



A Report of the Study  
Concerning the Ordination of Women  
Undertaken by the Anglican Mission in America

*(A Survey of the Leading Theological Convictions)*

Submitted by:  
Women's Ordination Study Team  
The Rt. Rev. John H. Rodgers, Jr., Chairman

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# Introductory Matters

## Aim of the Study and Report

This report first examines the appropriateness of women being ordained as priests/presbyters or consecrated as bishops in the One Holy and Apostolic Church in and through the Anglican Mission in America as these offices are ordered and exercised in the Anglican Communion. In addition, in a following section, it examines the question of the appropriateness of women being ordained as deacons in the Church through the Anglican Mission in America.

The question of this study is not whether there should be involvement of women in Christian ministry--that is fully affirmed by the Anglican Mission in America. We are deeply committed to the ministry of all members of Christ's Body. We see the calling of the ordained ministry, in no small measure, to consist of helping to equip the laity for their crucial ministry to be exercised both within the Church and to the World.

This ministry of "the priesthood of all believers" or of "the whole people of God," involves us all. Men and women are both gifted by God. They bring complementary sensibilities to ministry, and both need to be properly equipped, openly commissioned and fully recognized in the ministry of the Gospel. Given the tremendous scope of the mission that lies before us in a fallen world and in a secular society, we all need to be fully involved in ministry. In Appendix 3, we indicate some of rich variety of this foundational Christian ministry. The focus of this study, however, is upon the question of women in ordained ministry as it is exercised in the Anglican Communion.

We have felt the need to do this study because few of us have given this question the careful, scholarly attention it requires. With that in mind, the Anglican Mission in America has exercised a moratorium on the ordination of women until this study is completed, our convictions have been discerned and the judgment of our Archbishops has been sought and given to us. Since we believe we are not alone in needing guidance, we hope that this report can also serve others as an orientation to this question and as a survey of the pertinent biblical texts and leading theological convictions. Naturally, we invite the readers to search the Scriptures and to read widely for themselves, taking particular note of the books in the Bibliography.

## Historical Background

This study was initiated in 2000 A.D. due to the formation of the Anglican Mission in America by two Archbishops: the Archbishop of South East Asia, Ping Chung Yong, and the Archbishop of Rwanda, Emmanuel Kolini, and a sponsoring Province, the Anglican Province of Rwanda. The Mission was established in response to the crisis in the Episcopal Church caused by its practical abandonment of the Holy Scriptures as the authoritative Word of God through neglect and subjective interpretation. This has been accompanied by and led to systemic

theological error, a failure of leadership in mission, unbiblical practice, an absence of ecclesiastical discipline and to an increasing departure from the faith of the Anglican formularies.

Communicants began to leave; some congregations left as well. Other congregations that stayed in the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. were oppressed and isolated due to their orthodox beliefs. Out of pastoral concern for the disenfranchised and their departing, the Anglican Mission in America came into being.

These two Archbishops are Primates of duly constituted and fully participating provinces in the Anglican Communion. Although they both are of orthodox conviction and practice, they have different practices and convictions regarding the ordination of women. In addition, the member congregations, clergy and laity that formed the initial membership of the Anglican Mission in America, brought with them differing convictions and practices regarding the ordination of women. Therefore, a biblical, theological question still under debate in the Anglican Communion was inescapably placed before us. Further, the increasing practice of ordaining women and the distress caused by requiring that it be allowed in all the dioceses in ECUSA posed the question as well.

It is important to note that not only is this question unavoidable but that our situation is far from neutral. The direction of our culture and the general practice of mainline Churches in North America are pushing us strongly in one direction. On the other hand, church tradition holds up a red light, or at least a cautionary light. The Anglican Communion itself is in a process of evaluation of a practice already begun in parts of the Communion and seems increasingly accepting of the practice.

## Controversial Nature

At the outset we want to assure everyone we are mindful that there are deeply felt convictions on all sides of this question. We are aware that people whom we know, love and respect will be directly affected by the ultimate outcome of this study. It is clear we cannot hope to satisfy everyone by the final recommendation the Anglican Mission will make after reading and discussing this study; some of the positions held among us are mutually exclusive. Godly persons who love and honor the Scriptures and the Catholic tradition of the Church are to be found on different sides of this issue. That being the case, it would seem fair to conclude that the answer to this question is not as obvious as some people assume it to be. A decision will need to be taken with genuine humility on our part.

This observation, however, does not deny that when all the data are considered, one position may seem to the Anglican Mission in America and its sponsoring Archbishops to be more faithful to Scripture, tradition, and reason than another. The Anglican Mission in America cannot avoid a decision as to its practice in this matter. Since a judgment must be made, and since it is unlikely that such evidence will be produced placing the matter beyond a shadow of a doubt for all involved, each of us should be looking for clear and convincing evidence as a standard in order to come to a personal judgment in this matter.

Aware of the potential for divisiveness that such a study as this provides, we pray that we in

the Anglican Mission in America will not let any differences of conviction damage our mutual care and respect for one another in Christ. We acknowledge sadly that some degree of impaired communion is a likely result of any decision taken. Yet it is our fervent hope that any such impaired communion be lived out in a loving and respectful manner.

We do want to state clearly that we have committed ourselves to protect the theological conscience of all our members as stated in the “Solemn Declaration.” We have endeavored to do that in this manner: no matter what decision is reached, no bishop will ever be required to ordain and no congregation will ever be forced to receive any ordained person contrary to theological conviction.

If the decision allows for some bishops and the congregations under their care to affirm women’s ordination to the priesthood and some not, then Holy Communion at joint meetings of the Anglican Mission in America would be presided over by ordained men only so that all may receive.

If the decision does not affirm the ordination of women to the priesthood, then no women would be ordained to the priesthood. However, those ordained women in the priesthood presently affiliated with the Anglican Mission in America would be permitted to remain and to exercise their priestly ministry fully until they retire or desire to be transferred to another part of the Anglican Communion. (See Appendix 2, The Solemn Declaration, Proposed Constitution and Canons, Article V, section 1).

## Scope and Limitations

There are several limits to this report. We undertook this study mindful of the immense amount of literature that has been and is being written on this matter. On the one hand, we could not hope to examine all of it. On the other hand, we believe we have given due consideration to the Scriptures and to the chief lines of their interpretation found in that literature. We also have considered the traditions of the Church as well as significant extra-biblical material that bear on this question. The books that are starred in the Bibliography attached (Appendix 1) lists the material that we have all read in the National Advisory Committee of the Anglican Mission in America. Additional literature can be found listed in the books cited in the Bibliography.

Along with the vast amount of material written on this subject, there is the wide scope of the biblical material involved. As soon as one enters into the question of the ordination of women, a great many biblical themes arise that bear upon the issue. It becomes quickly evident that the question of the ordination of women is not a minor issue that deals only with the order of the Church. Rather, the question of the ordination of women leads us with amazing speed and surprising depth into basic and central doctrines of the Christian faith.

The authority of Scripture, the nature and attributes of God, Creation, and humanity made in the image and likeness of God, created male and female, the Fall and its consequences, salvation, authority in family, church and society, all come into play and need to be considered.

For a pertinent example, let us consider the matter of authority. Authority lies at the heart of biblical revelation. God is the sovereign Lord of all. Jesus is Savior and Lord. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto Him. We human beings are created to know, glorify, worship, love, trust, serve, obey, and rejoice in God. Our relationships with one another are to reflect His nature and His holiness, because we are made in His image. Since He is a God of order, He has ordered all of Creation. Therefore, authority, responsibility, obedience and submission permeate all aspects of Creation and all of society. Every society reflects this ordering and accountability, even when the deeper, theological reason for the presence of authority is not known.

Our human relation to authority is deeply distorted. We are not what we have been created to be. We are fallen creatures. To be "fallen," at its heart, is to be in rebellion against God's authority, to deny His majesty, to contradict His truth and mistrust His goodness. This rebellion or declaration of independence from God affects our attitude toward lesser authority and our exercise of it. There is in us a tendency to deny our subordinate status and, therefore, to reject the goodness of submissiveness to authority, even duly constituted and properly administered authority. There is also a tendency to abuse our exercise of authority in a self-serving manner.

With regard to both the central importance of authority and our tendency to flee or corrupt it, the Scottish theologian Peter Taylor Forsyth once stated, "Men and societies are totally different according as their ruling idea is to serve an authority or to escape it, or according to the authority they do serve." (Forsyth 1) Clearly, we in our secular, Western society with our dislike of authority over us, our devaluing of submission, our drive toward individual independence and our striving to rise to the top, have as our ruling idea the "escaping of authority" that Forsyth mentions. Other societies, shaped by other particular religious traditions, are inclined to forms of totalitarianism. In both individualistic antinomianism (the rejection of God's law or authority over us) and in religious totalitarianism (the absolute control of society by religious leaders) our human rebellion against God's order is evident.

This rebellion is not just against the order of Creation; it is also contrary to the order of Redemption in Christ. The life of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit--a life of mutual love lived out in authority and submission between the fully equal, fully divine persons of the Godhead, is the source of both our creation and redemption in Christ. It is God's triune life we Christians are created and redeemed to reflect. We are in self-contradiction in the most basic sense when we fail to embrace the goodness of authority and gladly submit to authority rightly exercised, first by God and then appropriately by one another in Christ and in society.

The issue in Scripture is not whether there will be authority and submission in church and society, as some commentators on Scripture seem to imply. Rather, the issue is to discern how God has ordered things in a given area, to determine what sort of submission He requires, and whether the authority God has delegated is being exercised and received in accordance with the purpose of God.

Headship and submission are, therefore, very much involved in scriptural teaching concerning the relationships in the Holy Trinity, in the family, in Church (the family of God)

and in society. For that reason, headship and submission are deeply involved in the question of the ordination of women to the priesthood/ presbyterate and of their consecration to the episcopate.

Since all of the relevant biblical themes are interconnected, our understanding and application of one of them is bound to affect how we understand and respond to the other aspects of God's Word and work. Therefore, we must take care to consider the Scriptures all the more carefully concerning the ordination of women to positions of authority in the life of the Church.

We will restrict our examination of any of these matters to their bearing on the question of the ordination of women into Anglican orders as they are presently constituted. The examinations of the varied aspects of biblical teaching that bear upon this question have proven illuminating as well as relevant to our cultural context. We trust that the relevance of these diverse and interconnected themes will become evident in the several sections of this report.

## Presuppositions

Every study begins from basic assumptions and that is clearly true of this study. The Anglican Mission in America recognizes the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be "the Word of God written" and its supreme authority. It also affirms the three Ecumenical or Catholic Creeds, the classic 1662 Book of Common Prayer, the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion and the Lambeth Quadrilateral as secondary theological norms.

Therefore, in this study we seek above all to test things by the Scriptures, using appropriate Anglican rules of interpretation (see Appendix 5 "Hermeneutics"). Tradition will prove significant as well as the present experience of the wider Anglican Church, the Church ecumenical and the culture in which we live and minister. Nevertheless, the teaching of Scripture will prove decisive.

## Structure

The outline of the report will be followed. After the introductory sections, we will seek in Parts 1 and 2 to state as clearly, concisely and convincingly as possible the case for and the case against the ordination of women to the priesthood and their consecration to the episcopate. We will present these arguments as advocates for each. We do not want to be accused of setting forth "straw men" to be easily refuted from either position. We separate the consideration of the diaconate because it does not raise for many the same issues as the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate do.

This will be followed in Part 3 with exegesis of the key texts from both perspectives, so that the reader will be given enough data to consider which exegesis seems to better fit the texts and whether the texts taken together tend to support one position or another.

In Part 4 we take a look at the office of deacon in a fashion similar to the manner we have



examined the question of the ordination of women to the offices of priest/presbyter and bishop.

