

Women in the Teaching Ministry

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“Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.” So states the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. As of today, this amendment needs to be ratified by only four more states in order to become the law of the land. If adopted, NOW, the National Organization for Women, one of its chief sponsors, will be able to chalk up another victory in its relentless drive to place women on an equal plane with men and to eliminate all distinctions between them so far as this is humanly possible.

Without question the issue of the role and rights of women is one of the burning questions of our day. Since the early 60's a vocal and well-organized women's liberation movement has successfully promoted the passage of new women's rights legislation and the reinterpretation of existing laws in this direction.

The effects on the social, political, economic, and family life of our nation have been far-reaching. Employers have had to change their policies and practices so as to give women equal pay and equal opportunity with men. Schools have had to change their enrollment policies, their physical and scholarship programs, their procedures in hiring and promoting teachers. Even the Supreme Court decision legalizing non-therapeutic abortion was a direct result of the propaganda and pressure of the new feminism.

But women's lib is also reaching into the church. A battle over the ordination of women is shaping up in the Episcopal Church, where several women have now been ordained by bishops sympathetic to their cause. The Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church, two of the largest Lutheran bodies in the United States, have declared that they find no reason to refuse ordination to women, and they now have a number of women pastors on their clergy rosters. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has till now resisted the pressure to ordain women, but it has abandoned its former stand against woman's suffrage in the church.

No doubt about it – the feminist movement is making waves, and our Synod, too, has felt the effects. In its recent 43rd biennial convention the Synod revised its salary scale for women teachers in response to pressure brought to bear on it by the Department of Labor, although, as a matter of principle, it refused to concede the government's right to determine or regulate the salaries paid by religious bodies to their called ministry. In his Newsletter of March 27, 1975, President Oscar J. Naumann warned that if some such schedule is not followed by self-supporting congregations which have Christian day schools, they “may find themselves in difficulty with the DOL.” “Remember,” he said, “we are under investigation, and there is little hope that if we close our eyes it will go away.”

It was our Synod's conviction that in the matter of salaries we are not being asked by the government to violate scriptural principles. A warning that the time may come, however, when we will be confronted with just such a demand was issued by Professor Carleton Toppe in an editorial in the July 27, 1975, issue of *The Northwestern Lutheran*. Professor Toppe writes: “Given a U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare determined to impose its concept of equal rights and equal opportunity on the citizenry of this country, a confrontation between the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and this government bureau regarding the ordination of women seems almost inevitable” (p. 241).

In such a climate it is well for us to discuss the subject assigned for this essay, “Women in the Teaching Ministry.” We shall turn our attention first of all to the scriptural principles involved in this topic and then to a number of practical questions that your program committee has raised. The discussion period which is to follow will offer opportunity, I am sure, to consider additional questions.

I. Scriptural Principles

We shall begin by emphasizing that the women who teach in our Synod's schools are in the ministry. They are serving in the public ministry of the Word. They have a divine call to teach the children committed to their care. Romans 10:15 teaches the necessity of such a call. It says, "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession states therefore that "no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called" (*Trig.*, p. 49).

Jesus has given His church no other task in this world but to preach and teach His Gospel (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16). To enable it to carry out this important work more effectively He established the office of the public ministry (Eph. 4:11,12; I Cor. 12:28). The word "public" in this expression indicates that this ministry is not undertaken on one's own initiative but that the teaching and preaching is done in the name and on behalf of the church by those who have been called to do this as the representatives of their fellow Christians. The Scriptures prescribe the qualifications for the office of the public ministry (I Tim. 3:1-12; Tit. 1:7-9) and assure us that Christ has given and continues to give His Church ministers of various kinds, including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and others (Eph. 4:11,12; I Cor. 12:28). Paul reminded the elders of the congregation in Ephesus that they had received their office from God when he told them, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" (Acts 20:28).

From the Scriptures we see that women, too, served the church in various types of ministry. Acts 21:9 tells us that Philip, the evangelist, had four daughters who prophesied, that is, preached the Word of God. In Romans 16:1,2 Paul warmly commends Phoebe to the congregation at Rome, informing them that she was a servant or deaconess of the church at Cenchrea and that she had been a great help to many people, including Paul himself. In that same chapter he greets Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, as a co-worker of his (v. 3) and mentions a certain Mary (v. 6) and two women by the name of Tryphena and Tryphosa (v. 12), whom he praises for their hard work in the Lord's service. In Philippians 4:2,3 he names Euodias and Syntyche as women who labored with him in the Gospel. In I Corinthians 11 he instructs women to cover their heads when praying or prophesying. The whole context makes it clear that he is speaking about praying or prophesying in public, not in the privacy of the home.

The prophet Joel foretold that the gift of prophecy would be given to women as well as to men when he wrote the words which Peter cited in his sermon on the first Pentecost: "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17,18; cf. Joel 2:28,29).

