

DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS AND THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS (DSTO)

VOLUME 1

F. WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Statement on rights of women to vote at meetings of the congregations

Prepared by the Joint Faculties of Concordia Seminary and Immanuel Theological Seminary. Approved by the combined Church Councils of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia and The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia, 1966.

Not edited.

1. In Christ man and woman have equal standing, Mark 12:25 and parallels, Galatians 3:28; but there is a difference between man and woman by virtue of the fact of creation, 1 Corinthians 11:7–10; 1 Timothy 2:13; Genesis 2:18ff, by which a subordinate position has been given to women. A further reason is the role played by the woman at the Fall, Genesis 3:1ff; 1 Timothy 2:14. This subordination shows itself, as far as the individual woman is concerned, in the marriage relation, Genesis 3:16.
2. This difference between man and woman, traceable back to Creation and the Fall, is not set aside in the Christian Church as it exists on earth, where it is subject to all the ordinances of Creation; 1 Corinthians 11:3,10; Ephesians 5:21f; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:5ff.
3. The ordinance concerning man and woman is to exist also in the congregation, 1 Corinthians 14:34ff; 1 Timothy 2:11ff. The emphasis is not on keeping silence, but on the reserve of which silence is a sign, as the parallel and contrasted verbs and phrases show. Of great importance, too, is the fact that the worshipping congregation is the place which the Apostle has in mind and for which his order is meant. This rule of the Apostle distinctly excludes women from the pastoral office (Community Formation Theses of Agreement, Vi, 11) and from the office of elder.
4. Since the Apostle has in mind the worshipping congregation, the divine service, as the place for which his order is meant, it is improper by way of deduction to claim silence of women in all congregational, business, and social meetings.
5. By giving woman as a member of the congregation the right to vote she is not necessarily given authority over the man, as has sometimes been claimed.

6. On the basis of these statements the Joint Faculties believe that congregations may grant women the right to vote at congregational meetings. Such right shall be subject to the same provisions that apply to male voting members.
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Resolution adopted by the General Synod, 1968 Convention. The General Synod resolved:

THAT the Convention recommend the insertion of the following words under Section 1 of the By-Laws to the Constitution for Congregations: That, when women are given the right to discuss and vote in congregations, the principle that in our congregations the woman is in subjection to the man be safeguarded by recognizing the right of the men to reserve the final decision on any matter to a male vote whenever the men desire to invoke this right.