In Part 5 we state the various ways a decision could be made and expressed in the life and work of the Anglican Mission in America. That will conclude the Report.

A separate letter will be written and addressed to the Primates that sponsor us indicating the majority and minority views as found in the Anglican Mission in America with an appropriate request that the Primates direct us to order our practice of ordination in a given manner.

The views considered for the request will be those of the Council of Bishops, the National Advisory Committee, all the other clergy, all of the vestries of the Anglican Mission in America and such groups and individuals within the Anglican Mission as have been invited into the study. In this separate letter, we will make our request to the two Primates and sponsoring Province under whose oversight we exist and serve.

We in the Anglican Mission in America are very pleased to undertake this study. The note we wish to sound is a note of anticipation and expectation. The doctrine of the Trinity was clarified in the early Church only by serious, lengthy reflection on the biblical data occasioned by biblically false and pastorally harmful teaching. In like manner, we believe that a deeper understanding of humanity and of the significance of our being created male and female in God's image and redeemed in Christ, will result from a careful and sustained study of the Scriptures on these matters. We pray that this study will help in that process.

This period of examination will surely call the Church to a deeper appreciation of the unique contributions of women and men in the life and ministry of the family, the church and society in general. We want each and every one of us to minister as God intends, and we undertake this study to that end.

When we asked the sponsoring Primates to give us their concerns with regard to this study and the ensuing report, they asked us to take this study seriously. However, they also wanted us to keep it in proper perspective and not allow it to derail us from our primary call to evangelism, church planting and discipleship. We trust that this has not been the case.

## Report

### **Part 1: The primary reasons *for* the ordination of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and their consecration as bishops**

#### **General Comment:**

We turn to a statement of the main lines of support for the ordination of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and their consecration as bishops. This section is written from the perspective of convinced support.

The ordination of women is a present fact in parts of the Anglican Communion and is in a process of reception or evaluation. This practice seems to be of increasing acceptance in the wider Anglican Communion. Since the ordination of women is a recent departure from the uniform practice of Anglicanism and other Communion with the historic episcopate, we are told that very convincing reasons both biblical and otherwise will need to be stated for affirming the ordination of women in all of the orders of the Church. In essence, we are told the burden of proof lies upon us. However, we firmly believe that the burden of proof is actually on those who oppose the ordination of women for the following compelling reasons.

### **The argument from Scripture: the chief argument:**

First, and most importantly, we believe that the ordination of women is scriptural. In fact, we are convinced that Scripture does not merely allow for the ordination of women but requires it when the Scriptures are read carefully and without bias. Far from barring women from the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate, the Sacred Writings affirm an egalitarian understanding of men and women, equal both in nature and in their potential roles in all aspects of leadership, assuming that the person is called and has the proper gifts and preparation.

This may come as a surprise to many, but we believe we will show this convincingly in the exegesis of the biblical texts in Part 3 of this report. We must be careful not to read the later traditions of the Church back into the texts of Scripture.

Although we must wait for Part 3 for detailed exegetical comment, it will prove helpful to state here the general outline of a proper exegesis of Scripture on this matter.

Creation must be properly understood. We find no mention of "male headship" in the sense of governance in Genesis 1. Neither do we find it in Genesis 2. The only sense of authority to be found there is that of God's authority. Instead, we find equality and the mutual submission of man and woman, as both are submitted to God and in Him to one another. God, in His ordering of Creation, did not place men over women. Instead, He placed the woman alongside of the man with a common task to tend the Garden and populate the earth. The first we hear of male headship as domination is as a result of the Fall in Genesis 3. It is a result of sin, as well as an expression of judgment because of disobedience to God.

In the period between Abraham and Christ, male headship as "ruling" is limited and shaped by the Old Testament legislation and punctuated by some women called by God (such as Deborah) to serve in various forms of leadership and proclamation.

At the coming of Christ in the New Testament, male headship, in the sense of authority exercised, is fundamentally removed by the redemption and new creation in Christ. In Christ, we find only mutual submission expressed in sacrificial love received from the Lord Jesus.

All leadership is to be exercised in humble service to the Lord and the Body. It is exercised on the basis of individual calling and gifting, not on the basis of gender.

It is perhaps important to note that the male Aaronic priesthood of the Old Covenant, which was really never open to all males in Israel, is now fulfilled and ended in Christ. Christ is the

High Priest eternally, and His sacrifice on the Cross brings to an end the need for atoning sacrifices. He has made atonement once for all time. His sacrifice avails forever for all who are in Him. This means that the New Covenant priesthood and eldership is no longer limited to the sons of Aaron. The New Covenant priesthood or presbyterate is open to all men and women in Christ who are anointed by the Spirit and called to that ministry.

We are aware that there are several texts in the New Testament that have been traditionally interpreted as barring women from exercising authoritative leadership in the Church. These, we will show, are better interpreted as specific inhibitions intended to solve specific pastoral problems unique to the Roman Empire's culture 2000 years ago. These inhibitions are, therefore, not automatically applicable on a universal basis today. The inhibitions were never meant to set forth universal prohibitions. Indeed, if taken as absolute prohibitions, they would contradict other texts of St. Paul in which he assumes women will speak openly to the congregation during corporate worship.

Anglicans are not permitted to set one part of Scripture in contradiction to another part of Scripture. We are, therefore, led by the language of the texts themselves as well as by our view of Scripture, i.e., that it expresses the mind of God in order to see these texts as related to particular pastoral situations. Since it is scriptural for women as well as men to serve in ordained leadership, it is unscriptural not to allow or encourage each person in the Body to use his or her gifts appropriately.

This general perspective on the ordination of women just stated flows from and is an application of the new place of women in Christ that is clearly expressed in four chief ways in the New Testament:

1. There is the newness of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of the prophecy of the Prophet Joel, declaring in the age of the Messiah that the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh. Both sons and daughters will prophesy (Joel 2. 28f). In the Messianic age, it is the Spirit who gifts and empowers for ministry; and He does this in and through sons and daughters, both men and women.
2. There is Holy Baptism, the new sacrament of initiation and belonging to the Covenant that both men and women receive personally. As the sign and sacrament of incorporation into the Covenant of Grace, Holy Baptism replaces circumcision. No longer are women incorporated into the covenant of grace through the male head of the family. They receive in their own person the sacrament of the new birth.
3. There is Jesus' attitude to and relationship with women. We should note, first of all, that Jesus was miraculously born of a woman. Mary, the mother of our Lord, was chosen by God to bear the Son, the very Word incarnate in her womb and to raise him. In his incarnation he was profoundly dependent upon this most blessed of women. Next, we see that in his time of public ministry, He permitted women to accompany Him and to minister to Him. He not only spoke to women in public, He instructed them and bid them learn. This treatment of women by Jesus was a dramatic departure from the practice of the rabbis of the day, many of whom would not speak with a woman in public and forbade them to study the Law. It is perhaps worth noting that during His earthly ministry, Jesus was far more open to women than he was to

Gentiles. The inclusion of Gentiles in any full sense came only after His resurrection.

In this context and taking note of Jesus' dramatic openness to women, it is important to ask the question, "Why did Jesus not appoint a woman as one of the twelve Apostles?" It is clear that Jesus was willing to break with rabbinical practice; therefore, accommodation to custom cannot be the reason. Was it that women could not be apostles due to being women? Jesus does not teach that. We are not explicitly told why. We may offer a conjecture.

Jesus' choice of all male apostles was likely due to the fact that the Twelve are symbolic of the twelve Tribes and the twelve Sons of Israel. Therefore in choosing twelve of His Jewish disciples who were sons of Abraham, Jesus makes it clear that He is fulfilling God's promises to Israel and is thereby renewing God's historic people in and around Himself as King in the in-breaking Kingdom of God. The Twelve were unique. As personally appointed by Jesus and in their role as the Twelve, they are of the foundation of the renewed people of God, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. In their uniqueness, they are not typical of the ordained ministry of the priest/presbyters who they themselves appointed. After the Apostles filled the place of Judas, we do not find a continuing group of twelve in the life of the church.

Given the uniqueness of the 12 Apostles and given Jesus' sustained openness to women, it is questionable indeed to appeal to the Twelve as an argument that women should be excluded from the ordained ministry in general.

We should note in this context of Jesus' relationship with women, that it is women who are the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection and are sent to tell others of His resurrection. This fact is hardly likely to have been made up by the Apostles or the early Church and is weighty evidence that women were called upon to speak. That these women were chosen to be the first witnesses to His resurrection is of profound importance and represents a remarkable change in the place of women in ministry.

4. There is the practice of the Apostles. The Apostles continued Jesus' practice with regard to women. Above all, it was the Apostle Paul who frequently singled out women with the weighty phrase "fellow workers in the Gospel." He gave instruction for the exercise by women of prophetic gifts in the corporate worship of the Church by women. He commended Phoebe as a deacon of the Church in Cenchreae. These are all signs that already within the scriptural period something new had come; signs that the Age of the Spirit was bursting the old wineskins and overcoming the consequences of sin and death. The place of men and women had become new in Christ. As the Apostle Paul put it in Galatians 3:28, *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

These four signs indicate a crucial, hermeneutical principle that we wish to underline. It is essential to see that Scripture recounts God's leading of His people forward to the fullness

of the Kingdom of God. God is not simply restoring the situation in Eden but fulfilling it and going beyond it to a New Heaven and New Earth, the glory and goodness of which is beyond our comprehension. There, in the completed Kingdom, even marriage will no longer be practiced. A faithful reading of Scripture, therefore, is forward looking. It is neither static nor backward looking. This must be kept in mind if Scriptures are to be rightly read. It seems to us so much of the interpretation of Scripture opposed to the ordination of women fails at just this point.

Our first point then is this: rightly read, the Scriptures call for the full use of the gifts of the Spirit by all in Christ and thus for the ordination of those women equipped, prepared and called of God.

There are additional very significant reasons in support of the ordination of women. These need to be clearly stated and taken to heart. They are as follows:

### **The argument from equality:**

Theologically, we find it difficult to resist the logic that, since both men and women are made in the image and likeness of God and are equal in His sight, this equality would be expressed most clearly if ordination were made available to both men and women. Since we are equal in Christ, is ordination not more appropriately based on our sense of calling and giftedness instead of being restricted on the basis of gender? The point we want to make here is that equality and newness in Christ is more fully and clearly expressed if the basis for qualifying for ordination does not lie in a gender distinction but in what can be applied to men and women alike: gifts, calling and preparation.

### **The argument from the character and attributes of God:**

Those in the offices of priest/presbyter and bishop serve as agents of and mediate God's ministry among us through word, sacrament and oversight. Unavoidably, they represent God's authority and character to the People of God. Since God's image and likeness is born by both men and women alike, would it not, therefore, be a truer and richer representation of God if both men and women shared in the ordained ministry? Together, would they not better represent both His transcendence and power on the one hand and His immanence and nurturing love on the other? Both men and women need to be allowed and encouraged to bring their masculinity and femininity, as well as their various and often complementary gifts, into the ordained, servant leadership of the Church if we are to be faithful to our understanding of God. This point needs to be emphasized and underlined. For the ordained ministry to fully reflect the God that it serves, it must include both men and women.

In this connection, some might ask, "But can a woman represent Christ who became Incarnate as a male and Who reveals to us the Father?" This becomes particularly pertinent at the celebration of the Eucharist. The answer is that Jesus incarnates and reflects the whole nature of God; all of God's attributes, both His more masculine and His more feminine attributes, just as both men and women are created in His image and likeness. Further, it is important to note that the human nature He assumed was human nature per se, not just maleness. In addition, we note that both men and women are being conformed to the image of Christ by the Holy Spirit. We dare not limit the saving work of Christ to males nor the

ministry that represents Him to males. This leads us to the next point.