The women who teach in our Christian schools are included in the fulfillment of this prophecy. When they explain the Word of God to the children in their classrooms and help them to apply it to their lives, they are prophesying in the scriptural sense of the term. (You will recall that when Jesus says, "Beware of false prophets" [Mt. 7:15], He is warning not only against those who falsely claim to be able to foretell the future, but against false teachers of all kinds who claim to be teaching the Word of God.)

Why is it then that we are so strongly opposed to the ordination of women? Don't we usually have an induction ceremony for our women teachers? What is the difference between ordination and induction, and how do these two ceremonies differ from an installation?

In answering these questions, we must remember, first of all, that ordination is merely a custom of the church, not a divinely commanded rite. It is a ceremony in which public testimony is given to the fact that a person has been properly called by the church and that he has accepted the call. He is reminded of the responsibilities of his office and of God's gracious promises to help him in his work. With the laying on of hands and prayer the blessings of the Holy Spirit are invoked.

As far as the nature of the ceremony is concerned, there is no essential difference between ordination, installation, and induction. The only difference lies in the use we make of these three terms. We reserve the word "ordination" for the first time a pastor is installed into office. Any subsequent installation when a pastor has accepted another call is simply called an "installation." This term is applied also to the ceremony by which a male teacher is inducted into office. "Induction," the third term, is a name for the ceremony by which a female

teacher or a person with a provisional call, such as a tutor or an assistant instructor in one of our synodical schools, is formally and publicly installed.

As was mentioned, there is no real difference between these ceremonies. Different terms are used merely to indicate that there is a difference in the scope of the work and the responsibility in these various offices. The scope of the work is outlined in the call. A pastor is called to minister to the whole congregation, a teacher principally to the children in the school. Pastors and male teachers also have the privilege and responsibility of voting membership in the Synod. Female teachers do not become voting members of the Synod, just as they do not become voting members of the congregation.

We do not call women to serve as pastors, and therefore we do not ordain them. The reason for this, like the reason for not having woman's suffrage in the church, lies in the relationship which God has from creation established between men and women.

Paul refers to this relationship, the so-called order of creation, in I Corinthians 11, a passage in which, as was mentioned above, he instructs women to cover their heads when praying or prophesying. He writes: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (v. 3). A man is to recognize Christ as his head. So also a woman is to recognize the man as her head. In His wisdom God has established a certain order in society. This is for the welfare of mankind. God expressed His will concerning this order, or arrangement or plan for human society in the very act of creation. Paul points this out when he says, "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man" (v. 8).

From the story in Genesis we recall that in creating man God first of all created Adam, a male human being, forming his body out of the dust of the ground and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. Subsequently, on that same sixth day of creation, God created a woman by taking a rib from Adam's side and using this to form her body. Adam recognized where she had come from and said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man" (Gen. 2:23).

God, we note, did not create the man and the woman simultaneously, forming the bodies of both of them out of the dust of the ground, as He easily could have done. That would have indicated that they were independent and co-equal as human beings. By deriving the woman from the man He had previously created God was giving expression to the principle, as Paul explains, that "the head of the woman is the man."

That man is to exercise the headship or leadership in human affairs is evident also, according to Paul, from a second feature in the story of their creation: "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (v. 9). God expressed His intention and will concerning woman's status or place in life when He planned her creation. He said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18).

God recognized that for man's welfare in his life here in this world he needed a helper, a partner, not only in order to propagate the human race, but for the whole range of human activity. So He created the woman "for him," a phrase the Paul stresses. Woman was not created to be man's superior, nor even his equal, but his assistant. The words "meet for him" mean literally "as his counterpart." Woman was not to be an inferior kind of creature like the animals. She was to be a human being, like man in every respect, though sexually different. She was to correspond to him physically, mentally, and spiritually. He was, however, to be her head, and she was to be his subordinate. To be subordinate is not the same as to be inferior. Children are to be subordinate and obedient to their parents, but that does not mean that they are inferior creatures of God. They are human beings redeemed with the precious blood of Christ that they might live with Him eternally. So also the woman as she was created by God was in every sense of the word a human being, a creature with whom God desired to have fellowship through all eternity. To enable her to fulfill her God-ordained role in life as man's counterpart and subordinate, God endowed her with the physical and psychological characteristics necessary to complement man. In comparison with man she is, however, in the words of Peter, "the weaker vessel" (I Pet. 3:7).

Since the custom of those times that women wore a veil when they appeared in public served appropriately to reflect and symbolize the God-intended relationship between men and women, Paul admonished the Christian women of Corinth to observe this custom when they were praying or prophesying in public. This was a matter of propriety in view of the local customs of that time. That is clear from his remark:

"Judge in yourselves: is it comely, [that is, proper] that a woman pray unto God uncovered?" (v. 13). At other times and in other places different customs might prevail, but for a Christian woman in Corinth to appear in public without a veil would be considered immodest and would be interpreted as an act of rebellion against God and His order of creation. It would be understood as indicating a desire on her part to step out of the subordinate role into which God had placed her by making her a woman. Everyone would construe her actions as a kind of declaration of independence, a sort of women's lib protest.

