

AGENDA 6.2

CTICR: A theological basis for the ordination of women and men – Draft Doctrinal Statement

PREFACE

The 2015 General Convention of the LCA asked the CTICR ‘to build on its earlier work regarding the ordination of women and men to develop a draft doctrinal statement for General Pastors Conference and the 19th Convention of Synod that presents a theological basis for the ordination of women and men’.

The initial draft doctrinal statement (DDS) that the CTICR prepared in response to the 2015 convention resolution, and an accompanying commentary, were work-shopped at a series of Churchwide consultations in Australia and New Zealand in 2017. Guided by feedback from the consultations the CTICR prepared a new document in the form of six brief biblical and theological theses, titled: *A theological basis for the ordination of women and men: draft doctrinal statement*. It replaces the initial DDS that was presented at the consultations. In response to the second part of the convention resolution, the CTICR has also written a document called: *A theological basis for why the ordination of women and men need not be Church-divisive*. By issuing these two documents the CTICR has fulfilled the synodical request.

The CTICR has also produced two other documents for the guidance of the Church: *A theological basis for the ordination of women and men: background to the draft doctrinal statement*, and *Engaging with the Draft Doctrinal Statement: Reflection arising from the current teaching of the Lutheran Church of Australia*.

The draft doctrinal statement on the ordination of women and men deals only with the inclusion of both women and men in the office of the ministry; it does not seek to reformulate the doctrine of the ordained office, which is given in Theses of Agreement 6.1–10.

The CTICR wishes to acknowledge that not all members support the case for the ordination of women and men, and conversely not all members support the case for the ordination of men only. It also wishes to affirm that all members of the CTICR regard the Scriptures as the divinely inspired, written and inerrant Word of God, and uphold the Lutheran Confessions as the correct exposition of scriptural teaching.

A THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN AND MEN: DRAFT DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Both men and women are ordained to the office of the public ministry of the Lutheran Church of Australia for the following reasons:

1. **Women and men in the public office continue the ministry of the apostles**
The public office of the ministry today is apostolic in the sense that it exists to proclaim and enact the teaching of the apostles. However, the foundational role of the apostles was unique. Therefore, the precedent of male apostles (Acts 1:21,22) does not require that pastors be male today.
2. **Women as disciples**
Jesus included women in the wider circle of disciples who followed him throughout his ministry, were served by him, and in turn served him (Matt 12:49,50; 27:55; Mark 10:45; 14:3–9; 15:41; Luke 23:55; 24:22–24,33). When Jesus predicted his impending death and resurrection to the disciples in private, women disciples were

among them (Luke 9:18–22; 24:1–12). Women were the first to see the risen Lord and the first to announce his resurrection to the other disciples (Matt. 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–20; Luke 24:4–10; John 20:1–18). As members of the wider circle of Jesus' disciples they were well placed to serve as leaders in the early church's ministries alongside the apostles (Luke 24:13–49; Acts 2:17–21).

3. **Ministries of women in the New Testament era**

The Holy Spirit led the early Christians to establish a variety of ministries, such as prophets, bishops (overseers), teachers, evangelists, pastors and deacons. Many of these included women. Women served as prophets in Corinth and in Caesarea by the Sea (1 Cor 11:5; Acts 21:9). Phoebe was a deacon (minister) of the church at Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1,2), an office occupied also by Epaphras and Timothy (Col 1:7; 1 Tim. 4:6). Priscilla was Paul's co-worker in Rome and a teacher of the church (Rom. 16:3; Acts 18:26). Euodia and Syntyche 'struggled in the gospel' alongside Paul in Philippi (Phil 4:3), Mary, Traephena and Tryphosa 'worked hard' as the church was established in Rome (Rom 16:6,12), and Junia was 'prominent among the apostles' (Rom 16:7). The inclusion of women in these significant ministries supports the case for their inclusion in the public office of the ministry today.

4. **1 Timothy 2:11–15 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b–37**

Regarding 1 Timothy 2:11–15, Paul did not permit women to teach the faith at Ephesus. This restriction was consistent with the practice of the synagogue, and was necessary for the time being to avoid offence, especially to Jewish Christians. In other settings, such as Rome, Philippi, Cenchreae, and Caesarea by the Sea, the same ruling was not in force (Acts 18:26; 21:9; Rom 16:1–3,6,7,12; Phil 4:3; compare 1 Tim 3:12 with Rom 16:1; and 1 Tim 2:12 with Acts 18:26). Regarding 1 Corinthians 14:33b–37, the women who served as prophets in Corinth (1 Cor 11:5; see also 12:28; Eph 4:11; Acts 21:9) are to be distinguished from the wives referred to at 1 Corinthians 14:34,35. Their questions to their husbands, asking them to explain what was being said, prompted the apostle to warn them not to disrupt worship. He commanded them to 'keep silent in the churches' (1 Cor 14:34,35). This is a specific application of Jesus' overarching command to love one another (1 Cor 14:37; see also 8:1; 13:1–13; 14:1; John 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 3:23; 4:21), for the sake of good order in worship (1 Cor 14:33,40), so that the church may be built up in faith, hope and love (1 Cor 13:13; 14:3–5,12,17). Paul prohibited women from teaching the faith at Ephesus, and he regulated the conduct of certain wives during worship at Corinth and across the church, motivated by his overriding missionary concern, to 'become all things to all people, so that [he] might by all means save some' (1 Cor 9:22). Since 1 Timothy 2:11–14 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b–37 do not specifically address the issue of ordination, they cannot be used to support the exclusion of women from the pastoral office.