### **The argument from complementarity:**

It is clear from Scripture and from life that while men and women are much alike, they are also different. Men are meant to be masculine and women are to be feminine. These differences complement each other. It is our contention that these differences need to be incorporated into the ordained leadership of the Church.

This point has not been urged as forcefully and frequently as it needs to be. Why has this point been neglected? The first reason is that it is not easy to define the heart of masculinity and femininity because masculinity and femininity are on a continuum with shadings and degrees. No woman is feminine in precisely the same way and to the same degree as every other woman nor any man precisely masculine in the same way or to the same degree as every other man.

However, having said that, there are generalities that can be observed and stated. As one scholar put it: "Men are more likely to be separate, individualistic, oppositional, and to think in terms of binaries, whereas women show greater 'connectedness' and orient themselves empathetically toward others" (Storkey). It is precisely these more empathetic and communal gifts that are needed if the ordained ministry is to draw upon the resources given humanity by God in Creation. It is also essential for women's femininity to be included if the full nature of God is to be reflected.

In addition, another difficulty in giving male and female complementarity its due place in considering the ordination of women is that what is considered feminine and masculine varies to a significant degree from culture to culture and from period to period in a given culture. Nurture or cultural socialization has a major part to play in this matter. However, we are not to be conformed to a cultural definition of masculinity and femininity when it falls short of or contradicts Scriptural truth.

There is a third and darker reason why those writing in support of women's ordination have been hesitant to develop the argument from complementarity. It is the fact that there is an historic and worldwide tendency for cultures to see women in their differences from men as inferior in worth to men and for many women to agree with this unbiblical and unchristian view. This tendency is no doubt a result of the Fall. There we read that it will be a consequence of the Fall for men to turn headship into domination and for women to turn healthy desire for belonging into inordinate, passive dependence (See exegesis of Genesis 3). Fearing that if these differences were emphasized, they would be seen as reasons not to allow women to be ordained, the supporters of women's ordination have emphasized equality and sameness, "bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh," rather than complementary differences. This has been a serious omission. Both are important. We wish to correct that omission and state that the differences are in no way a bar to ordination and, in fact, are essential to a full and adequate exercise of ordained leadership in the Church.

### **The argument from the priesthood of all believers:**

The very priestly nature of ordination itself offers a reason for the ordination of women.



Women along with men are already priests in the New Testament sense of the priesthood of all believers. Actually, in the New Testament, only Jesus as the High Priest and the ministry of all in the Church, both men and women together, are referred to as priestly ministries.

Since the ordained ministry represents the people in prayer and worship before the Lord to God, as well as representing the Lord to the people of God, and since both men and women already share in the priesthood of all believers, it is a contradiction to bar women from the ordained priesthood/presbyterate. This is doubly true because the ordained ministry represents both men and women and because women already share as priests in the priesthood of all believers. After all, it is the priesthood of the whole body, of all believers, that provides the context as well as the source of the representative, ordained priesthood.

We must not reintroduce the Old Testament priesthood into the New Testament era, as some do, and then use it to exclude women from ordination.

### **The argument from the history of women in ministry:**

We must consider the place of the history of women in ministry in the Church. Historically, both in biblical times and subsequently, women have exercised teaching and leadership roles in the Church. By their presence in history, these women serving in ministry make it clear that when the conditions are appropriate, women can and should be permitted to answer God's call to ministry. We do not need to ask whether women have the ability. They have proven they do. Alas, this is often overlooked in commentaries and church history books.

To keep this section about women in ministry brief, we will mention only a selection of the most important and generally accepted examples of women in prophetic, teaching and leadership roles in the Old and New Testaments.

Prophecy in the Old Testament is among the highest forms of revelation. St. Paul refers to it as the chief gift in the New Testament. It is to be prized, sought and not suppressed. We find in the Old Testament that Miriam, Huldah and the wife of Isaiah are all referred to as prophets. Women served as bearers of the Word of God.

As well as being a prophet, Deborah was a judge over Israel. A judge was a position of oversight and leadership. In addition, in her case, she exercised a ministry of strategic military wisdom.

Moving to the New Testament, Anna and the four daughters of Philip are referred to as prophets. The Apostle Paul refers to women prophesying in Corinth. As for teaching, we read that Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, taught or instructed Apollos more accurately in the way of the Lord. Phoebe is also singled out for special attention and assistance due to her being a deacon and for her previous ministry of service to Paul and many others in Cenchrea.

At the close of the Scripture we are just at the starting point. There is an astonishing record of women in ministry to be found down through the ages in the history of the Church. To even try to list the tremendous examples of leadership, teaching, pastoral care, evangelism, missionary zeal and humble service that women have exercised in the Church from biblical

times to the present would be a daunting task. It far exceeds the limits of this study; it requires at least a book. The story has been told in numerous volumes of late (see for example, Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld's book, "Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times until the Present"). Here, we can only refer the interested to further reading.

### **Argument from the tradition of the Church:**

We turn to the Church's tradition regarding women in ministry. Many have felt that the tradition of the Church provides a barrier to the ordination of women. However, that is not actually the case. The tradition of the Church can be cited on behalf of women's ordination.

The manner in which church tradition takes shape is by practice and consideration over a period of time. This very process can rightly be appealed to in favor of the ordination of women. In the history of the Church and its developing traditions, not all subjects came under sustained consideration at the same time. The timing as to when a matter comes under such consideration is, under God, in large measure, determined by fresh insights into the Scripture, by cultural factors and/or by the presence of a heresy that must be addressed. It can be a combination of all of these factors.

Keeping this in mind, we cannot simply cite 2000 years of church tradition that has not ordained women as being against the ordination of women. The truth is that the Church has not given deep, theological attention to the role of women over the whole length of its life. The Church is just now beginning to give serious attention to a proper biblical understanding of the place of women. This has been brought about by the modern availability of education to men and women and by the consequent suffrage of women.

The suffrage of women, beginning in the West, is a fairly recent matter. It rests largely on the biblical teaching of the equal dignity of both men and women. It is a gift of the Gospel, though many in our secular society seem ignorant of that fact. It did not begin in India or Pakistan or China, for example. If the suffrage of women is relatively recent, then serious and sustained theological reflection on the teaching and implications of Scripture concerning

women's ordination is more recent still. It is for this reason that a fresh look at the actual teaching of Scripture pertinent to the ordination of women is and should be taking place now. This is also the reason why the reception of women's ordination is only presently taking place in the Anglican Communion.

To fail to give serious consideration to the ordination of women is not, therefore, to honor tradition but a contradiction of the way tradition is formed and to deny tradition as it is presently in the making. We need to take our responsible place in the process. If we do this in the light of Scripture, we believe the results will affirm the ordination of women.

### **Arguments from missiology: a sensitive witness to our culture:**

We, as the representatives of Christ, need to be aware of and responsive to our cultural situation. This too calls us to a fresh examination of our practice regarding the ordination of women.



In this section, we do not want to be understood to be arguing that because of cultural sympathy to the suffrage and enhanced freedom of women that the Church should ordain women. The Scriptures bear a revelation of God that critiques every culture and certainly critiques our Western, secular culture. There is much in our culture that is condemned in the light of Scripture. However, there are certain characteristics of our culture that we need to view in the light of the Gospel and the Scripture and to affirm them in our witness and mission. Cultural sensitivity is not the same thing as cultural conformity or compromise. Sensitivity is apostolic, compromise is not.

Our culture is one in which women are well educated and are exercising leadership in all areas of social life. Women have, in practice and not just in theory, given convincing evidence of their capability and of their ability to carry out the various tasks of leadership in the society and in the ordained ministry. They certainly cannot be excluded from ordination on the basis of lack of ability.

Sensitivity to the culture is itself a biblical practice. For example, all of the warnings about women speaking wrongly in Church are found in letters addressed to largely Gentile congregations, in Hellenistic settings where women were more restricted than in Israel. The Apostle was particularly sensitive to an unnecessary affront to the prevailing cultural restrictions in order that the Gospel might be heard. Now, in our cultural situation, precisely the reverse regarding the place of women is the case. Women are now given opportunity to exercise their gifts of teaching and leadership more and more. We need to be as sensitive to our situation as the Apostle Paul was to his and impose no unnecessary restrictions on women in ministry.

Further, to apply Scripture to our situation, we need to remind ourselves that for a principle in Scripture to be transcultural, it must be capable of being applied in cultural settings other than in biblical times. One test of a right interpretation of biblical texts as intending a universal principle is the applicability of the interpretation in our contemporary setting. That being so, we need to take seriously the impossibility of applying certain interpretations of Scriptural texts which assert that women may not teach men in any setting. Ours is a culture in which men and women study, learn, work and worship together. Women have become scholars in all fields of knowledge, including becoming biblical and theological scholars.

Women teach in universities, colleges, and seminaries. They write books, publish and speak at conferences. It is quite simply impossible to keep women from teaching men in any absolute sense in our cultural situation. Indeed, when we read of various attempts to do this, the degree of legalism, contortions, and absurd distinctions that contain little real difference, however well meant, become embarrassing. This inapplicability underscores the point that the few texts of Scripture that prohibit women from teaching men cannot be treated as universal prohibitions but rather are related to specific pastoral conditions.

In our day, there is among women an increasing sense of a call from God to the ordained ministry. There can be no denying the fact that women are coming forward in large numbers in the Church and saying that they have a sense of call to ordination. Most of them come in all humility seeking to be obedient to God and not trying to prove a feminist point. They

make it clear that they are willing to be properly evaluated as to gifts and calling by the Church; and they are more than willing to become fully prepared for the ordained ministry. They are not asking for favors but rather for the opportunity to answer a sense of call. In fact, women have been ordained and have served in the ordained ministry and done well. Would it not be terrible for women, having known such a sense of call and shown such ability, now to be excluded from saying “yes” to God and exercising their gifts in the Church? The Church cannot say “no” without convincing reasons. In the light of Scripture, carefully interpreted, we believe such reasons cannot be found.

In addition, if we view the society in which we live and minister evangelistically, we must ask these questions, “Would not the exclusion of gifted and called women be a scandal, an affront to the society in which we serve?” “Would it not put a false barrier between the Gospel and many women and men who would simply write off the Scriptures, the Church and the Gospel as being oppressive and hopelessly out of touch with reality?” Indeed, unless we have very strong and clear reasons drawn from Scripture as to why women should not be ordained, we simply must move forward with the ordination of women.

We hold that the Holy Scriptures affirm and indeed call for the ordination of both men and women as called by God and discerned by the Church. In addition, we have taken note that the same Scriptures are the ultimate source for the suffrage of women. Would it not be a scandal in the eyes of God and a scandal for many in society as well, to refuse ordination and the service of the ordained ministry to the women He has called?

### **Conclusion of arguments for women’s ordination:**

After a careful reading and interpretation of Scripture and after examining compelling theological, historical, practical, pastoral and missiological reasons for the ordination of women, we are convinced that all in Christ, male or female, who are called of God and of their church community, and who have been properly equipped and prepared for this call, should be ordained as priest/presbyters and bishops. Indeed, we believe that the Scriptures, rightly read, mandate the ordination of women to all ordained orders in the Church.

We believe this conclusion is confirmed, chiefly but not only by our examination of Scripture. It is also confirmed by what it means to be equal in God’s eyes. This sense of equality, rooted in our being made alike in the image of God, is so transparent that it could be stated clearly and concisely. We have no need to belabor the point with extended explanations, as it appears the “con position” believes we must do. We believe that God sees both men and women together and individually to be suited to effectively represent His character and attributes to His people. We also find significant support for this reading of Scripture in the historical and cultural precedent of women in positions of effective leadership, teaching, pastoral care, evangelism, missionary zeal and humble service in the Church.