Such a rebellious spirit and such an immodest, independent attitude would bring nothing but shame and disgrace on such a woman. Everyone knows what beautiful hair means to a woman. It is her glory (v. 15). A woman who disgraces herself by praying or prophesying without the customary veil might as well go all the way, Paul says, and cut off all her hair and shave her head.

That a man, according to the prevailing custom, did not wear a covering on his head when he appeared in public aptly served to reflect the fact, according to Paul, that he was created in the image of God. He was a reflection of God's glory. Though he lost that image through the Fall into sin, God provided a way to restore that image through His Son Jesus Christ. Of course, the woman was also originally created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) but since she was created from man, she reflects God's glory only indirectly. "The woman," Paul says, "is the glory of the man" (v. 7). Having been taken "out of man," as Adam declared, she received from the man the noble characteristics of body, mind, and spirit which God had previously given to him.

The order of creation of which Paul has been speaking applies only to life in this world. In their standing before God, men and women are equal. The God-ordained male/female, head/helper relationship has no bearing on their status in the eyes of the Lord. Paul writes, "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (v. 11).

In the sight of God both men and women are by nature miserable sinners deserving nothing but eternal condemnation. By faith in Christ Jesus, the Savior from sin, both are, however, equally the children of God. Neither has an advantage in this respect, nor is either one excluded. In Galatians 3:28 Paul writes, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." The Apostle Peter likewise reminds husbands that they are heirs together with their wives "of the grace of life" (I Pet. 3:7). In the order of redemption there is no distinction.

God, the Creator, made man male and female. He created the woman out of the bone which He had taken from man, and He determined that in the future man was to be born of a woman. All of this is "of God," as Paul emphasizes (v. 12). He established this interlocking relationship of the sexes.

It may be well to explain at this point that I Corinthians 11 is not setting up a dress code for Christians to follow till Judgment Day. The New Testament does not impose such regulations on us as the Law of Moses imposed on the Jews (Num. 15:38,39). The Law of Moses has been fulfilled by Christ. It is now abrogated (Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:1-11; 5:1; Col. 2:16,27). The only law that still speaks to us in New Testament times is the moral law, the holy, immutable will of God, which was inscribed by God originally in the hearts of all men, and which is repeated in the New Testament (Rom. 13:8-10).

Why then does Paul insist that the Christian women of Corinth wear a veil when they pray or prophesy? His sole interest is to uphold the moral principles of modesty and of God's order of creation that "the head of the woman is the man." Since disregarding the customs of the time with respect to the wearing of a veil would be considered immodest and construed as contempt for God's order of creation, Paul admonishes the women to conform to this custom. If, however, it is the custom for women to go without a veil in public, as it is among us, and if no contempt for God's order of creation or immodesty is manifested by such a practice, women may go to church without a veil or hat, and they need have no bad conscience about it. Wearing a hat in church is not a part of the moral law. The Augsburg Confession therefore says, "No one will say that a woman sins who goes out in public with her head uncovered, provided only that no offense be given" (Art. XXVIII, 56. *Trig.*, p. 91).¹

Wearing a hat or being circumcised or not eating pork are what we call adiaphora, matters which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word. It is obvious, of course, that a Christian will not dress immodestly or indecently. Modesty and decency are required by the moral law. They belong to the Sixth Commandment.

Paul's concern for the moral principle that according to God's order of creation women are to be subject to men is evident also in chapter 14 of his First Epistle to the Corinthians. There he writes, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (vv. 34,35).

Paul emphasizes that women "are commanded to be under obedience." They are not to seek equality with men. On the contrary, they are to be subject to the men. This, Paul says, is commanded in the law. The word "law" here refers to the Old Testament. In our discussion of chapter 11 we saw that Paul has in mind the creation account in the Book of Genesis. He will elaborate on this, as we shall see later, in I Timothy 2. In our present context, however, he underscores the fact that the subjection of the women to the men is the will of God by adding in verse 37 that the things he is writing "are the commandments of the Lord."

Again we need to remember that the New Testament does not set down any ceremonial regulations. It does not prescribe to us how we are to conduct our services, except for the fact that we are to observe the principles of the moral law in our worship just as at other times and places. This means that we will conduct our services "decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40). It means also that we will not overthrow God's order of creation when we meet together with our fellow Christians for worship or to conduct the work of the church.

That is why Paul insists that women are to remain silent in the churches. "It is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience."

Notice that Paul makes a contrast here between speaking and being under obedience. This indicates that not all speaking is forbidden, but only that kind of speaking which conflicts with the principle that women are to be subordinate to men. Any speaking which does not undermine or overthrow the God-ordained relationship between men and women is not prohibited.