5. **Galatians 3:26–28**

The unity of all believers before God through baptism led to a breakthrough in the way that people of Jewish and Gentile background, and masters and slaves, related to one another. Likewise, the new creation in Christ transcends and transforms any barriers built by humans which prohibit the ordination of women. This new creation in Christ enables women, in the midst of ever-changing social and cultural contexts, to serve in the office of the public ministry (Gal 3:27,28; Acts 10:1–48; Eph 2:11–22; Gal 2:11–14; Phm 16; 1 Cor 7:21–24; Eph 6:6–9; Col 4:1; 1 Tim 6:1,2).

6. **Lutheran doctrinal foundations**

The article on the office of the public ministry in the Augsburg Confession (AC 5) follows the chief article, justification by faith (AC 4). The overriding concern of the Augsburg Confession is that the gospel of God's grace and forgiveness in Christ remain central to the teaching and practice of the church. The gospel is the teaching by which

the church stands or falls. God has established the pastoral office to ensure that, through the word and the sacraments, people are continually brought to and sustained in faith (AC Apol. 7/8.28). The power of the gospel to accomplish this is not dependent on the preacher, whether male or female, but on God's promise (Isa 55:11) and the power of his Spirit.

CONCLUSION

The ordination of women to the office of the ministry is consistent with the Scriptures, and with the doctrine of the ministry as articulated in the Lutheran Confessions. The inclusion of women in the public ministry does not mean a change to the teaching of the Confessions, but only a change to the LCA's public teaching that men only may be ordained. Duly called, qualified and authorised persons (AC 14), both male and female, may be ordained, and may exercise the office of the keys, by proclaiming the gospel, pronouncing the absolution, and administering the sacraments (John 20:21–23; Matt 28:18–20; 1 Cor 11:23–26).

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APPENDIX 1

A Theological Basis for the ordination of Women and Men: Background to the Draft Doctrinal Statement

PREFACE

The 2015 General Convention of the LCA asked the CTICR 'to build on its earlier work regarding the ordination of women and men to develop a draft doctrinal statement for General Pastors Conference and the 19th Convention of Synod that presents a theological basis for the ordination of women and men'. The document that follows is a background paper that provides a more comprehensive biblical and theological rationale for the ordination of both women and men than can be provided in the brief draft doctrinal statement that synod requested. The draft doctrinal statement is now in the form of six brief theses; this is an abridgment of that paper.

A THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN AND MEN: BACKGROUND TO THE DRAFT DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

- 1. Women and men in the public office continue the ministry of the apostles**
Jesus chose twelve men to serve as the original apostles. They represented the new Israel, the recreated community of God's people, the church. The risen Lord commissioned the twelve apostles, who had followed him during his earthly ministry and witnessed the resurrection, to witness to him as Lord and Saviour before the world. As the long promised messianic king, it was necessary that Jesus should be a man. And as the true heirs of the twelve patriarchs and the twelve tribes of ancient Israel, it was understandable that Jesus' chief representatives during the New Testament era were men (Acts 1:21–26). They played a unique foundational role in the history of the Christian church. Their apostleship involved eye witness testimony and personal authorisation by the Lord. But the apostles whom Jesus commissioned died out. The Lutheran church has always understood the public ministry as apostolic, in the sense that it exists to proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments. However, the precedent of the original twelve apostles does not require that only men may be pastors today. These factors cannot be overlooked when understanding why women can be included in the church's ministry today.
- 2. Women as disciples**
Jesus acted in a counter-cultural way by defying many of the customs of his day. Women were accorded a lowly status in Jewish society, so it is little wonder that the twelve disciples were 'astonished' to find Jesus speaking with 'a woman', the Samaritan

woman at the well (John 4:27). Women could not function as priests in the temple, or as leaders of the synagogue. They could not study Torah with a rabbi (teacher). However, Jesus, who was known as a rabbi (John 1:38; 3:2; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8; 20:16), had no hesitation in having Mary sit at his feet in the posture of a disciple (Luke 10:39), just as Paul sat before his teacher Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Likewise, despite first century Jewish custom, Jesus included women among the wider circle of his disciples, as the gospels show.

On one occasion Jesus pointed to his disciples and said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers', a statement that makes little sense if there were no women among them (Matt 12:49,50).

Women were the first to see the risen Lord and the first to announce his resurrection to the other disciples (Matt 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–20; Luke 24:4–10; John 20:1–18). On the morning of Jesus' resurrection when the angels spoke to the women who had come to the tomb to prepare his body for burial, they reminded the women of Jesus' prediction of his crucifixion and resurrection, a conversation that was held with the disciples in private; it was meant for them alone (Luke 24:1–12; 9:18–22; see also 8:1–3). Therefore, that earlier private conversation with the disciples must have included these same women. They belonged to the wider circle of disciples who accompanied him as he healed the sick, dethroned the powers of evil, and proclaimed the coming of the kingdom. As the first witnesses of the resurrection (Matt 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–20; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–18), women were numbered among the broader post-Easter community who were authorised to serve in various ministries in the early church, as is clear from the account of the risen Jesus standing among his followers, pronouncing a word of peace, showing them his pierced hands and feet, calling on them to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations, and telling them to wait in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit (Luke 24: 22–24,36–49; Acts 2:17–21). As disciples of Jesus they were well placed to serve as leaders in the early church's ministries alongside the apostles (Luke 24:13–49; Acts 2:17–21).