*We turn now from the egalitarian view of men and women in Christ and in Christian ministry to a traditional complementarian view that would oppose the ordination of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate and affirm a male priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate.*

## Part 2: The primary reasons for a male priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate and *against* the ordination of women as priests/presbyters and their consecration as bishops

### General Comment:

Just as the "Pro Ordination of Women" section was written from a convinced position, so also this section is written from a convinced position.

God, being a God of order and not of confusion and being all wise, good and gracious, has ordered all things in Creation wisely and for our good. This "ordered-ness" of the Creation has been retained and renewed in His Redemption. As part of this good order, God has appointed the man to be the head of the family and to be the elder (presbyter) or priest in the wider family of the Church. God's good order, therefore, neither envisions nor permits women to exercise the ministry of "headship" or oversight involved in the offices of the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate as they are understood and practiced by Anglicans.

This is in no way detrimental to women since God has a different and complementary ministry for women in the family and church. Since God orders Creation thus for the well being of men, women, families, the church and the wider society, this godly order is to be respected, followed and enjoyed. When men and women are united in such a godly partnership, they walk in the path of freedom and fulfillment. Other paths may seem attractive and promise much, but they prove deceptive and full of contention.

The reasons we hold these convictions are primarily drawn from Scripture. There is, in addition, much supplementary evidence that corroborate the biblical reasons. These supplementary reasons are found in the experience of God's people in history and in God's other "book," the "book" of Creation or nature. We will do our best, with a great sense of responsibility and joy, to state the main reasons from both books concisely, clearly, and compellingly.

We are aware of attempts to interpret the Scriptures to allow women to serve as co-heads of the family and as priests/presbyters and bishops in the church. It is our conviction that responsible exegesis simply will not support their interpretations nor, on the whole, does experience confirm it. We have not entered this study to defend the traditional practice of the Church but rather to understand it and evaluate it in the light of Scripture. In fact, many of us prior to this study took quite a different view, but have been led to affirm the wisdom and faithfulness of the Church down through the ages in this matter. We invite the readers to consider the key reasons which we will set forth and compare them with the Scripture. To this end, we commend the exegetical notes that follow in Part 3 of this report.

### The argument from Scripture: the chief argument:

We begin with Scripture. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments clearly call for a male priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate and do not permit women to exercise the

ministry of headship over God's congregation. This fact, when recognized as true, is sufficient reason for all faithful Christians to affirm an all-male eldership and to reject the practice of the ordination of women as elders. If God in his Word has a plan, we should walk in it.

While detailed exegetical notes follow in Part 3, we also want to sketch out in broad strokes here what we believe to be the correct reading and interpretation of the Scriptures concerning the matter of the permissibility and advisability of the ordination of women as presbyters/priests and bishops.

Nowhere in Scripture do we read of a woman being either a priest in the Old Testament or an elder in the New Testament. In the New Testament, no woman was chosen by Jesus to be one of the twelve Apostles. Jesus could have chosen one of the women who accompanied Him, prepared her along with the other apostles-in-training, and after the Resurrection, appointed her an apostle had he deemed that to be appropriate. He did not do so. The same is true of the Apostles. They carefully chose a man to take the place of Judas and not once did they appoint a woman to be a presbyter or bishop. In sustained, self-conscious contrast to the practice of the surrounding nations and religions, it was the unvarying practice of God's people from the beginning of Israel to the close of Scripture to call men to these official, stated positions among the people of God.

This sustained practice of male priesthood and designated leadership is all the more striking when we note the variety of ministries that women did exercise in Scripture, including the ministry of prophecy which St. Paul refers to as the highest of the gifts of the Spirit. It is even more striking when we take note of the status, the freedom and the call to learn and teach, that Jesus and the Apostles gave to women. In giving women such freedom and such an elevated place in the fellowship, they broke all of the customs of the day. However, not once did they call women to these formal, official leadership ministries in the Church as elder or priest/presbyter. Given who they are, the Lord, the Apostles and the early Church, this emphasis upon male eldership by Jesus and the Apostles is of profound significance and must not be overlooked or explained away.

We want again to emphasize this uniform practice in all of the Scriptures. It is the fundamental point we want to make. We do not want the reader to think that the case for an exclusively male priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate rests on a few texts, several of which contain some phrases difficult to interpret. This position rests on the overwhelming majority of the biblical texts related to governance and leadership in the family and Church. It rests upon a perspective that is pervasive and uniform in all of Scripture. The truth is that the designated or official leadership of the husband in the family, and of priesthood/presbyterate or eldership in the people of God is male leadership and that is without exception.

Such a universal, sustained practice requires a profound (and in this case) a divine reason. The Bible tells us what this reason "from above" is: Male headship in the priesthood and eldership of God's chosen people roots itself in the male headship in the family which is part of God's good ordering of Creation. And God's ordering of the relations of male and female in the family ultimately reflects and rests upon God's own triune nature. Human life, made

in the image and likeness of God, is privileged to mirror the mystery of God's own life. We need to consider this in more detail.

First, we need to be aware that in dealing with ordination, and specifically the ordination of women, we are not dealing merely with a service and the ability to perform certain actions done by individuals, such as are done in professions like law or medicine. We are dealing rather with the exercise of ministries done by God through members of the Church for one another. This is done in a life and mission lived together in a community and also lived out in marriage and the family. This common life is ordered in accordance with God's triune nature. This places the family and the Church in a distinct and unique category.

Since this common life mirrors God's triune life, we must, therefore, begin our consideration of the question of the ordination of women with a brief review of our understanding of God as Triune. God is One; God is Three-fold. He is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, three Persons of equal dignity and divinity united in a single life of love and mutual indwelling. He is one God of one nature eternally existing in three interpenetrating Persons. The Trinity is a mystery, but to say He is one while being triune is neither a contradiction or totally beyond our comprehension. In fact, since we are made in the image and likeness of God, we can expect to find, and do find, analogies of God's triune nature in our human nature.

In the triune life of God, as Scripture teaches and the Eastern Orthodox tradition often reminds us, there is a hierarchy among equals. An eternal headship and submission are lived out in the divine life of love. God the Father is by nature Father in His triune life. He is the eternal, loving fountainhead of the Trinity. He is eternally the Father of the Son and the primary source of the being of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son is ever delighted to do the Father's will. Submission to the Father is what good sons do in biblical perspective, whether they are sons among human beings or the Son in the Trinity. The Spirit is always the Spirit of the Father proceeding to us through the Son and thus the Spirit of Christ.

The main point we want to note is that loving headship and submission are eternal in the life of God. They are qualities, therefore, of the eternal order of things. This is always true of God; it is His eternal triune nature. This has consequences for God's act of creation. God's own nature and attributes provide the pattern for His act of creation and particularly for the order and life of those made in His image and likeness, men and women. We can expect to find headship and submission in the way that we have been created in relation to one another.

This also deepens our understanding of headship. Consider the nature of God's gracious, majestic and sovereign act of creation. We find that in the act of creation God exercises His headship. Evident are His divine initiation, loving source and divine authority. Authority and source are the twin aspects of biblical headship.

We want first to emphasize the authority of God. The Father sovereignly initiates. He creates through the Son by the power of the Spirit. In this connection, we note that God does this initiation from "beyond" so to speak. He does not, as in a female metaphor, "give birth" to the Creation as if the Creation were already pregnant within Him; the Creation does not naturally proceed out of Him. Another way of making the same point is to note

that, in Scripture, the Creation is not the same order of being as His. It is not of His substance. It is not "divine." He transcends the Creation that He calls into being. This transcendent "otherness" reflects His masculine nature expressed in relation to the Creation. Having created, He is the Lord of Creation. The Father's act of creation is an authoritative act, a command. He speaks and it is done (through the Son by the Spirit). He reigns over the Creation that He has made.

Here we have the significance of God's revealing Himself to us in male terms as "the Father," "the Son" and "the Spirit." The male name of "the Father" points to His being distinct from the Creation that He has made, ordered and sustained, and it points to His Lordship over it. If there was any truth that God had to repeatedly drive home to His people Israel it was this, that He is Lord over all and not simply a part of Creation, not a fertility "god" at their beck and call.

By contrast, in the neighboring religions where female imagery was also used of the "gods" and of the "birthing" of nature, the "gods" were always part of and of the same nature as the cosmos. One gives birth to the same order of being that one possesses. The "gods" of the nations were never "Lord" in the true sense but rather forces within nature or the cosmos to be appeased and manipulated to human ends. Nor did they ever originate the world from beyond it. True headship was missing. How different is the case of the true God as He has revealed Himself to us in Scripture.

Does God have a feminine aspect? Yes. God's creation and rule is always loving and full of grace. He nurtures who and what He has made. God has attributes that are more fully exhibited by women than by men; however, they are always His attributes. He is never called "Her." Even the more feminine attributes are His attributes, attributes of the One Who with loving, divine initiative and authority called the world into being, created not from his own substance but from nothing, "ex nihilo," from beyond the world.

In the light of God's triune nature and His act of creation, we can consider more specifically His creation of us human beings who are made in His image. When He created us, He created us male and female and thereby set us in families in a specific order. In the family, the man is to serve as husband of the wife in a unity of love between equals and as the head of the family as well as the representative of the family, tribe or people. The woman is given the complementary ministry of support and nurture. Her gifts of leadership are to be exercised in, with and under the headship of her husband.

The headship of the man reflects God's Fatherhood in the life of the Trinity and in the act of creation and serves as an instrument of God's reign in human society. We read in Scripture that it is from God's Fatherhood all earthly fatherhood is named. Since in Scripture the man's headship reflects the Father's headship, it includes the aspects of both initiation or source and governance. This is the basis of the man's precedence as the initial created human being and the source of the female. In this sense, the man is the head as the fountainhead of humanity. The man was created first and the woman was taken from him and created for him. With respect to male headship, man's vocation also includes the caring governance or oversight of the family and of the representation of the family or people. Here is the source of the federal representation of Adam and Christ of which St. Paul speaks



later.

Male headship also finds expression in the larger family of His people. The designation of men to be priests and elders in the people of God is a wider application of the headship the man is given "in nuce," first in the nuclear family. The nuclear family is the "little church in the Church" and the Church is the family of the families of God.

The woman's position is as important as the man's, though different. She is the treasured, supportive partner in the family and Church. Her submission and ministry of leadership, support, nurture, and quite varied, active service reflects and expresses the submissive, indwelling, nurturing qualities of God's being and attributes as He has revealed Himself to us in Creation and through the Son and the Spirit in the history of salvation.

It is important that we do not misunderstand the complementary ministries of headship and submission. Modern meanings and attitudes and false caricatures must not be read into Scripture. Therefore, to avoid misunderstanding, a word about submission in Scripture is in order.

In Scripture, submission is a good thing, and it is by no means limited to women. Jesus as the Son is ever submissive to the Father. All people made in God's image are to be submissive to God. The Church as the Bride of Christ is by grace to be submissive to Christ who is Lord over all, the head of His Body. Men and women are to be submissive to one another in a variety of structures. In the Church, the members are urged to submit to those whom the Lord has placed in authority over us. In the family, the wife is freely to submit or orient her ministry under the oversight of and in support of her husband. The children are to submit to the parents. In society, we all are to submit gladly to the magistrates in all things agreeable to the revealed will of God, because God has placed them over us. In addition, we are to pray for them.

To clarify what Scripture is teaching us about submission, we wish to make several brief comments.

### ***Comment 1: Male and female ministries rather than roles***

We prefer using the terms "the ministries of headship and of submission" rather than using the more customary terms of "male and female roles." We do this for two reasons:

The first reason is that "roles" is a word, in our culture, that tends to suggest particular tasks, ways and means, such as who will do the cooking, keep the books, etc. In contrast to that, we are thinking of more general responsibilities of the man giving spiritual oversight to and providing for the family, and the woman supporting the man and nurturing the family.