When, for example, women join the men in congregational singing, or in confessing the Creed, or in reading a Psalm responsively, or in praying the Lord's Prayer in unison, they are not overthrowing the order of creation. It is also obvious that the will of God as expressed in His order of creation is not being disobeyed when a woman who has received the gift of being able to teach or to pray uses that gift among children in a school or in an assembly of women.

The order of creation is not necessarily overthrown either if a woman is asked to exercise the gift God has given her in a group of men or a mixed gathering of men and women when no man is present who is able to teach or preach or pray. Such cases will naturally be exceptional and rather rare, but the passage from I Corinthians 11, which we discussed a few moments ago, actually assumed such a situation and instructed the women to respect God's order of creation also under such circumstances. Their speaking in such a situation is not a case of exercising authority over men but of rendering a service at the request of the men. Humbly they will put the gift the Lord has given them at the disposal of the church, including the men, in a submissive spirit of Christian service. It is a similar matter when a woman is asked to play the organ or direct the choir. If she has this ability and no man is able or willing to do it, she will gladly render this service in all humility; and the order of creation is not subverted by her cooperation.

Such situations are similar to that of a husband who asks his wife to handle the checkbook because he recognizes that she can do it better than he can. Such an arrangement is no violation of the command that the wife is to be in subjection to her husband.

Speaking is not then in itself an act of exercising authority over men. When Paul here commands the women "to be under obedience," he uses the same verb that he uses in Colossians 3:18 where he admonishes wives to submit themselves to their husbands, and that Peter uses in I Peter 3:1 to express the same thought. Nowhere does Scripture suggest that wives are not permitted to speak in the home. Christian wives will, however, in their speaking always be mindful that "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church" (Eph. 5:23).

What I Corinthians 14 forbids then is not speaking as such on the part of women in an assembly of men, but speaking which violates the order of creation. Women are not to step out of their subordinate role and assume leadership in the church. Neither are they to be placed on an equal level with men. Whatever activity has

this implication is displeasing to God and morally wrong. Christian women will not therefore enter into discussions with men as equals, debate issues with them, or participate in the decision-making process of the church by their vote. They will not demand such privileges; neither will the men in a Christian congregation grant them to them. The men, in fact, do not have the authority to grant any privileges which set aside the order of creation.

That under certain, special circumstances the men may wish to hear the ideas of the women before making a decision is not, of course, excluded. But such occasions will always remain the exception and not become the rule. We might compare them to the case of a husband who asks his wife's opinion before he takes a new job.

A Christian woman will always want to be conscious of her station in life as a woman. If men are present who can speak, she will out of deference to them generally remain silent in an assembly of the church. But if no men are present who are capable of praying or teaching, she will willingly serve with her God-given gifts in a God-pleasing way by showing her respect at all times for God's order of creation. Whatever speaking she does will be in keeping with her position and in a spirit of helpful service.²

It is clear, therefore, that Paul's words are not to be applied mechanically or legalistically. The important thing is that neither the men nor the women unconsciously overlook or deliberately overthrow the order of creation. That would be done if women were ordained as pastors or if they were given voice and vote in meetings of the congregation as a matter of policy. The order of creation, which applies in all areas of life and in all facets of society, ought especially to be observed by the church when it is at worship or at work.

Paul takes up this matter yet a third time in I Timothy 2. There we read: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (vv. 11-14).

Again we note that Paul's emphasis throughout is on the divinely instituted natural order between men and women. The woman is to be in subjection to the man. That is why she is to learn in silence. That is why she is not permitted to teach men. She is not "to usurp authority over the man." The word which is translated in the King James Version "to usurp authority over" means literally "to exercise authority over, to have full power over, to domineer over." For women to have such a position over men is contrary to the will of God. Man, not woman, was created by God for the role of leadership. If the men are not able to exercise such leadership,, however, a woman who has such ability may and should, of course, as was mentioned, put her gifts into the service of the Lord.

Again Paul makes reference to the story of creation. We see that this is basic for an understanding of the principle that is involved. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve," Paul writes. The very order in which God created the man and the woman expressed His will concerning their relationship. Man's priority in creation is indicative of man's primacy in human affairs. This was God's design. This is the natural order. From the very beginning God wisely established a male/female hierarchy in society for the welfare of the human race. It was an act of rebellion against God's order of creation on Eve's part when she seized the initiative and ate of the forbidden tree. Paul alludes to this tragic event in human history when he writes, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." The point here is not the relative guilt of the two, but the fact that the woman acted in a role for which God had not equipped her. She was deceived by the devil. Adam was not deceived. In spite of this, however, Adam meekly submitted to his wife's ill-conceived and illegitimate seizure of the reins of leadership. With his eyes open he deliberately followed her into the ugly and destructive paths of sin.