Immediately before Jesus parted from his disciples with words of farewell (John 13–17), he offered them the true model of ministry by washing their feet, in the way that a slave washed the feet of household guests (13:1–16). Accordingly, the LCA teaches that 'the office of the ministry is essentially an office of service to the Lord and his Church with the Word and the Sacraments' (TA 6.5). Jesus spoke of himself as a servant who waits on honoured guests at table (Luke 12:37); he is among us 'as one who serves' (Luke 22:27). Women are not excluded from the call to service.

The term 'service' comes to full and final expression with Jesus serving the whole world by emptying himself, taking the form of a slave, and giving his life on the cross, 'a ransom for many' (Phil 2:5–7; Mark 10:45). Jesus called on his disciples to exercise his authority by becoming servants of all—unlike the Gentiles who think that leadership means exercising arbitrary power over others (Mark 10:41–45; Luke 22:24–27). In Mark's gospel the verb that is used to describe Jesus' sacrificial service on the cross (Mark 10:45) is otherwise used only of the angels who served Jesus after his temptation in the wilderness (Mark 1:13) and of the women disciples, as they served the community around Jesus (1:31) and as they served Jesus himself (15:41). This is a vital clue to the intimate connection that Mark draws between Jesus' ministry of service and the ministry of women. They are far more than mere members of his travelling entourage, attending to the men's needs.

3. Ministries of women in the New Testament era

Before giving details of women who provided various forms of spiritual leadership in the New Testament era, it is important to note that the New Testament does not give a

uniform picture of first century ministries. Paul listed apostles, prophets, teachers, miracle workers, and people with the gifts of healing or speaking in tongues, at Corinth, where worship was more explicitly Spirit-led than elsewhere (1 Cor 12:27–31). In Ephesus he wrote of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph 4:11). And slightly later, also addressing the believers in Ephesus, he spelt out the duties of bishops (overseers), deacons, elders, and even an office of widows (1 Tim 3:1–13; 5:3–22). The New Testament picture of ministry and ministries kept changing as new ministries arose to meet new challenges.

When the New Testament speaks about those who exercise oversight within a Christian community and perform tasks that resemble most closely those of pastors today, the terms that are used can be applied equally to men and to women. Such leaders are described as overseers with responsibility for shepherding the church of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:1–4), or as leaders who will have to give an account of their pastoral care for the souls of their people (Heb 13:7,17). In other words, when pastors are pictured in the New Testament, women are not explicitly excluded from the portrait.

The following examples have a direct bearing on the ordination of women, for they show that women were involved in leadership roles both in ancient Israel and in the early church. Already in the Old Testament women are shown serving in leadership roles among the people of God (eg Ex 15:19–21 [Miriam], Judg. 4 and 5 [Deborah], and 2 Kgs 22:14–20 [the prophetess Hulda]). The picture given in the New Testament is telling.

- All four gospels indicate that women were the first witnesses of the resurrection and the first to announce the resurrection to the other disciples (Matt 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–20; Luke 24:4–10; John 20:1–18). In the early church Mary Magdalene, who appears in all four accounts, became known as ‘the apostle to the apostles’.
- The daughters of the evangelist Philip were prophets (Acts 21:9).
- Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, took the lead in teaching ‘the way of God to [Apollos] more accurately’ (Acts 18:26; Rom 16:3).
- Phoebe bore a ministry title—‘a deacon (minister) of the church in Cenchreae’ (Rom. 16:1)—that is more descriptive than any other ministry title in the New Testament. When the word ‘*diakonos*’ is applied to Epaphras and Timothy, it is often translated simply as ‘minister’ (Col 1:7; 1 Tim 4:6). Phoebe was ‘a person set over (or, a person in charge of) many people’ (Rom 16:2). In its form as a verb the word refers to leading and presiding over a worshipping community, the role of a pastor today (1 Thess 5:12,13; 1 Tim 5:17).
- The overwhelming evidence of church history is that Junia, whom St Paul acknowledged as ‘outstanding among the apostles’ (Rom. 16: 7), was a woman. The masculine name ‘Junias’ only started appearing in English translations of the Bible from the late nineteenth century. St John Chrysostom wrote: ‘O how great is the devotion of this woman that she should be counted worthy of the appellation of apostle!’
- Paul said that Euodia and Syntyche ‘struggled beside [him] in the gospel’ (Phil 4:3), a verb suggesting close collaboration in the proclamation of the gospel; and Mary, Traephena and Tryphosa ‘worked hard’ as the people were evangelised and the church was established in Rome (Rom 16:6,12).

So, although there were a variety of models for leadership and a variety of ways of ordering ministry in the early church, these New Testament examples show that in some locations women were included in major leadership and ministry roles. Indeed, the New Testament provides substantial evidence that women were numbered among the apostles (Junia), prophets (the women in Corinth, Philip’s daughters), evangelists (Euodia and Syntyche), church planters (Mary, Traephena and Tryphosa), deacons/ministers (Phoebe) and teachers (Priscilla). These factors play an important

role in helping us to understand why women may become pastors today. In affirming the ordination of women, the LCA would be following the witness and precedent of the New Testament with regard to women in ministry.