Particular roles or tasks are related to the particular gifts and interests of the partners and to the opportunities they have in their specific cultural settings. We do not want to be understood to be restricting women or men to particular tasks, no matter how traditional they have become. For a biblical example of what we have in mind, we cite the responsibility and the variety of tasks being carried out by the "godly woman" in Proverbs 31 or the work in society of Lydia who was a "seller of purple."

The second reason we prefer to speak of ministries is that headship and submission, when referred to as roles, are likely to be viewed in the terms of superior and inferior, of dictatorial boss and cowed subordinate in our culture. That is not how we understand the scriptural ministries of headship and support. These are complementary ministries of equal importance, carried out by equals united in love, exercised in mutual consultation and care in a common mission, and they are based on the created nature of the two partners. The partners together, united as one, reflect the attributes of God and the mystery of the Trinity.

In biblical perspective, men and women are equal as to nature and dignity but different and complementary as to order and ministries. The ministry of headship is different from but not superior to the ministry of support and submission. For example, when one is the head of a team, that does not mean that one is the smartest on the team or that one has the most interesting or important work to do or that one makes unilateral decisions. It certainly does not mean that one serves ones' self or simply pleases ones' self. It means that the leader or head has overall responsibilities, not least of which is to help each member of the team serve the common calling and goal by helping each member of the team to use his or her gifts to the fullest potential. It is servant leadership and subordinated participation in joint ministry that is in view in Scripture. Therefore, the term "ministries" is suited to convey this better than the term "roles."

### ***Comment 2: Stepping in when needed***

That men and women have been "given" ministries does not mean that men or women are never to step outside the ministries for which by Creation they are best suited. There are times in this fallen creation, when due to circumstances or the failure of men or women to do their part, the partner will need to do what must be done. This is evident in Scripture. We think of Deborah, the judge, for example, who reluctantly accepted a military assignment because the men of the day were unwilling to do it alone. Women who have served so well and sacrificially in the history of global missions often illustrate the same point. Life in a fallen world is never as neat and orderly as we would like.

In addition, we need to recall that while men and women differ considerably, they do not differ totally. We do embody the traits of one another in varying degrees. Because of this, it is possible in emergency situations for one partner to assume the responsibility that would normally belong to the other.

### ***Comment 3: The heart of masculinity and femininity***

Since God by design has made us male and female, we are to understand and rejoice in our created nature as male and female. We will say something more about masculinity and femininity later when we consider data from nature. At this point, we want to note that in the Bible the central and defining aspects of masculinity and femininity are found in the order and ministries of male headship and female subordinate support. Whenever this order of Creation and these ministries are ignored or denied, a silence on the nature of masculinity and femininity settles in. Equality is defined as interchangeability. Competition replaces complementarity. This is evidenced dramatically by the society in which we live. Our culture generally and erroneously asserts a unisex interchangeability of men and



women. It tends to deny the difference between men and women with the exception of the erotic aspect that it depersonalizes, commercializes and exaggerates. Clearly our society is greatly confused about sexual intimacy and sexual mores. This departure in principle and practice from traditional and biblical norms has proven a devastating, harmful error as we can see in the state of things today, including our high divorce rate.

To date, even the biblical egalitarians, who deny that the man is the head of the family and that female submission is the biblical norm, seem to believe, when one has stated that men and women are equal, all that is of importance has been addressed. God, having made us male and female, deems otherwise. This makes it all the more important for us to explore and embrace the biblical teaching concerning men and women and to model it in the Church and family life so that we may glorify God and be a witness to a confused society.

Since a great deal depends upon our understanding of the way God has ordered Creation with respect to men and women, we want to look briefly at the biblical accounts of Creation and the Fall in Genesis 1-3 and then at some aspects of the New Testament. By turning to Genesis 1-3 first, we follow the example of Jesus and the Apostles. They appealed to the Creation accounts to determine God's purpose and order for humanity and to see the effects of the Fall.

## **Old Testament**

Three main points stand out in Genesis 1-3:

### ***Point 1: The equality of men and women***

Men and women each are created in the image and likeness of God, "...bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh..." The equality of men and women is made clear by the fact that they both share the same human nature. Animals are not of the same order or nature as man, but men and women are of the same order. Eve was taken neither from the dust nor from an animal but from Adam. She is the partner who corresponds to and is "meet" for Adam. Together they have dominion over all living things and together they have a common mission to populate the earth and care for the Garden. There is no way for a male superiority complex or a female inferiority complex to find any basis on Scriptural grounds. In the face of each and in complementary fashion, the glory of the Creator is to be seen reflected. Love, respect and unity are meant to be the order of the day, not a battle of the sexes.

### ***Point 2: The difference of order and ministries between men and women***

If our equality in the image of God is the basis of our unity as man and woman in marriage and society, our difference as male and female is fundamental to the living out of our partnership as one. While sharing a common nature made in the image and likeness of God, men and women are different. This difference or distinction arises from the way God has created us and how He has ordered our creation. Adam, the male, is first. He requires a partner and helper to be fulfilled as well as to be able to carry out the joint task of populating the earth and tending the garden of Creation. Eve who is created for Adam and from Adam's substance is given to him as his "helper." This order, uniting two into one, is a wonderful mystery that mirrors in Creation the mystery of the life of the divine Trinity and

Christ's love and unity with His body the Church.

In the life of mutual love and belonging between man and woman, there is the distinction of complementary ministries that rest on the order of Creation. Eve has the ministry of motherhood and as nurturer of the family; she is the subordinate overseer of the household and helper to Adam. Adam has the ministry of fatherhood and of providing protection, spiritual direction and provision for Eve and the family as well as to represent the family and people of God to the world.

While the words "headship" and "submission" are not used in Genesis 1-3, the reality of the order and complementary ministries of male headship and female subordinate support are present. It is because this order and these mutual ministries reflect the Trinity and are fundamental to the order of Creation that they are pervasive in all of Scripture. God does not change and Creation abides throughout the entirety of God's story with humanity. Even after the Fall as found in the New Testament, God's grace does not abolish the order of Creation but redeems it from the disastrous effects of the Fall and perfects it.

***Point 3: God's intended order and the ministries of man and woman are distorted in the Fall.***

We are not what we have been created to be. In the Fall the human heart is corrupted, the order of Creation is distorted and the ministries of the man and of the woman are flawed. The ministry of headship in the fall of humanity easily becomes selfish domination on the part of men. This often provokes either false passivity or rebellion or both on the part of women who themselves are fallen. Lost is true love and partnership. The common mission is disrupted and conflict in human life becomes the order of the day. Men and women no longer find true fulfillment in the Lord and in one another. Given the devastating effects of the Fall, the work of grace in Christ will be not only to restore the caring ministries of headship and support but also to deepen to levels of sacrifice the ministries of headship and of support and nurture. These are to be lived out in Christ in a new covenant people with a global mission in God's name in which godly order is embodied and seen.

We are convinced that this interpretation of the general lines of Genesis 1-3 is faithful to the biblical text. It sets the pattern and context for the rest of Scripture. We note that St. Paul interprets Genesis 1-3 in this fashion (I Co.11:8-9, I Tim.2:13 in Part 3 below).

## **New Testament**

Turning to the New Testament, we find repeated and explicit affirmation of the complementary ministries of male headship and of female submission and support. What is perhaps most striking is that when reference is made to these ministries of headship and support, it is done in order to give guidance concerning some inappropriate behavior going on in the new situation of the Church in Gentile settings. For example, women were prophesying with heads uncovered in Corinth. The Apostle Paul corrected this by appealing to the way God had ordered Creation as the basis of male headship and female submission in order to give guidance concerning the proper manner for women to exercise the gift of prophecy while honoring their husbands. The Apostle makes a similar appeal to the order of Creation when he writes to the saints in Ephesus. To argue in this fashion makes sense only if

male headship and female submission were known by the Apostle to be anchored in Creation and to be clearly stated in Scripture so that it could serve as the commonly accepted basis for the correction of the behavior.

In the various New Testament texts that urge submission, there is often a reminder to the one administering oversight that it is to be done as a ministry of sacrificial service and in the name of God. In the family, the husband is called to exercise headship with the sacrificial love of Christ. Christ's love is both the model and source of the husband's love for his wife and children when there are children.

At this point, we must consider a particular text because it is often cited as abolishing male headship for all who are in Christ. Some have suggested that Galatians 3:28 is a master New Testament text about the relationship of men and women and that it removes male headship in family and Church. It is thought to do this when it states that in Christ there is "neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female...." The context of this text, however, refers to the basis of salvation. The gift of justification received through faith and depicted in baptism rests upon grace and not works. In matters of salvation, there is no distinction as Paul frequently points out. God is no respecter of persons because "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." In this regard, the Apostle Paul certainly did not mean for this "neither male nor female" to obliterate all distinctions in male and female reality and relationships.

Such a view erroneously extends the meaning of this text. As Christians, men remain men and women remain women. Husbands and wives as well as parents and children do not cease to be such when they become Christians. There are Jewish and Gentile Christians in the New Testament and even today. Slavery was not immediately abolished in society or even in the Church. There were Christian masters and Christian slaves, as we read in the Letter to Philemon, though slavery's foundations were undermined in Christ, for slavery is no part of the order of Creation and appears only after the Fall.

The point is that Galatians 3:28 does not refer to headship and submission at all. It does not address the ministries of men and women in family or church. It is, therefore, not a master text defining all New Testament teaching on the relationship of men and women. It does not even define all of Paul's teaching on the subject. It certainly does not undo the order of Creation to which the Apostle Paul and other New Testament writers repeatedly turn to affirm male headship and female subordination (I Co.11: 3-4; Eph. 5:22-33; I Pet.3: 1-7, see Part 3).

In the epistles of First Timothy and Titus, we find explicit and significant treatments of the place, the duties and the character of those who are to be presbyter/bishops or elders. These texts provide the primary basis in the New Testament for our developed offices of priest/presbyter and bishop. In both sets of texts, the persons referenced are men. There is no hint of women serving as elders in the texts that discuss these ministries. Just the opposite is the case; it is clear that it is men who are to serve in these ministries.

It is possible that the women referenced in the middle of the treatment of deacons in I Timothy 3 could be female deacons. That will be discussed later in Part 4 of this report which considers the diaconate.

Lastly, in this overview of the Bible's teaching on the ordination of women, we note that there are two specific texts that appear to deny outright the office of priest/presbyter or bishop to women. They are I Corinthians 14: 33-35 and I Timothy 2: 9-15. These texts assume and reflect the universal view of male oversight in the people of God found throughout Scripture. They make explicit application of this order and ministry in particular pastoral situations.

These texts only corroborate what is found throughout the Scriptures. Since they require rather extensive discussion for several of their phrases to be understood, we will withhold further comment on them until Part 3 of this report.

### **Conclusion of the argument from Scripture:**

We conclude this fundamental argument by asserting that the Scriptures do not envision, authorize or permit women to exercise the headship that is contemplated for those ordained to be priests/presbyters or consecrated as bishops. It is contrary to the mystery of the Trinity, to the character of God's act in Creation and to the created nature of men and women that mirrors the mystery of the life of the Trinity in marriage, the family and in the Church. The Scripture having said, "No." the Church has no right or authority to ordain women to these offices for, as the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion put it, the Church "ought not to decree anything against the same." (Art.20)

We turn now from the argument based on Scripture to arguments based on the significant corroborative evidence of theological reflection, on the observation of nature, on experience of life in society and on Church history.

### **The argument from the symbolic character of the offices of priest/presbyter and bishop:**

The ordination of women symbolically distorts the scriptural revelation of God due to the intimate connection between the nature of God and the symbolic character of the ministry of priests/presbyters and bishops. Symbolism is powerful in effect and defies easy explanation. We ask the reader to give very careful attention to our attempt to articulate this important reality.