When God confronted Adam and Eve with their sin, He graciously promised them a Savior. But at the same time He reiterated and reemphasized His holy will regarding their relationship. The man is to take the leadership role for which he was created, and the woman is to be subordinate to him. To the woman God said, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:15). As a result of sin, man's rule has often been harsh. Consequently, the New Testament repeatedly emphasizes that the husband is to love his wife (Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19). God has not placed His stamp of approval on the tyranny of men over women.

At the same time, however, the New Testament admonishes wives to be obedient to their husbands: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" (Eph. 5:22,23); "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord" (Col. 3:18); "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands....For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands; even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord" (I Pet. 3:1,5,6; cf. also Tit. 2:5).

In addressing Adam after the Fall God expressly pointed out to him that he had sinned, in abdicating his God-given position as the head of his wife and acquiescing in her insubordination: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. 3:17). Man's sweat and sorrow in making a living are to be a continual reminder to him of the position of leadership God has ordained for him and the evil consequences of failing to measure up to this responsibility.

Paul's words, "I suffer not a woman to teach," are not to be taken absolutely. This is clear from the addition of the qualifying phrase, "Nor to usurp authority over the man." He does not exclude her from all teaching, but only from that which would involve exercising authority over men. Paul himself expressly instructs the aged women to be "teachers of good things," teaching "the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Tit. 2:3-5). A woman may, therefore, very properly conduct the devotions for a women's organization in the church. She may also teach a Bible class for women. But the prohibition that she is not to exercise authority over men clearly excludes her from becoming the pastor of a congregation. And for that reason, as was previously explained, we do not ordain woman.³

Obviously, God's order and arrangement are not overturned either when women teach children or young people. Timothy learned the holy Scriptures from his childhood (II Tim. 3:15) at the feet of his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice (II Tim. 1:5). The church may, therefore, utilize the special gifts which God has given women for teaching children by calling them into the teaching ministry. It may establish schools and colleges to train women for this specialized form of the ministry by helping them to develop the innate characteristics and natural talents God has given them for this God-pleasing work. We thank God for the many consecrated women who have unselfishly dedicated their lives to serving the Lord by teaching the children of the church the truths of salvation. May the Holy Spirit continue to enrich the church with the gift of such faithful laborers in the teaching ministry! Although their service may not be highly esteemed in the world, their reward will be great in heaven.

It is self-evident that just as men are to be witnesses for Christ in their daily lives, so also women are to confess their faith in private Christian testimony. Jesus words, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32), apply also to women. The instruction which Priscilla, together with her husband, Aquila, gave to Apollos is an example of such private Christian testimony (Acts 18:24-26).

Radical advocates of women's lib brush aside the clear statements of Scripture on the status of women with the charge that such teachings are antiquated and archaic. One feminist states: "I think that the pastoral commentary of Paul comes off to the modern women as prehistoric. You know, women should be silent in church, women should cover their heads in church, the man is the head of the family, the woman must be obedient to her husband. All of those things have to be seen in the context of history. After all, Paul was not married, and it was a patriarchal society in which he lived."⁴ Obviously, this writer considers the writings of Paul to be nothing more than the personal views of a first century misogynist.

Perhaps you have heard of those extremists who want to rewrite the Bible and eliminate all the masculine references to God. Names such as Father, Son, King, and Lord are said to be sexist. What could be more blasphemous than such a charge? The feminists' rebellion against God's order of creation is exposed for what it really is – rebellion against God Himself. God keep us faithful to His holy Word!

II. Practical Applications

How do the scriptural principles which we have learned now apply to practical situations that confront us as a result of calling women into the teaching ministry? If we keep in mind the basic fact that women are not to exercise authority over men, I don't think we will have a great deal of difficulty in making the proper God-pleasing application in the various situations that arise. We take a look first of all at the voice women may have in the affairs at school.

May a woman teacher participate in faculty meetings? Since according to Scripture women may teach children, it is obvious that they will need to participate in the discussions with their fellow teachers which are necessary to carry on the educational program. Consultation and cooperation among the teachers are essential. It would be not only foolish but impossible to try to operate a school without hearing the opinions and suggestions of the women teachers, especially with respect to their classes and their work. Information and reports from the women members of the faculty will be needed in order to make many decisions.

During my ministry I have had the privilege of serving several congregations with Christian day schools. I regularly attended the faculty meetings. It has been my experience that the women teachers in those meetings were mindful of and respected God's order of creation. That was evident in the way they conducted themselves and in the spirit they manifested when they spoke. They recognized the leadership of the men who were present.

In some congregations women teachers are expected to attend the meetings of the school board, while in others they attend only when a matter is to be discussed in which they are personally involved. If their presence is requested, it is for the purpose of giving information or advice in matters directly related to their work. The decisions are generally made by the school board, which is the body to which the congregation has entrusted the supervision of the school.