4. 1 Timothy 2:11–15 and 1 Corinthians 14:33b–37

1 Timothy 2:11–15

The context for 1 Timothy 2:11–15 is a situation of disorder caused by the promotion of false doctrine by unscrupulous teachers (1 Tim 1:3) who had infiltrated the congregation making members angry and argumentative (2:8; 6:4). Their false teaching seems to have caught on especially among the women (1 Tim 4:7; 2 Tim 3:6,7) and led to idle gossip (5:13), pleasure seeking (5:6,11), and the love of expensive clothes and jewellery (2:9). In response Paul contended that the effective witness of the gospel required that wives regard the home as their proper realm, conduct themselves quietly and reverently, practise subordination, and refrain from teaching or exercising domineering authority over the men of the church (1 Tim 2:9–15).

It is possible that Paul's words about the prior creation of Adam and the deception of Eve rather than Adam (2:13,14) consisted of an attack on the cult of Artemis in Ephesus (Acts 19:21–27), the teaching that the goddess Artemis, source of life and purity, was created before her inferior male consort, who in turn was unfaithful and inherently sinful. The Christian women in Ephesus were especially susceptible to the enticements of the false teachers. But if they had known their place, behaved with decency and decorum, and waited till they were properly instructed in the faith, they would not have been led astray, as Eve was in the beginning. However, it is more likely that Paul was not reacting to the intrusions of the Artemis cult, but simply appealing to a community with its origins in Judaism that took an extremely cautious position regarding women's place in society. To new Christians coming out of a background in the synagogue, Paul's concern for modest and sensible behaviour would have struck a responsive chord (1 Tim 2:9–15).

At Ephesus women were permitted to learn from their menfolk, something that was not permitted in Judaism; but they should pursue their studies quietly (2:11,12). The word 'quietly' is different from the word for silence at 1 Corinthians 14:34, even though few Bible translations differentiate between the two terms. The word used in 1 Timothy does not mean absolute silence, but a respectful and deferential quietness. Also, the verb that is usually translated as 'having authority over' a man appears only here in the New Testament. From wider usage, the word most often refers to aggressive, assertive, or even violent behaviour towards others. Therefore, it has been suggested that Paul was not allowing women to teach in a specific way. Perceptively, Luther followed the Latin Vulgate with its verb 'to dominate', so that his German translation records that the wife is not to lord it over her husband; literally, 'I do not permit a wife to be her husband's lord' (Luther Bible, 1545). Women boisterously bullying their menfolk was what Paul ruled out. Rather, they were to learn quietly (not, in silence) at the feet of a teacher with the possibility of becoming a teacher and leader in their own right when they were ready and the times allowed (2:11; 2 Tim 3:6,7).

Paul's major concern in writing to the young pastor Timothy was that the early believers at Ephesus, having just emerged from their home in Judaism, might make the mistake of completely rejecting some of the non-problematical practices of their former life. Therefore, he advocated nothing but small steps forward, such as allowing women to study the scriptures, quietly and respectfully. But he would have been taking several steps too far if he had also allowed women to play a major leading role in worship, because that had never been the practice in the worship of the synagogue, and as women with no formal training in the scriptures they were too easily led astray by false

teachers. Instead he bent over backwards to prevent the church at Ephesus from the damage caused by breaking too quickly with traditional views and behaviours that had been formed over the years. Paul's caution in moving slowly in implementing the full implications of the gospel is also shown in his willingness to circumcise Timothy, while maintaining that the gospel meant that circumcision counted for nothing (Acts 16:3; Gal 6:15; 1 Cor 7:19).

In similar vein, the formative Lutheran church had to grapple with the issue of which practices of their Catholic heritage they could retain without undermining the gospel. Cautiously, the Reformers appealed to the advice that the apostles gave the fledgling church concerning the practices of Judaism. At the direction of the Holy Spirit and by apostolic decree, the infant church was commanded, among other things, to abstain from eating flesh with blood in it (Acts 15:28,29). Despite the divine authority for the decree, the Reformers concluded that such eating was maintained 'for a time to avoid offence' because 'the chief part of Christian doctrine (the gospel) is not abolished by this decree' (Augsburg Confession 28.66; Kolb and Wengert, 100). As is well known, the practice of abstaining from meat with blood in it lapsed in the Christian church, presumably as it became a burdensome requirement.

The husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2)

It is often said that the ordination of women is ruled out by Paul's ruling that a bishop (overseer), among other requirements, must be 'the husband of one wife' (1 Tim 3:2). However, in the same chapter Paul says that not only a bishop but also a deacon must be the husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:12). Yet the same Paul describes the woman Phoebe as a deacon of the church at Cenchreae (Rom 16:1), a town where apparently the same precautions about women in leadership did not operate. Regulations that applied in one setting did not necessarily apply in another.

1 Corinthians 14:33b–37

The clear proclamation of the gospel and the mission of the church were Paul's primary concerns in his worship regulations for the church at Corinth. The loveless exercise of spiritual gifts and the conduct of some wives at worship were undermining orderly worship. Love, the 'more excellent way' (1 Cor 12:31), was not being practised. Those with the gifts of tongues and prophecy were talking over one another and failing to wait for their prayers and messages to be interpreted (14:26–33). Paul therefore called on them to be silent, and so also the wives (14:28,30,34).

Even though the Greek word for women and wives is the same, Paul is referring specifically to wives when he singles out their behaviour at worship for special mention. The expression 'their own husbands' (1 Cor 14:35) is reserved for the husband-wife relationship (1 Cor 7:2; Eph. 5:22; Tit. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1), and, secondly, the wives were admonished to take up their questions with their husbands at home (1 Cor 14:35). Therefore, Paul cannot have been writing to women in general. The expansion of the church at Corinth, with its origins in the Jewish synagogue (Acts 18:1–11), would have been greatly hindered by the disruptive questions of wives (14:34,35).

