 100-108.
- Judisch, D. 'Theses on Woman Suffrage in the Church', Concordia Theological Quarterly 41:3, 1977, 36-45.
- Knight, G. 'Authentein in reference to women in 1 Timothy 2:12', New Testament Studies 30, 1984, 143-157.
- O'Connor, JM. 'Sex and Logic in I Corinthians 11:1-16', Catholic Biblical Quarterly 42, 1980, 482-500.
- Padgett, A. 'Wealth Women at Ephesus: I Timothy 2:8-15 in Social Context', Interpretation 41:1, 1987, 19-31.
- Parvey, CF. 'Ordain her, Ordain her not', Dialogue 8:3, 1969, 203-208.
- Payne, PB. 'The interpretation of I Timothy 2:11-15: A rejoinder' in What Does Scripture teach about the Ordination of Women? A study commissioned by the Committee on Ministerial Standing, The Evangelical Free Church of America, Minneapolis, 1986.
- Piepkorn, AC. 'The Sacred Ministry and Holy Ordination in the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church', in Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV: Eucharist and Ministry. 1970, 101-119.
- Renner, JTE. 'Women in the Old Testament', Lutheran Theological Journal 9:3, 1975, 90-99.
- Reumann, J. 'What in Scripture Speaks to the Ordination of Women', CTM 44:1, 1973, 5-30.
- Rushdoomy, RJ. 'The Doctrine of Marriage', in Fellserson, E (ed), Towards Christian Marriage, Nutley, NJ, 1972.
- Sasse, H. 'The Ministry and the Congregation', The Lutheran Quarterly II:4, 1949, 100-113.
- Scaer, DP. 'The Office of Pastor and the Problem of Ordination of Women Pastors', Springfielder 38:2, 1974, 123-133.
- Scaer, DP. 'The Validity of the Churchly Acts of Ordained Women', Concordia Theological Quarterly 53:1,2, 1989, 3-20.
- Schroeder, EH. 'The Orders of Creation - Some reflections on the History and Place of the Term in Systematic Theology', Concordia Theological Monthly 43, 1972, 165-178.
- Schulz, RR. 'A Case for "President" Phoebe in Romans 16:2', Lutheran Theological Journal 24:3, 1990, 124-127.
- Schulz, RR. 'Romans 16:7: Junia or Junias?', Expository Times 98, 1986/1987, 108-110.
- Walker, WA. 'I Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul's Views Regarding Women', Journal of Biblical Literature 94:1, 1975, 94-110.
- Weinrich, WC. 'Feminism in the Church: the Issue of Our Day', Concordia Theological Quarterly 50:2, 1986, 139-144.

## Appendix 2

A Tabulation of Written Submissions

The committee received 91 submissions. A basic summary of those submissions is set out below.

Overall, 15% of correspondents were in favour of the ordination of women, 8% were undecided, and 77% were against. Women correspondents were more likely to be in favour of ordination than men (see Table 1) and urban dwellers more likely than rural (See Table 2).

TABLE 1

## Gender of Correspondents

Ordain women?	Gender		
	female n (%)	male n (%)	both* n (%)
yes	13 (18)	1 (7)	0
undecided	5 (7)	1 (7)	1 (25)
no	54 (75)	12 (86)	3 (75)
TOTAL	72 (100)	14 (100)	4 (100)

\* letters sent by couples

TABLE 2

## Residence of Correspondents

Ordain women?	Area of residence		
	urban n (%)	rural n (%)	unknown n (%)
yes	5 (29)	6 (9)	2 (33)
undecided	2 (12)	3 (4)	2 (33)
no	10 (59)	58 (87)	2 (33)
TOTAL	17 (100)	67 (100)	6 (100)

As would be expected, most correspondents came from Queensland or South Australia (see Table 3).

TABLE 3

## Address of Correspondents

Ordain women?	Address					
	NSW n	Vic n	Qld n	SA n	WA n	Other* n
yes	0	1	6	4	1	2
undecided	1	0	0	2	2	2
no	11	15	15	24	3	3
TOTAL	12	16	21	30	6	6

\* includes PNG, NZ, NT and Germany