A related subject is the question of women's participation in teachers' conferences such as this one. Just as faculty meetings are necessary on the local level, so conferences which offer an opportunity for joint consultation by those who are engaged in teaching the children of the church are important on an area level. At such conferences experienced, veteran teachers are able to counsel, instruct, and help their younger colleagues. Sectional meetings particularly give the newer teachers an opportunity to benefit from the experience of the veterans. Women teaching Kindergarten or the primary grades, for example, will meet to discuss common problems.

I have attended a great many teachers conferences, and it has been my observation that in joint meetings of the men and the women, the women have generally deferred in the discussion to the men who were present. Very often it was only on request that a woman would speak in an open meeting. I am sure this is because the women are conscious of the scriptural teaching concerning the order of creation and are observing it. When they do speak, it is in the spirit of God's order, recognizing their subordinate status. The contributions they make are made for the purpose of rendering a helpful service, not from a desire to exercise authority over men.

It is true that such mixed conferences might tempt one or another woman to step out of her proper place. If that should happen, the presiding officer would be obliged to give a tactful reminder concerning God's will and order. The mere fact that this might happen is not sufficient reason to discontinue such conferences, however, any more than the fact that a wife might on occasion be tempted to lord it over her husband is a reason to discontinue marriage. The choice of a man as the presiding officer of the conference is further evidence that God's order of creation is understood and respected.

In this entire question it is important to remember that the thrust of the New Testament passages is not to set down rules and regulations for the conducting of meetings but to uphold the order of creation. They do not impose absolute silence on women but require a recognition of the divinely established leadership role of the men and the subordinate status of the women. When this is recognized and respected, Christian men and women will find ways to carry on the Lord's work in a God-pleasing manner within this framework.

Some of our women teachers may also be involved in the ministry by serving as Sunday school teachers. What has been said about the meetings of a Christian day school faculty applies also the meetings of a Sunday school staff. The usual procedure, to my knowledge, is that the pastor or perhaps the principal of the Christian

day school conducts such meetings. The fact that they are conducted by a man will help to assure that the order of creation is respected in the discussions.

The second question that was raised concerns workloads. I suppose that in connection with our topic the question actually concerns the relative workloads of the men and the women on a school faculty, especially in the area of special duties in addition to the regular teaching assignment. Such additional duties are usually mentioned in the call. Frequently a male teacher may have a greater workload than a female teacher. He may have the administrative duties of the principalship, or supervise the athletic program or the youth group, or be responsible for the organ and choir work. Some of these responsibilities may, of course, be assigned to a female teacher.

It happens at times that a congregation begins a new program such as a youth choir and then, after considering the talents of its workers, asks one of the teachers to assume this additional responsibility. If the teacher has the ability and the time, he or she will look on this request as an opportunity for added service in the Lord's kingdom. He or she will not refuse with the argument, "It's not in my call." If a teacher, however, actually feels that he or she cannot take on an added responsibility, the congregation should frankly be told. A Christian congregation will not be unreasonable if an honest and complete explanation is given of the reasons for declining such a request.

A Christian teacher is in the public ministry, and the public ministry is not a secular job. It is a calling. It is a minister, that is, a service one is privileged to render to the Lord and to His church. A person who has the proper concept of his office will gladly devote his whole life and energy to this work. He will say with the Apostle Paul, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you" (II Cor. 12:15). His talents and training will be employed for the benefit of the congregation, for "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (I Cor. 12:7). He will serve in the spirit of Paul, who said, "The love of Christ constraineth us" (II Cor. 5:14), and, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel" (I Cor. 9:16).

In normal situations the work of the teaching ministry is a full-time occupation. A teacher who has been called to serve the congregation with all his strength and energy will not then take on a secular part-time job, at least not without the consent of those who have called him to serve them. Moonlighting almost inevitably leads to conflicts of interest. The teacher who hurries out of school at 3:30 to get to her job as a clerk in the dime store may soon be excusing herself from faculty meetings, or not giving a slow learner the help he needs after school, or not making herself available for consultation with the parents of a problem child.

Normally a teacher is called to serve the congregation twelve months out of the year, except for vacation time. Some congregations may call a woman for only ten months of service. Our Synod has repeatedly discouraged this practice and urged congregations to utilize the services of a woman teacher in the summer for such work as teaching Sunday school and vacation Bible school, playing the organ, making home visits, attending summer school, and preparing for the coming school year. Female teachers who are married may be able to render less service to the congregation than those who are unmarried, especially if they have a family.

Christian teachers will not think of their work as an eight hour job and resent it if additional time and service are required beyond that in the classroom. It is self-evident, for example, that the teachers will faithfully attend the services, the Bible class, and the meetings of organizations in the congregation. They will want to set an example in this for the rest of the members. Their presence and interest will be an encouragement to others. Christian teachers will remember that they are privileged to serve in the highest calling that life has to offer, the Christian ministry. In the world the attitude often prevails that a worker is unwilling to do anything extra unless he is paid for it. A conscientious and dedicated Christian teacher will cheerfully render extra service without extra pay.