'The command of the Lord' (1 Cor 14:37) is Jesus' love command, the new commandment (John 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 3:23; 4:21; 1 Cor 8:1; 12:31; 13:1–13; 14:1), the command that his followers love one another as he has first loved them. The command applies to all the worship regulations in chapters 11–14. Flowing from his great hymn of love in chapter 13, the apostle commences chapter 14 with the command: 'Pursue love'. Love is the yardstick by which all spiritual gifts are measured and the goal of all spiritual gifts. In ancient Corinth the love command was expressed through specific instructions designed to enhance the worship life of the church. The command of the Lord in question in verse 37 is not some secret command that Paul received from the Lord, with the ultimate effect of prohibiting women from being

ordained. Rather, it is the expansive love command that constantly gives rise to fresh initiatives that nurture the church's internal growth and promote its external expansion.

Paul's warning that 'anyone who does not recognise this is not to be recognised' (14:38) applies to those whose disorderly conduct at worship breached the commandment to build up the community in love. Paul may have meant (a) that the worship leader should refuse to acknowledge the disruptive speakers and not let them take their turn in speaking, (b) that their prophetic ministry as such should not be recognised, or even (c) that they should be excluded from the worshipping community. It is unlikely (d) that Paul was speaking of their eternal condemnation (see 1 Cor 3:17). Whatever Paul's threat may have meant, it certainly showed how seriously Paul regarded the loveless conduct that disrupted orderly worship.

From earlier in 1 Corinthians we know that women served as prophets in the church at Corinth (1 Cor 11:5). Prophets had the gift of gospel proclamation and spiritual discernment that built up the church in love and provided encouragement and consolation (14:3–5, 24–33). Prophetic proclamation catechised the church (14:19), called unbelievers and outsiders to account, convicted them of their sin and their need of a saviour, and ultimately led to the praise and worship of God (14:24, 25). After apostles, Paul could speak of no higher office than the prophetic office (1 Cor 12:28, 29; Eph 4:11), which also included women.

It is important to distinguish between prophets, among whom women were included, and the disruptive wives who were to be silent at worship and raise their questions with their husbands in the privacy of the home. Paul bases his appeal on the fact that 'God is a God not of disorder but of peace' (14:33a, 40), existing ecumenical practice (14:33b), the law (14:34), and the word of God (14:36), to put a halt to their unruly behaviour which caused such offence to regular worshippers, to unbelievers and to outsiders (14:22, 23). No indication is given that the specific regulations apply until the coming of Christ in glory. But the essential requirement, that worship be orderly for the sake of the gospel, never becomes dated.

Headship and subordination

Paul's words about headship and subordination have played a major role in the Church's deliberations on the ordination issue. The whole point of the long section on headship at 1 Corinthians 11:2–16 is Paul's insistence that women remain veiled when they offer prayers and proclaim prophetic messages in worship (1 Cor 11:5), because the head covering demonstrated their adherence to God's created order and thereby their authority to engage in the prophetic ministry of the worship assembly (1 Cor 11:10). Alluding to the creation account in Genesis 2, Paul says that 'woman came from man'; that is, Adam was the source of Eve, her 'head' (1 Cor 11:8, 10). To step outside the bounds of creation was understood as shameful and degrading, especially in the setting of worship. Paul's insistence on short hair for men and long hair and a head covering for women when they led in worship belong to the same concern (1 Cor 11:4–6, 14, 15). Paul's point here is to ensure that women kept their heads well covered when they served as prophets in public worship, the second highest office in the New Testament church (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11), not to provide the biblical basis for a teaching about the relationship of men and women.

It is also vital that we take the broader context into consideration when considering the word 'subordination'. All Christians are admonished to be subordinate to one another (Eph 5:21). A wife's subordination to her husband will have his welfare in mind, and a husband's subordination to his wife will be modelled on the self-giving love of Christ (Eph 5:22–33). The word 'subordination' does not suggest a fixed scheme. Otherwise the church would have been at fault in struggling for the abolition of slavery, because Paul calls on slaves to submit to the authority of their masters, using the same language

that he uses in relation to wives and husbands (Eph 6:5; Col 4:1; 1 Pet 2:18). The New Testament writers are speaking of a voluntary submission under others with a given outcome in mind. Wives are called to win their unbelieving husbands to faith in Christ by submitting to their authority (1 Pet 3:1–6). Presumably St Peter would issue similar advice to Christian husbands in relation to their unbelieving wives. Subordination is a Christian virtue, vastly superior to modern forms of egalitarianism, an attitude of heart and mind formed by Christ that regards others as better than oneself and looks to their interests rather than one's own (Phil 2:3–4).

Interestingly, wives are called to be subordinate in the two texts that have been studied most closely in the course of the Church's discussions on ordination (1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11). As has been shown, the verb suggests a voluntary subordination, not by compulsion and not according to a fixed scheme. But in neither text is Paul calling on wives to practise subordination to their husbands. Rather, at Corinth the fact that those with prophetic messages are called to be subordinate to those who interpreted prophecies (1 Cor 14:32) would suggest that the disruptive wives in the following verses are being asked to submit to the rulings of the worship leaders, in an attitude of due deference. And at Ephesus Paul's concern is that everyone submit to the 'the sound teaching that conforms to the glorious gospel' (1 Tim 1:10,11), and that the women especially would adhere to his expectation of modesty in behaviour and dress in keeping with their former life (2:9,10). In other words, strictures that applied in the New Testament era in the domestic realm did not carry over to the realm of the church.