The Christian worldview is theistic. As we have seen above, the one and only God transcends the world that He has created while at the same time sustaining the world and acting within it. In His revelation, God the Creator names Himself to us in male terms. He is "He." He is the Father as revealed in the Son. Even the Spirit often takes male pronouns in the New Testament while being grammatically neutral. Female pronouns are never used to refer to the Spirit, the Father or the Son. God has no female consort. His action is likened at times in Scripture to the action of a mother because He acts in motherly ways showing that He also has the attributes in Himself that are mirrored more fully by women. However, it is always clear in Scripture that His attributes adhere in Him and are exercised by Him Who is beyond the world and not to be strictly identified with it.

A review of the history and typology of the world's religions discloses that it is only in Scripture, and to a certain degree in the corrupted offspring of Scripture found in Islam, that God and the world are so understood. The dominant tendency in the world's religions is

some form of religious monism. The religions of the world tend to be pantheistic, not theistic. Feminine symbols and images of God, goddesses, female consorts, priestesses and the giving of birth to the universe are religiously widespread. When the feminine is given the same prominence as the masculine, pantheism is the usual result. This brings with it the manifold problems of pantheism. At almost every point, pantheism is a worldview and a religion in direct contradiction to God's Word in Scripture.

The point we want to emphasize is that the ordained priest/presbyter and bishop through their ministry of Word, Sacrament and governance necessarily represent God to His People. The ordained ministry is, therefore, inescapably symbolic of the God it represents. This reaches a high point sacramentally in the celebration of the Eucharist when the priest/presbyter expounds the Word of God written and takes the words of Christ, the Son of God incarnate, on his lips in the consecration and distribution of the elements to the faithful. This symbolic character of the priestly ministry is inevitable. It is fitting, therefore, that the priest/presbyter representing Him be male. To put it differently, it is not merely coincidental that feminist theologians (often clergy), have begun to push for the "re-imagining" of God and the alteration of the Faith in a feminist, pantheistic direction. One of the mildest but revelatory examples of this is their refusal to speak to God or of God as "He." Instead, they use phrases such as "God reveals God's self" so as not to speak of God revealing Himself. The most moderate of them tend to limit the use of "Father" to the Lord's Prayer.

Even when the ordained woman is orthodox in faith and not a theological feminist, by being a woman serving as a priest/presbyter or bishop, she has imported a contrary symbolism into the representative ordained ministry. Such symbolism will inevitably push matters in the wrong direction in the Church. We can already see it being done.

### **The argument from the difference between man and woman as depicted by the sciences:**

General revelation studied by the descriptive sciences of biology, psychology and sociology confirms the biblical teaching on the appropriateness of male headship and female partnership, submission, and nurture. It concurs with the biblical teaching that there is a distinction between men and women that is deeper than social tradition and needs to be respected in order for society to be healthy.

Extensive treatments of this material drawn from the sciences can be found in the appropriate chapters in the books by Hauke and by Grudem and Piper as found in the Bibliography and in Stephen B. Clark's book *Men and Women in Christ*. What follows is only a brief summary of what is found there:

#### **1. Biology**

As human beings, we are not determined by biology; but, as unified persons of body and spirit, we are limited, influenced and given an orientation to our whole person by our bodies being either male or female. This spiritual significance of our bodies is an aspect of God's sacramental way with us. Biologically men and women differ; the male is physically more outwardly directed and the woman more inwardly. This is evidenced in a number of ways. In sexual intercourse, the man imparts and the woman receives. The male bone structure is generally heavier and better shaped for

addressing obstacles in the environment; whereas the woman's bone structure is weaker and shaped for the bearing of children.

The male hand is stronger and the male striated musculature is more capable of strong and sudden contraction. The arm and chest muscles are generally larger and more developed in the male. The bodily form of the male is more rugged with wider shoulders and narrower hips suitable for outward action. Whereas, the female form is more rounded and smoother with smaller, narrower shoulders and wider hips, suitable for the bearing of children. Recent studies have stressed the benefits of breast-feeding of the newly born and the measurable, beneficial impact upon the IQ of babies from being reared in the early years by the mother. Women are biologically oriented toward the family, and men are more oriented toward the world.

## 2. Psychology

Descriptive psychology studies the consciousness of human beings. Building upon the physical differences, different mental and emotional traits are found between men and women. Maleness and femaleness are, therefore, far more than can be described in biological terms. Our sexuality or gender pervades our person.

Men usually have more distance from their emotions and evidence a tendency to detach themselves from immediate reactions; whereas, women tend to be more immediate and spontaneous in their responses. In patterns of thought, men tend to analyze, objectify, disassociate, classify and synthesize; whereas, women are more prone to be intuitive, personally related and to exercise empathy. Men tend to be more visual/spatial and women more verbal. Men are less aware of their bodies than women tend to be. Men are more goal-oriented, and women are more care and need-oriented. Women are more holistic in viewing a situation, and men tend to focus on some given aspect that will lead to a particular course of action. Women are more capable mentally of multi-tasking and nurture. Men are more inclined toward sequential planning, goal setting and achieving. Women are more welcoming in orientation; whereas men are more aggressive and competitive.

## 3. Sociology

Societies differ in many respects. However, sociologists have discerned a number of trans-cultural or common traits that characterize every healthy society. They reflect the biological and psychological factors listed above. Clark identifies them as follows:

- Sexual division of labor
- Complementary roles in the Communal and Domestic Spheres (Men bear primary responsibility for the larger community. Women bear primary responsibility for domestic management and the rearing of young children.)
- Some form of female subordination to the male (Men govern the larger communities while women exercise their responsibility for domestic management and the rearing of children under the oversight of the husband.)



- Cultural expressions of gender differences between men and women. (413-415)

Clark goes on to point out that sociologists have observed in societies such as ours, where these traits are significantly weak or obscured, the following consequences:

- Family life is weakened,
- Sexual relations become troubled,
- Women often lose a sense of value,
- Womanly roles are neglected,
- Manly roles are neglected, and
- Men and women develop psychological instabilities." (442-443)

The above data simply confirms what is clearly taught in Scripture. This should come as no surprise for the Creator and the Redeemer who authored nature and Scripture, is one and the same. He does not contradict Himself. The Church, which is meant to be a new community in Christ and not merely a religious institution dispensing periodic, professional religious services, is called to model and embody in our life together what God has given us in Creation and Redemption. We are to give full and appropriate place in our common life to masculinity and femininity as found in Scripture and in the natural order. To place women in authority over the congregations would violate the natural order of things as taught throughout the Scriptures and as observed in the sciences.

Scripture speaks directly about the family and Church due to their uniquely intimate connection to God. It does not explicitly address the wider reaches of society with regard to male and female ministries. Therefore, in this report, we do not attempt to address the wider social patterns. Much reflection is needed by all concerned before such application should be attempted.

#### **An argument from the Church's relation to our contemporary culture: the importance and place of submission:**

In light of the remarks of Clark cited above, we note that there are ways in which we, as the Church, need to be counter-cultural. One of these ways is to bear witness to the created order and ministries of male headship and female submission and support. There is great need in our culture for us as a society to embrace the place of submission in life. We are a culture known to have "an authority problem." We need to show our neighbors a better way by living it out in families and in the community of the Church. As we embrace godly submission in the life of the Church, we have the opportunity to provide a strong witness to the culture in which we live. Departing from God's order of things in the family and in the ordained ministry would contradict and obscure that calling.

#### **An argument from the nature and state of the family:**

That which is said of the society and culture as a whole can also be said of the family. God has a plan for the family. Today, boys and girls are growing up in families in which they are receiving almost no instruction on manhood or womanhood and in which the model of family life is anything but gracious and healthy. Instead of a father's headship and the mother's support, assistance and nurture, there is often an absence or lack of spiritual leadership and an overabundance of bickering, competition and eventual divorce. A church that is not in the proper order in its leadership and committed to living in accordance with God's way will not offer the help and witness that is needed for its own families, much less the society around it.

#### **An argument from the nature and state of human sexuality:**

The contemporary confusion about the place of sexual intimacy, about sexual identity and sexual morality in our society is not unrelated to the condition of the family, the general ignorance of the Word of God or to the weak teaching and witness of the Church. The issues of homosexuality, adultery and fornication are all clearly addressed in Scripture. We can do much better. The path to healthy sexual mores and practice in our culture depends on a wholehearted return to the teachings of Scripture in the life and witness of the Church.

#### **An argument from the feminizing of the Church:**

The ordaining of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate will surely lead to the feminizing of the Church. In many congregations, the Church has already been largely feminized. For some time, women have carried the chief load of the work of the Church in the West. The ordaining of women to the priesthood and episcopate can only make a bad situation worse. Since men are by Creation fitted to lead spiritually, they cannot and will not be willing, in the long run, to serve under the spiritual leadership of women. They will simply leave the Church to the women altogether. Europe is a case in point. The ordination of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate will only speed up this unfortunate process.

#### **An argument related to evangelism:**

We are told that if we exclude women from the priesthood/presbyterate and from the episcopate, then we will offend many in our culture. It is true that to exclude women from anything has become counter-cultural and offensive in our society. To do so will, no doubt, initially be offensive to many. On the other hand, while some will be offended, such a stand will attract the attention of others. They will take note that there are people who are willing to stand and be criticized for the Truth they affirm. Both the courage that is involved and the conviction that there is truth worth suffering for is noteworthy today.

However, there is no evangelism without the risk of offending if one is faithful to the Gospel. To be told that one is a sinner and lost forever unless saved by Christ is not good news in the eyes of those who have not yet come to grips with their sinfulness, and who do not have a sense that they need a Savior. One never knows when that awareness will be given to an individual. (It is up to God.) We, for our part, need to do the right thing because it is right. That holds true both for evangelism and for ordination.



### **An argument from tradition:**

The contemporary pressure and the demand for the ordination of women is a local and recent matter in the history of the Church. It is Western. It arises in a secular culture and amidst a decadent Church. That in and of itself does not disqualify the demand, but it surely places a large question mark beside it. Ours is a society that no longer can agree on what it is to be human, much less what it is to be male and female. We need to consider the source.

When a change is as radical a change in the interpretation of Scripture as the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate would be, and as radical a change in the Church's practice from the Fathers on, we rightly insist that the burden of proof lies with those who make such a proposal. When this proposal arises from a secular society and amidst a compromised Church, and when it is a request from but a tiny minority of the Church universal, the burden of proof required to legitimize the change becomes even more demanding.

Such proof has not been forthcoming, quite the contrary. The teaching of Scripture and evidence cited above from God's creative order are both contrary to the innovation of the ordination of women to these offices.

### **An argument from the nature of the universal church:**

This objection can be stated very briefly. What right can such a tiny portion of the church universal have to make such a fundamental change unilaterally when it affects our understanding of so many of the doctrines of the faith and deepens the division between Church bodies of orthodox faith? Surely failing to persuade the vast majority of the world's Christians in their several Communions should give us profound pause and lead us to test things by a fresh examination of Scripture. Scripture, when taken as a whole and as the normative Word of God, is in opposition to the ordination of women as priests/presbyters and bishops.

With this last comment we are brought back to Scripture, which is where we must decide ultimately. It would be wise to review the argument from Scripture before turning to Part 3.

### **Conclusion of arguments against women's ordination:**

There are compelling reasons to affirm a male priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate. First and last, Scripture does not allow for the ordination of women to these offices as these offices function within Anglicanism. We are convinced that the exegetical section will only serve to substantiate that statement. In addition, we believe we have indicated that there are important theological, ecclesiastical, social, scientific and missiological reasons that corroborate the teaching of Scripture.