This brings us naturally to the question of salary. A congregation has the obligation to pay its workers a living wage. In I Corinthians 9:14 Paul writes, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." This does not mean that the servants of the church should receive a salary equivalent to that of the most prosperous members of the congregation, but neither should they be salaried on the level of the poorest members. Scripture says, "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:6).

Those who dedicate their lives to the Gospel ministry do not enter the work of the church for the sake of the financial rewards such a career offers. Their motive is their love for the Lord and the desire to serve Him in His kingdom. They know that their income will not be equal to that of professional people in the world. They realize that the salary scale in the public school system is also substantially higher than in the church. They are mindful also of the Bible's warnings that a servant of the Lord is not to be covetous or greedy of filthy lucre (I Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7).

Scripture also says, however, that "the laborer is worthy of his reward" (I Tim. 5:18). A resolution adopted by our Synod this past summer states, "There is nothing in Holy Scripture that militates against the principle of equal pay for equal work" (p. R. 40). Fairness would certainly support this principle. For this reason in our Synod's salary scale the base salary is the same for men and women teachers. Beginning January 1, 1976, fringe benefits and housing according to need will be provided for all equally. Increments are given on the basis of experience. An additional allowance is provided for those who have the added responsibility of a principalship. It is assumed that the burden of other responsibilities will be divided fairly evenly among the remaining members on the staff. Self-supporting congregations which have a larger faculty may find that some staff members have a heavier workload than others and may decide to compensate them accordingly. This is certainly in agreement with the scriptural principle mentioned above that "the laborer is worthy of his reward."

The Christian teacher's spirit of service previously described will keep him or her from nitpicking or clockwatching. He will not quibble or grumble over minor inequities that will always exist. The dedicated servant of Christ will always be willing to go an extra mile without demanding extra pay.

Nothing will prevent a congregation, however, from giving special assistance to one of its workers who has an unusual financial burden because of high medical expenses or some other hardship. Christian concern and charity will always be characteristic of a Christian congregation. God's people will be mindful of the apostolic admonition, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

Closely related to the question of salary is the final question that was raised by the program committee regarding certain discriminatory policies. The first area mentioned concerns housing.

Generally in the past, housing has been provided for married male teachers, especially principals, in the form of a teacherage owned by the congregation. Like a parsonage for the pastor, this is frequently furnished because of advantages for the congregation as well as for the teacher. Generally the teacherage is near the school and therefore convenient for the parents who wish to see the teacher as well as for the teacher in exercising control and care of the school property. In the long run ownership of a teacherage may involve a saving for the congregation, especially if the teacherage is exempt from the local property tax. In many areas it would be difficult to provide comparable housing at a comparable cost by way of a housing allowance.

For the married teacher there is the advantage that he does not have to go house hunting when he accepts a call. If he has a number of children, this presents a definite problem in some communities. The salaries paid by the church are, admittedly, often minimal, and the churches workers must frequently learn to practice the virtue of frugality. In such circumstances the fact that the IRS exempts housing, whether in the form of a teacherage or a housing allowance, from income taxes for male teachers, whom the IRS considers to be self-employed ministers of religion, is no small consideration. This advantage is not offered by the IRS to female teachers.

Single male or female teachers also need housing, but they do not need to provide a home for a family. The Department of Labor has approved the arrangement whereby a congregation makes provisions for housing according to need. Married female teachers do not normally come into consideration with respect to housing because their husbands provide them with a home.

With regard to medical insurance, if a congregation pays the premiums for some of its workers, it would be only fair that it pay them for all, with the obvious exception of married women who are covered by their husband's employer.

Government regulations often make it necessary for a congregation to pay the employer's portion of the social security tax for female teachers and to deduct the employee's payments from their salary. Some

congregations also pay the social security tax for their pastor and male teachers. Since these are considered to be self-employed, such payments must be counted as additional salary.

As was previously mentioned, some inequities will be inevitable. Government regulations are responsible in part. Christian congregations will, however, try to be fair. It is well for them to review annually the compensation they give to those whom they have called to serve them and to make adjustments for inflation. If congregations are negligent in this respect, the conference visiting elder ought to make this his concern. District presidents frequently have an opportunity to speak with congregations concerning their salary schedule in connection with call meetings.

When a congregation, acting in Christian love, does its best to be fair and to avoid discrimination and inequities, those who are privileged to serve will go about their work willingly and cheerfully. They will not continually complain and compare their pay with others. Rather, they will take to heart the words of Paul, "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Tim. 6:6-8).

Above all, they will look on their service in the public ministry as a high privilege. To be a servant of Jesus Christ in ministering to His church offers a joy and satisfaction that will be found in no other calling in life. It has the Lord's promise, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). God make us all, both men and women, faithful in our ministry!