The two texts, 1 Corinthians 14:33b–37 and 1 Timothy 2:11–15 have provided the basis for the LCA's prohibition of the ordination of women (TA 6.11). However, those who advocate the ordination of women agree that neither text speaks directly to the topic of ordination, and neither text contains a command, either of the Lord or of St. Paul, that would prohibit the ordination of women. On the other hand, the point of the texts is as binding as ever, that is, that worship be conducted 'decently and in order' (1 Cor 14:40), so that the gospel can be proclaimed clearly, and the worshipping community built up in faith, hope and love (1 Cor 13:13).

5. Galatians 3:26–28

St. Paul writes: '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 longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus'.

The final phrase in this baptismal formula, 'there is no longer male *and* female', is a reference to Genesis 1:27, to the original creation. Paul here points to the results of the new creation in Christ through baptism. The gospel does not abolish natural distinctions between people of different nationality, class or sex. Rather, it gradually transcends and transforms barriers built by humans that deny our unity as believers, barriers between Jews and Gentiles (Acts 10:1–48; Eph 2:11–22; Gal 2:11–14), between masters and slaves (Phm 16; 1 Cor 7:21–24; see Eph 6:5–9; Col 4:1; 1 Tim 6:1–2), and between males and females. All have the new status of unity and equality before God.

It has been argued that this text only describes our status before God and has no implications for interpersonal and social relationships. However, early Christians could not change whether they were of Jewish or Gentile background, but Paul called on them to embrace each other as equal in honour and standing (Rom 15:7–9; Eph 2:11–22). In terms of slavery, Onesimus may not have ceased to be a slave, but Paul expected Philemon to treat him very differently once he had become a Christian (Phm 15–17). Husbands and wives remained men and women, but their relationships were now determined by the love, respect and mutual submission that they shared as partners in the gospel (Eph 5:21–33).

Even within Galatians chapter 3 it becomes clear that the equal status of Jews and

Gentiles has major relational implications. Galatians 3:26–28 is far more than a statement of faith, as profound as it is in that respect. But it follows soon after Paul's words about his major disagreement with Peter, who failed to practise the truth that the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles had been broken down, by withdrawing from table fellowship with Gentiles when people sent by James came from Jerusalem to visit them in Antioch (Gal 2:11–14). Paul was adamant that Peter and the 'circumcision party' had not acted 'consistently with the truth of the gospel' (2:12,14). Nevertheless, a hard-fought battle about the relationship between Jews and Gentiles reached a God-pleasing conclusion already in the New Testament period, as we know. Much later in history the full implications of the gospel for relations between masters and slaves were taken to heart and acted on. We now live during the period when the church is continuing to implement practices that are consistent 'with the truth of the gospel' in the area of the relationship between male and female. The gospel preached is the gospel lived. Since men and women share a common status as children of God through the gospel, the natural difference between the sexes that has been regarded as having implications for the ordained ministry no longer applies.

6. Lutheran doctrinal foundations

The article of the Augsburg Confession (AC) that deals most clearly with the office of the public ministry (AC 5) teaches: 'To obtain such faith God instituted the office of preaching, giving the gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel. It [the gospel] teaches that we have a gracious God, not through our merit but through Christ's merit, when we believe' (The Book of Concord, Kolb and Wengert, 40). The teaching is set out in some detail in the LCA's Theses on the Office of the Ministry (TA 6), supported by scriptural references.

It is important to note that AC 5 follows immediately after the article titled 'Concerning justification' (AC 4). The whole point and purpose of the divine institution of the public ministry, according to the Confessions, is so that a perpetual office might be established that ensured that people would continue to hear the gospel, receive the sacraments and thereby come to saving faith and be sustained in that faith. In its few lines AC 5 refers to saving faith three times to show that the gospel, proclaimed through the word and administered through the sacraments, is the heart and centre of the ministry. It is the teaching by which the church stands or falls. Even the following article 'Concerning the new obedience' (AC 6) starts with the words: 'It is also taught that such faith should yield good fruit and good works', to ensure that believers would not trust in their good works for salvation, but in Christ. That, in the final analysis, is what the ministry is all about. With its focus on God's institution of the ministry for the creation of faith, AC 5 is silent about the ordering of the ministry, including the sex of the pastor.

This concern for the centrality of faith is reflected in the LCA's selection of texts for inclusion in the rite of ordination. It chose those texts in which Jesus conferred the means of grace on the church: the preaching of the gospel, the announcement of the absolution, and the administration of the sacraments (John 20:21-23; Matt 28:18-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26). By these means, administered through the public office, God ensures that faith is created and sustained and good works are produced. The texts may be applied equally to men and to women.