We are very desirous that women exercise their full ministry in the Gospel, in the Church, in the family and in society. We want the full flowering of womanhood and manhood in complementary partnership to be modeled in our families and in the Church. We believe that to ordain women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate can only hurt the family, the Church and society. It will hurt, not help, women. It will do wide-spread damage. We pray that our presentation of this evidence and these arguments, as well as the

sustained reading of Scripture, will lead us all in the right and godly direction. It is there that the glorifying of God, and joy, fulfillment and health are to be found.

### Part 3: Exegetical notes relating to key texts

The following texts have been chosen because they are representative of the texts upon which the arguments for and against the ordination of women have been based. There are undoubtedly more texts that could be cited, but they would not add substantially to the discussion.

The texts are arranged under various categories. When there are several texts in a category, then they are listed in biblical order in that category.

After each of the texts, we will make general comments indicating the context of the verses and any other pertinent features. Then we will indicate through specific notes how those who support the ordination of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate interpret the text and how those who believe God has established a male priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate interpret them. In some cases, both views will interpret the text largely alike.

Please keep in mind that these notes do not endeavor to provide a complete exegesis of the texts but instead seek to explain the leading interpretations of the texts and their significance in so far as they are related to the question of the ordination of women. While reading these texts and notes, the reader should be asking which of the interpretations seem to be most faithful to the texts. Also, the reader should be considering which of the options of application seem to be best supported by the texts. Those options are set forth and discussed in Part 5 of the Report.

## Texts

The texts are arranged in the following order:

- 1. Men and women in Creation**  
    Genesis 1:26-28  
    Genesis 2:18-25
- 2. Men and women in the Fall**  
    Genesis 3:1-17
- 3. Men and women in the Old Testament**
  - a. Aaronic priesthood  
        Exodus 28:1-5
  - b. Women in ministry  
        Judges 4:4-10, 5: 7
  - c. Women in the family  
        Proverbs 31:10-31
- 4. Jesus and women**

- a. Learning  
Luke 10:38-42
- b. Exercise of authority  
Matthew 20:20-28
- 5. Pentecost and women**  
Acts 2:16-21
- 6. Apostles and men and women**
  - a. No distinction between  
Galatians 3:26-29
  - b. Men and women in the family  
I Corinthians 7:1-5  
Ephesians 5:21-33  
I Peter 3:1-8
  - c. Men and women in ministry  
I Corinthians 11:12-16  
I Corinthians 14:31-40  
I Timothy 2:8-15  
Titus 1:5-9

## 1. Texts relating to men and women in Creation:

Genesis 1:26-28 (RSV)

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

### General Comment:

Chapters 1-11 of Genesis set the context of God's rescue of fallen humanity that begins with Abraham, moves through Israel, Jesus the Christ and His Church and culminates in the new heaven and new earth found in the Book of Revelation. Genesis establishes this context by describing the beginning of the Creation, the fall of humanity and the spread of sin throughout society.

In so doing, an utterly unique worldview that pervades the Scriptures is set forth. It is often pointed out that in the very first sentence, "*In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth,*" atheism, polytheism, pantheism, dualism, materialism, idealism, anthropocentrism, humanism and fatalism, the chief views found in human religions and philosophies, are all refuted.

This specific text is part of the initial depiction of God's creation of the world and all that is in it. God's act of original Creation is described in a soaring, architectonic picture of six workdays or periods bringing things to an unsullied completion.

The God who creates is singular, but there are hints of plurality connected with Him. One of the words for God in Hebrew is "Elohim" which is plural in grammatical form but takes a singular verb. Throughout the Scriptures the uniqueness and singularity of God is emphasized, *"Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is One."* This dominant stress on oneness is accompanied by the plural of "Elohim" and by the "us" in the phrase *"Let us make man in our image."* This may be an early foreshadowing of the plurality in unity of the Trinity that is only fully revealed in the New Testament writing. If so, it provides the divine pattern for man and woman being of one nature, made in God's image and likeness, yet being different and distinct from one another while also being made for one another, to be joined as "one flesh."

The Hebrew word used here for "create" is "bara." It is the word used almost exclusively for God's action of creation. It goes beyond fashioning something already there and points in the direction of a creation from nothing, or of a new beginning, or an advance so profound as to require divine action of a special sort. It is used at three points in this account of Creation: at the absolute beginning, at the creation of life and at the creation of humanity. These are all points where something dramatically new appears.

The climax of this grand, sweeping presentation of Creation is God's creation of mankind in His image and likeness, male and female. The uniquely high place which humanity has in the eyes of God and in relation to the rest of Creation is emphasized by this fact. It is also emphasized by the fact that humans were created at the climax of Creation, by the use of "bara" for God's action, by the divine consultation prior to creating humanity and by the fact that humans alone in Creation are said to be created in the image and likeness of God.

### **Pro Comments:**

There is in this inspired presentation of Creation a strong emphasis upon the equal dignity of men and women. Both are made in the image and likeness of God and thus set apart from and over the rest of Creation.

We note that both men and women were given dominion over all the earth and all the things upon the earth. Together they are elevated above all other creatures and are to serve together as God's vice-regents over them.

The call to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth is clearly a joint calling and partnership in which each has an essential and continuing part to play.

The fact that men and women were created as distinct and different emphasizes that both are important and that a person is male or female by creation. There is no subordination in this account, and it should not be read into it.

### **Con Comments:**

We agree with the above comments with the exception of the last one. We too want to

recognize that the text teaches the full equality of men and women, their joint fulfillment of God's calling for the human race and their unique unity in marriage.

We agree that this text of the Scripture declares that God created us as men and women, and it also emphasizes the equal importance of both. We would simply underline that it does, thereby, make clear that the difference itself is important. Men are to be men, and women are to be women. This will receive more attention in the next text, and we will comment on the implications there.

However, there is a reference to male headship and female submission in the text. It is found in referring to humanity as "Adam." In short, the name for human beings in Scripture is "man." In the next text in Genesis and elsewhere in Scripture, "Adam" also refers to an individual man as distinguished from "Eve," the woman. This pervasive biblical usage that makes the male name serve for the whole of humanity as well as for just males is of great significance.

This biblical perspective has also shaped the usage of the English language. It has been customary in English, until recently, to use "man" to refer to all humans inclusively as well as to refer only to males. The recent discomfort some women in our post-Christian culture and secular society find in this usage is a sign of the increasing loss of appreciation for Scripture's witness about the relation of men and women. One would hope that understood biblically the headship it reflects might be seen as a comforting covering rather than an exclusionary "put down."

#### Genesis 2:18-25 (RSV)

*<sup>18</sup> Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." <sup>19</sup> So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup> So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; <sup>22</sup> and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." <sup>24</sup> Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.*

#### General Comment:

In contrast to the more general presentation of God's initial act of creation in the first text, this text comes from a section that presents Creation with a narrower focus on the creation of mankind. It also sets the stage for the fall of humanity. With its more concentrated focus on the creation of Adam, the first man, and on the creation of Eve, the first woman, we can expect fuller teaching about the difference between men and women and about the order or nature of their relationship as intended and created by God. This particular text is the one most often quoted by Jesus and the Apostles when they wish to discuss the relationships of

men and women as ordered by God's intention in Creation. Because of the importance of this text, the comments on it will be more extensive.

The focus in this portion of the text is on the creation of Eve. God discerned that there was something lacking. God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." It is not spelled out why. We should be cautious about reading the text as if it were exclusively referring to a sense of loneliness on Adam's part. Adam's being alone has wider dimensions. There is incompleteness as long as Adam is without a true partner, since Adam, as the representative of humanity and as the only individual male, could neither care for the whole earth and exercise dominion over it nor be fruitful and multiply in order to fill the earth. Such a vocation requires a society of human beings spread across the earth. Such a society of human beings arises only from men and women united in families.

The animals are not able to provide a fit partner for Adam. They are created and brought before Adam and are named by him. In the light of Genesis 1:27, we can observe that the animals were not made in the image and likeness of God as was Adam. He needed a partner also made in the image and likeness of God who could share in the God-given vocation for mankind and who would, therefore, be fit for him. To this end, God created Eve from Adam and for Adam.

Adam's cry of delight speaks of the joy, the amazement and of the intimacy and openness between the two. The reference to being naked and unashamed does also. They fit together and are suitable for one another, because they were created the one from the other and for the other. They are a unity in proto-typical marriage.

The importance of the comment of the man leaving his parental home and cleaving to his wife as one flesh refers to the importance of the nuclear family and, thereby, establishes the priority of the bond between husband and wife over all other relational ties. It does not, however, imply a separation from the extended family or the wider society of which the new family is a vital part.

### **Pro Comments:**

We are mindful of the crucial importance of this text. It tells of God's intention for man and woman from Creation onwards. Neither the Fall nor diversity of culture can change His purpose. This being the case, it is important that we not misread the text nor read into the text notes of male authority that are not there. Since this has happened so frequently, we want to make some extensive comments about specific terms and phrases in the text that will help prevent that from happening.

- 1) *"...not good for man to be alone"*: When God says that it is not good for the man to be alone, He underlines the fact that "filling the earth and exercising dominion or subduing the earth" is not a mandate that the man can do alone. It will take man and woman, families, tribes, and larger communities to do that. A man alone cannot reproduce.
- 2) *Social, nature*: In addition, we take it to refer to the inherent social nature of the man and mankind. Adam means both in differing contexts. Since humankind and the man, Adam, are made in the image of God and since God is triune and has an inner

relational life of love, man is by nature social. Adam as a single man is, therefore, incomplete and needs another alongside of him to be himself.

- 3) *"...A fit helper..."*: God declares that he will make a helper "ezer" fit or suitable for Adam. "Helper" in Scripture does not necessarily mean inferior or a subordinate. God is frequently spoken of as our "helper" or the "helper of Israel." There are other words in Hebrew that make it clear when the helper is a subordinate, but they were not chosen to describe the one who will be created as Adam's helper. "Helper" might be better translated "partner" as a companion who will share in the work that is to be done.

This helper will be a suitable helper "fit for him," a helpmeet. The Hebrew word is "knegdow" and does not imply a subordinate. In the Septuagint Greek translation of this text, "kata" with the accusative is used, which means "in accordance with" or "corresponding to." The Latin Vulgate uses "homoiousios," which means "of like nature." The emphasis of the helper's suitability is on likeness, not on subordination. Subordination must not be read into the text when it is not there.

- 4) *Adam was created first*: Some have thought the fact that Adam was created first and the woman second implies Adam has a primary position and the woman a subordinate position. But mere temporal priority does not always imply authority for several reasons:
- a) If that were true, then John the Baptist would have authority over Jesus because he was born before Jesus, but actually Jesus has authority over John.
  - b) Others have suggested that the later institution of primogeniture in Israel, in which the eldest son inherits two times as much as the other sons, supports the interpretation that since Adam was created first, he had authority over Eve. This parallel is utterly inappropriate. Here we are not speaking of the relations of sons to sons and the inheritance of property. In addition, primogeniture did not primarily address the question of authority. Were that the case, David, the youngest, could never have been made king in Israel over his eight older brothers. Further, the text we are considering refers to Adam and Eve before the Fall, and primogeniture was established in Israel after the Fall.
  - c) Some have interpreted the Apostle Paul's reference to Adam being created first in 1 Timothy 2:8-15 as supporting this line of thought, but a more careful look at this very complex and difficult text (see Part 3 below) will show that is not the case. The suitable helper will serve alongside and with Adam in a common mandate. She is not called to serve Adam, except in the sense that we are all to serve one another. In short, we cannot conclude that mere temporal priority implies male headship or authority and female submission.
- 5) *Adam names the animals*: God creates the animals and brings them to Adam to see what he will "call" or "name" them. Keep in mind that we are concerned in this text with the provision of a suitable helper for Adam. Adam names them all and does not find any of them suitable to be his partner. That is the point of this action.