Endnotes

¹ Cf. the remarks by Prof. August Pieper in his article, "Gibt es im Neuen Testament gesetzliche Verordnungen?" ("Are There Ceremonial Ordinances in the New Testament?") in the *Theoloische Quartalschrift*, XIII, 3 (July, 1916), pp. 179f:

But what about I Cor. 11:1-16? If anything in the New Testament looks like a general outward ordinance for the services and social life, then it is what Paul says there about the covering of the woman who prays and prophesies in the assembly. He is plainly speaking in general terms: *Pasa de gune*, and he bases this on the created relationship of the woman to the man. – But we know that this directive is neither a part of the Law nor of the Gospel, but it was merely a hellenistic custom for the woman by which her subordination to the man and her modesty were to be expressed. We know also that Paul therefore in no way wishes to institute a Christian style of dress, but to inculcate the two moral matters which are based on God's order of creation: the modesty and the subordination of the woman under the man, which in morally loose Corinth were endangered also among the Christians. He is not concerned about a social custom for its own sake, but only insofar as it expresses a general moral principle. If the outward custom is different in a different society, then this custom takes the place of the other in the command, while the actual sense always remains the abstract moral principle. The outward action and form is never in itself a moral command. A woman's dress which in mid-summer is altogether inoffensive in New Orleans, may be altogether indecent in winter in St. Paul. The behavior of a boy which one accepts as self-evident can in the case of a Lutheran pastor become the basis for disciplinary action. Morality and immorality depend on the customs of a people ('*Laendlich, sittlich; laendlich, unsittlich*').

² Cf. Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 180:

Paul does not wish to establish the legalistic or evangelical outward regulation that the woman is to keep silent in the congregation. In the passage just discussed [I Cor. 11:1-16] he actually takes for granted that she in fact appears in the congregation and publicly prays and prophesies. But in doing this she is not to violate her modesty and her subordination under the man by prophesying with an uncovered head. In I Cor. 14 the contrast is expressly made, 'But they are to be in subjection, as also the law says.' When, therefore, her being in subjection is not contradicted by a woman's public speaking, praying, and prophesying, it is neither immoral nor a hindrance to the Gospel.

³ Cf. Pieper on I Tim. 2:12ff., *op. cit.*, p. 180f.:

The woman is not to teach publicly when she thereby becomes a lord over the man. It is against this that the whole argumentation also in this passage is directed. When therefore exercising authority over men and modesty do not in any way come into consideration, as e.g., in a school or in an assembly of women, or in an assembly of men or a mixed assembly in which there are no men who are capable of teaching, praying, or prophesying, but a woman has received as special gifts from God both public prayer and prophecy or teaching, there she not only may, as in I Cor. 11, but she should according to Joel 2; Acts 2:17; 21:9; I Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:16, pray, prophesy, teach, with the understanding, of course, that she always preserves her chastity.

The public praying, prophesying, and teaching of a woman is not in itself immoral or unevangelical (much less naturally that done in private). Against both Law and Gospel, however, is the emancipation of the woman from her

specially ordained subordination and modesty, which, in addition to other considerations, by and large in practice relegate her to silence and exclude her as a rule from participation in public life.

The modern emancipation movement among women is a rebellion against the God-ordained subordination and modesty of the woman by which not only relationships in the state as well as in the home, but above all moral relationships will inevitably be destroyed. And the church also cannot under ordinary circumstances without harm tolerate the placing of women on the same plane as men in its public activity. The woman does not belong in the pulpit as long as there are men who are qualified for the public service of the church.

To the above mentioned reasons must be added the fact that the woman is not in the same degree apt to teach, capable of ruling, prudent, capably of punishing and fighting, guided by principle, logically firm, and actually skilled in training as is the man, even though it may be different in exceptional cases. God Himself through His creation and His order of creation made and called the male sex for the rougher, heavier, largely physical and intellectual work in the world as well as in the church. The woman does not participate in the work of the world on an equal basis, but as *eser k'negdo*, as a help at man's side and corresponding to him. No man will change this order of creation established by God. Only with harm to society will this relationship be overturned. The same goes for the church. The Gospel does not suspend the natural order of God. It does not establish its own forms, but fills the natural ones that exist with its spirit. Much less does it turn a woman into a man, or a man into a woman – physically or mentally. It makes the man a Christian man, and the woman a Christian woman. Therefore also the Lord, as the Head of His church, appointed men – apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers, admonishers, rulers – for the administration, the public edification of the church – not women – female apostles, prophets, etc. And when here and there He on occasion gives His church a prophetess or a woman evangelist, this happens rarely and by way of exception.

⁴ Lois Snook in “An Interview with the Rev. Barbara Andrews,” *Dialog*, Vol. 10, Spring 1971, p. 128.