The Confessions do not understand the ministry as a replication of the apostolic office. The apostles are understood as those who witnessed the risen Lord and were commissioned by him for witness to the world. Since apostleship involved eye witness testimony and personal authorisation, it is noteworthy that the apostles whom Jesus commissioned died out. Their founding ministry was unique; there was no second

generation of apostles. But the apostles appointed those who held a range of offices, such as pastors, elders, evangelists, deacons and teachers. The Lutheran church understands that the public ministry continues the ministry that Jesus began with the apostles, the office of proclaiming the gospel and administering the sacraments (TA 6.6). Pastors speak and act as his personal representatives (Luke 10:16). The fact that the twelve disciples and twelve apostles were male is a fact of history. But, as has been shown, women were included among the wider circle of disciples and among the various offices that arose in the apostolic age. The precedent of the twelve male apostles does not establish a requirement that only men may be ordained as pastors.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As true heirs of the patriarchs and the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve apostles were the recreated people of God, the church. As eyewitnesses of the resurrection, authorised by the risen Lord for the ministry of the gospel, they played a unique foundational role in the history of the church. Lutherans understand the public ministry as apostolic because it exists to proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments. But the precedent of male apostles does not give rise to a requirement for male pastors.

Women were included among the wider circle of Jesus' disciples; he taught them and shared with them the deep mysteries of the faith, and they were present at the major events of his ministry. As such they were well placed to be included among the ministries that arose in many places: as prophets in Corinth and in Caesarea by the Sea (1 Cor 11:5; Acts 21:9), as a deacon (minister) of the church, in Cenchreae (Rom 16:2), as a teacher, in Rome (Acts 18:26; Rom 16:3), as those who 'struggled in the gospel' alongside Paul, in Philippi and Rome (Phil 4:3; Rom 16:3), and as those who 'worked' tirelessly, witnessing to Christ and establishing the church in Rome (Rom 16:6,12). Women were probably also among those who served in an office that more closely resembles today's pastoral office (Acts 20:28,29; Heb 13:7,17; 1 Pet 5:1-4).

Although the gospel transforms people, relationships and communities, in some communities the early church was careful and cautious in its practice so as not to cause undue offence. This is no more apparent than at Ephesus where Paul forbade women from teaching in the church, and admonished them to dress modestly and learn from their teachers with a quiet demeanour. These regulations were understandable in a church with deep roots in Judaism, where women's roles were severely limited.

Paul's regulations regarding the conduct of certain wives at Corinth and the women at Ephesus were driven by his overriding missionary imperative, to 'become all things to all people, so that [he] might by all means save some' (1 Cor 9:22). They were necessary for the time being to avoid offence. In other settings, Rome, Philippi, Cenchreae and Caesarea by the Sea, the same regulations were not in force.

Just as the common standing of all believers before God through baptism has led to a breakthrough in the way that people of Jewish and Gentile background, and masters and slaves, relate to one another, so also our baptismal standing removes those role restrictions that have prohibited women from being ordained (Gal 3:27,28).

Following immediately after the article on salvation before God by grace solely through faith in Christ (AC 4), the Confessions (AC 5) teach that God has instituted the public ministry so that through the gospel and the sacraments he may give the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel. With its three-fold reference to saving faith, AC 5 shows that the gospel is the heart and centre of the ministry. It is the teaching by which the church stands or falls.

God has established the pastoral office to ensure that the spiritual functions of the twelve apostles continue until Christ returns, the ministry of the word and the sacraments, and thereby people are continually brought to and sustained in such saving faith (TA 6:6).

The New Testament does not say that those who hold the office must be male. The Lutheran Confessions do not dogmatise about the ordering of the ministry, including the sex of the minister. The ordination of women is compatible with the doctrine of the ministry as articulated in the Confessions. Strictly speaking, the inclusion of women in the ministry does not require a change to the Confessional Lutheran doctrine of the ministry, but only a change to the LCA's teaching that only men may be ordained (TA 6.11). Therefore, duly called, qualified and authorised women may be ordained alongside their male colleagues and exercise the office of the keys, by proclaiming the gospel, pronouncing the absolution, and administering the sacraments (John 20:21–23; Matt 28:18–20; 1 Cor 11:23–26).

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APPENDIX 2

Engaging with the Draft Doctrinal Statement: Reflection arising from the current teaching of the Lutheran Church of Australia¹

1. The current teaching of the LCA is that women cannot be ordained in the church since it is prohibited in the New Testament (TA 6.11). The draft doctrinal statement proposes a change to this teaching, and this document engages with the draft doctrinal statement in the light of the current teaching of the Church.
2. When the New Testament outlines the qualifications a person needs to be called to the pastoral office, it stresses that a pastor must be 'able to teach' (1 Tim 3:2; 2 Tim 2:24; cf. Tit 1:9). It then prohibits women from doing the kind of authoritative speaking/teaching/ preaching within the divine service that the office requires (1 Cor 14:33b–38; 1 Tim 2:11–15).
3. It has been suggested that the texts used in the LCA's prohibition of women from the office of the ministry refer to women not teaching publicly only in Ephesus or not disrupting worship as part of a broader love command. In fact, the texts themselves give specific reasons for the prohibition that are neither time-bound nor culturally-relative, and therefore still apply today. They tell us that the prohibition is grounded in the headship God gave to men at creation (1 Tim 2:13; cf. 1 Cor 14:34), the consequences of the fall for women (1 Tim 2:14; cf. Gen 3:16), and a command of the Lord (1 Cor 14:36–38). Furthermore, this prohibition applies not only in one local context, but 'in all the churches of the saints' (1 Cor 14:33b).
4. Exegetical opinion about additional reasons Paul may have had for this prohibition can never overturn the reasons he clearly articulates for us in Scripture. It has been argued that Paul was concerned about the women in Corinth speaking in a disruptive manner, or about avoiding offence in a mainly Jewish culture, which would have violated the law of love and hindered the mission of the Gospel. Paul says little about any of this in the immediate context.² Even if it were shown that there is some truth to them, that would

¹ In consultation with the College of Bishops this paper has been written in response to feedback from the LCA-wide consultations. The bishops asked the CTICR to 'engage the current teaching of the church with the DDS' in preparation for General Convention. This statement does not express the position of some members of the Commission.

² Neither of these reasons are mentioned at all in 1 Timothy 2. With 1 Corinthians 14 the situation is more complex. Earlier in the chapter Paul addresses disruptive speech by tongue speakers and prophets, and asks them to speak in an orderly manner. Yet when he addresses the women he says nothing about disruptive speech. Instead, he says they should not speak at all, since 'it is shameful for a woman to speak in church'. Given that he does not spell this out further, this could mean 'shameful in God's sight', or 'shameful according to cultural norms', or both. Even if it only means shameful according to cultural norms and not shameful before God, this is a slender basis on which to build an entire case, and does not nullify the other reasons Paul gives for this prohibition.

not nullify the reasons Paul spells out for us in Scripture.

5. The case for the male only pastorate hinges on the two passages (1 Cor 14:33b–38 and 1 Tim 2:11–15) that speak directly and unambiguously to this issue. Yet, these texts do not stand alone without broader scriptural support. Instead, they find support from all of the following:
 - The example of Jesus, who chose only men to be his Apostles.
 - The example of Peter, who insisted that the replacement for Judas had to be one of the men who had followed Jesus, not one of the women (Acts 1:21).³
 - The parallel between the male only pastorate in the New Testament and the male only priesthood in the Old Testament, the two groups of people chosen by God to preside over the worship life of his people.
 - The parallel between the male only pastorate and the spiritual headship of husbands and fathers within their families (Eph 5:21–6:4; cf. Col 3:18–19; 1 Pet 3:1–7; Tit 2:3–5).
 - Paul’s insistence that a pastor must be ‘husband of one wife’ (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6).
 - Paul’s description of pastors as spiritual fathers to the church (1 Cor 4:15; Phm 10; Gal 4:19; 1 Tim 3:4–5).

Having said this, even if 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 did stand alone, they still stand, since they are part of God’s authoritative word. A teaching does not need to be reiterated several times in Scripture before it becomes authoritative. For example, the third and seventh petitions of the Lord’s Prayer are only taught once (Matt 6:10, 13), and Baptism is only commanded once (Matt 28:19).

6. The New Testament’s endorsement of the male-only pastorate is not a reflection of Jewish or Greco-Roman cultural norms. Instead, it is part of the Bible’s teaching on servant headship. It does not give men arbitrary power over women, or pastors arbitrary power over laypeople, but is a call by God to use the authority of Christ’s word to serve in a sacrificial, Christ-like way (Matt 20:20–28; 1 Pet 5:3; 2 Cor 1:24; 4:5; 2 Tim 1:8; 2:3; cf. Eph 5:22–33a). This call to spiritual responsibility and Christ-like service is counter-cultural in every age.
7. The unity and equal share in God’s kingdom that all Christians enjoy by virtue of our baptism into Christ (Gal 3:27–29) should eliminate prejudice or partiality that is based on human criteria (James 2:1–9; Rom 2:11; Gal 2:11–14; Eph. 6:9; Col 4:1; Phm 16; 1 Cor 7:17–23). However, it does not eliminate distinctions between believers with regard to our earthly vocations that are ordered by God’s word (see for example the 4th Commandment and the Table of Duties in the Lutheran Catechisms).⁴ The Bible does not treat the office of the ministry as something that is open to all Christians by virtue of our common baptism, but as something to which Christ calls specific, duly qualified individuals (1 Tim 3:1–7; Tit 1:5–9). And one of the biblical qualifications is that these individuals must be men.
8. The New Testament’s teaching that only men can serve as pastors does not mean that only men can be involved in Christian ministry, as if laypeople are prohibited from sharing the Gospel or engaging in other forms of ministry. The examples we find in the

³ The Greek word that is used here is *andrōn* (which means men as opposed to women) and not *anthrōpōn* (which can be used generically for either men or women).

⁴ Note also how Paul goes straight from talking about the baptismal unity of all believers within the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12–13), to talking about this body as something that is made up of many different yet complementary members (1 Cor 12:14–31). Likewise, the Apostle Peter says in one breath that Christian women should be subordinate to their husbands (1 Pet 3:1–6), and in the next breath that they are joint heirs with their believing husbands in the grace of life (1 Pet 3:7). There is no conflict between the two, since our standing in God’s sight is not determined by the works we do in vocation, nor is it impaired by how humble our vocations may be in worldly eyes.

New Testament of women who shared the Gospel (Mary Magdalene in John 20:17–18), prophesied (Philip’s daughters in Acts 21:9),⁵ engaged in Christian service (Phoebe in Rom 16:1–2), or taught God’s word outside of public worship (Priscilla in Acts 18:26), should encourage Christian women today to use their God-given gifts in the service of God’s kingdom. Yet these examples do not warrant the conclusion that women can be ordained, since it cannot be demonstrated that any women in the New Testament era served as pastors or in any equivalent role.

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⁵ The meaning of ‘speaking in the churches’ is clarified by the context. Paul distinguishes this kind of speaking from ‘speaking in tongues’ (1 Cor 14:27,28) and the ‘speaking’ of prophecy (1 Cor 14:29,30).