Some have seen in this naming of the animals an act of authority by Adam, which seems unlikely. Given the purpose of this verse, Adam's naming of the animals is a matter of Adam's discernment, not authority. God is seeing what Adam will call them and whether Adam will find any one of these animals to be a suitable partner for himself. God has already authoritatively given the animals their nature or named them in the most authoritative sense.

This part of the text which refers to the presentation and naming of the animals, does two things: it sets the stage for the climax of the entire text in the creation of the woman and her presentation to Adam and his response that follows. It also makes clear that bestiality is unnatural or contrary to Creation and thus forbidden, as is emphasized later in Leviticus where bestiality is declared to be "an abomination unto the Lord."

- 6) *God creates the woman from Adam's rib*: Previously God had created Adam and the animals from the earth. Here he creates the woman from Adam, the man. Surely this makes clear in a most striking way that the man and the woman are of like nature, that they belong to one another and that while she is different, she is different in an equal and complementary manner. There is not a hint of her being made for a subordinate relation to man in this action.
- 7) *Adam's joy*: When God brings the woman that He has made before Adam, he cries out with one of the more often quoted verses of the Old Testament:

*"This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."(Gen. 2.23)*

Adam sees immediately that the woman is the partner or helper fit for him. The delight of Adam underscores the dignity of the woman and the likeness of the woman to himself.

- 8) *Adam names Eve*: Some have thought to find a subordination of the woman in the fact that Adam stated, "She shall be called woman." and that is what he named her. They have concluded this on the basis that naming can be an act of authority in Scripture. However, we do not find that to be a convincing line of thought for several reasons:

Naming is not a male prerogative in Scripture. In the 45 explicit cases in which children are named in the Scriptures, at least one half of the time it was the mothers who did the naming.

- a) Nor is naming necessarily an act of authority. In this case, it is Adam's act of recognition of the nature of the woman. He is "ish" male and she is "isha" female. This joyful recognition of woman does not use proper names for either the man or the woman. The term "woman" here is a common noun. Her proper name, "Eve," a name full of promise, is not given her by Adam until after the Fall where male domination finds its origin. To add the note of authority here in the pre-Fallen state is inappropriate in the extreme.
- b) The emphasis in this text lies on the likeness and suitability of the woman for



the man and on the joy of their belonging to one another. Authority and submission simply do not fit into the thrust of the text.

What we have before us in the creation of Adam and Eve is a more detailed account of what we have read briefly in the first chapter of Genesis in verse 27, *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."*

- 9) *Marriage*: The writer goes on to spell out the relationship of this suitable partner and co-worker to the man. She is referred to as Adam's wife. Marriage and families are before us.
  - a) It is important to note that when "leave" is used it emphasizes that the new family is distinct from the parental families. This does not imply isolation from the extended families, but there is a leaving and cleaving that takes place and a new union and unity is formed. The woman is not subsumed into the family of the husband nor is the husband subsumed into the family of the wife.
  - b) It is also important to note that the "one flesh" union is only between husband and wife. It is a unique union and is not between parents and children. Of course, it is also not between men and men or women and women. Sexual intimacy between parent and child or between persons of the same sex is unnatural and contrary to Creation; and it is clearly declared to be so throughout the Old and New Testaments. Sexual intimacy is to be between husband and wife.
- 10) *Unashamed*: The text concludes with husband and wife naked and unashamed. It thereby affirms the goodness of God's provision of the helper fit for the man and of marriage as their relationship. There is nothing hidden from one another because in the pre-fallen situation all is in accordance with the will of God. There is no sin and, therefore, nothing of which to be ashamed, whether in the sight of God or of each other. The work of filling the earth and subduing or exercising proper dominion over the earth can now begin.

In all of the above, there is no mention of male headship or female submission. It is rather a joyful celebration of man and woman together, side by side, in the plan and provision of God. The woman is to serve alongside and with man; she is not to serve man except in the sense that both are to serve one another. Such is God's intention in Creation. We find no limitation here to the ordination of women.

#### **Con Comments:**

We concur that this is a crucial text and have no doubt (along with the Church for almost 2000 years) that it sets forth an order of Creation concerning the man and the woman. In the context of mutual dignity and equality between man and wife, it is an order in which the man is to exercise caring oversight or leadership; and the woman is to be supportive to the man and submissive to his headship in the family and in the wider family of God, the Church.

We note that this text on the Creation of Eve is in narrative form. Therefore, the meaning of the specific actions and phrases of the text must be interpreted by their use in this narrative and by the basic thrust of the narrative. It is also to be interpreted in accord with what the rest of the Bible declares about this text. There is an old saying, "A text without a proper context is a pretext." Here the context must be taken with great seriousness.

Under God, Adam is the leading man in this narrative in a two-fold sense. He is the leading man in the sense that the narrative centers on him. In it God is concerned to provide Adam with what Adam needs for Adam to be and do what God has called him to be and do. We see God treating Adam as a son. Adam is also the leading man in this text in the sense that he exercises authority and leadership in the actions of the narrative. The woman, while fully his equal, "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh," serves in the narrative as the "moon to his sun" as the appropriate helper for him. This initial and overall impression of the narrative is confirmed and deepened as we look at the specifics of the text.

- 1) *Adam was created first*: It is true that temporal priority does not always connote authority and is not always significant, but in this narrative it is very significant and is stated to be so for the woman will be created from him and for him. For that to be the case, it requires that Adam already be created and of significance in and of himself. This truth is reflected in the fact that God and the man had quite a little dialogue and mutual activity prior to the creation of the woman.
- 2) *The woman was created from Adam*: It is instructive that the woman was not created from the earth or "dust" as were Adam and the animals. Her creation from Adam makes it clear that there is only one human race that derives from Adam and that Adam is the head and representative of all humanity. It also makes clear they share the same nature and thus are both created "in the image of God." Also, it provides the basis for the "one flesh" union of man and wife in marriage; they correspond to one another, are fit for one another and belong to one another because she was created from him. In this, Adam has the lead.

That the woman was created from Adam's side (or "rib," as the translation of the Hebrew is "tsela") is also instructive. Many commentators have said something like:

*"She was not taken from Adam's head to be his master, nor from his feet to be his slave but from his side near his heart to stand alongside of him as his equal, to love him and assist him and so he could love her, guide, protect and provide for her."*

- 3) The woman was created for Adam: Neither here nor anywhere in Scripture is it ever said that Adam was created for Eve. When one observes that the woman was created after Adam, from Adam and for Adam, it becomes clear that an order of creation in marriage and family is before us. This is further emphasized by the next point.
- 4) *The woman was created to be a suitable helper to Adam*: The reference to being created to be a "helper" ("ezer") for Adam in context also makes the point of his headship and her submission. It is true that a superior can be a helper to an inferior. God often serves as a helper to Israel and to all the "sons of Adam," to all human beings. A man can help a man, or a woman help a woman, or a parent help a child; but

it is not said that the very creation of the one was in order to be the helper of the other. That, however, is precisely what is said here of the creation of the woman. Having made that point, we must quickly add that since the woman is created in the "image of God," her dignity and gifting are not fully defined by nor exhausted in the marriage partnership with the man; she is, however, centrally oriented and created for that relationship and service. In the context of mutual belonging and equal dignity, an order of leadership, assistance and of governing oversight and willing submission is built into Creation.

- 5) *God addresses Adam and not Eve:* The leadership of Adam and the subordinate role of Eve is evidenced by the fact that God addresses Adam from beginning to end. He expects Adam to relay His, God's, prohibitions and provisions to Eve. Later after the Fall, we shall see that God holds Adam responsible for the Fall and addresses him before he addresses Eve. The lead conversation throughout is between God and Adam.
- 6) *Adam names Eve:* The woman is brought to Adam, and Adam is given the responsibility for discerning her nature and declaring it. He calls her wo-man "isha" in distinction from his being man "ish." This not a personal name; it is a generic name. Adam gives her the personal name of Eve later, after the Fall. There is a debate among orthodox interpreters about whether this naming is an exercise of the authority by Adam. Noted commentators tell us such naming was an act of authority both in Scripture and surrounding cultures (von Rad 83). In either case, the fact that the woman is named and identified in terms of the man is instructive.

Adam was not brought to the woman to be named nor did they name one another; rather, God brought her to Adam to be named by Adam. This fits into the general place of leadership given Adam throughout this narrative. Eve at this point says nothing. She is receptive like a bride being given in marriage.

The entire New Testament interprets this text as the basis for male headship and female submission. This is the most impressive and ultimately authoritative endorsement of our careful reading of the text as we have set it forth.

This interpretation of Genesis 2 by the New Testament writers is of particular significance to Anglicans who are committed to a canonical interpretation of Scripture by Article 20 of the Thirty Nine Articles. Article 20 states,

*"And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another."*

This means that the apostolic writings' interpretation of this text is decisive. How then do they regard this text?

- a) We have already noted that throughout the Scripture it is Adam, not Eve, who represents the human race. *"Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created."* (Gen. 5:2). This practice continues in the New Testament. It is even true of the Fall into sin, although it is Eve who sins first. *"As in Adam, all die..."* (I Co. 15:22).

b) St. Paul explicitly cites this text in Genesis 2 three times in order to exhort women to submission in various forms to male headship (Eph. 5:31, 1 Co.11:8-9, 1Tim. 2:13-14, see the exegesis of those texts). It is important as well to note that the Apostles always base headship and submission in Creation. The interpretation of these texts will be set out below (see Part 3).

c) Lastly, we want to underline the fact that male headship and female submission are found in the New Testament, for example, in the texts just listed as well as others. If it is true that the order of male headship and female submission arose only as a consequence of the Fall, and if it is true that redemption in Christ removes the effects of the Fall, then there would be no place for male headship and female submission in the New Testament. It is found there as a universal and abiding order to be honored by men and women in the family and in the Church.

### Conclusion:

When the various elements of the text are read within the general flow and concern of this narrative text, the emphasis upon Adam's overseeing headship and Eve's position as the assisting helper is clear. The order of creation of male headship and female submission between equals in the family and the Church can be denied only when the various events, names and actions of this narrative text are removed from their context in the narrative and are also interpreted in contradiction to the New Testament understanding of this text. But such an approach to interpretation is flawed interpretation and is contrary to Anglican doctrine concerning the nature of Scripture as "God's Word written."

According to Genesis 2, God in His goodness, wisdom and overflowing love has created us to live together in unity in a given order. We are to affirm His gift and rejoice that in Christ He has restored and fulfilled that order by His grace.

## 2. A text relating to man and woman in the Fall Genesis 3:1-17 (RSV)

*<sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?" <sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" <sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.*

*<sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are*

you?" <sup>10</sup> And he said, "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." <sup>11</sup> He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" <sup>12</sup> The man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." <sup>13</sup> Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup> The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." <sup>16</sup> To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." <sup>17</sup> And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

### **General Comment:**

Chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis present us with the first fundamental presupposition of God's saving work found in the rest of Scripture. It is His work of creation culminating in the creation of the human race in His image and likeness. This cosmic Creation is a varied and ordered Creation. Its diversity includes the creation of humanity as male and female, and its order involves His ordering of the relation of man and woman.

Now in Chapter 3 of Genesis, we turn to the other fundamental presupposition of God's saving work: humanity's fall into sin and the consequences that this has for the human race as well as for the cosmos. From the Fall onwards, the good Creation is distorted by and corrupted by the power of sin. Humanity and all of Creation henceforth stand under the judgment of God and are also caught up in the titanic struggle between good and evil, God and Satan. The whole of Creation would ultimately be lost were it not for God's saving action beginning with Abraham and reaching its climax in Christ. It is, therefore, against the background of Creation and the Fall that the biblical account of salvation must be understood as God moves us toward the final consummation of all things in glory.

Earlier in Genesis 2:16-17, God revealed to Adam that he was not to eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" lest on that day of disobedience he would surely die. Biblical ethics are from start to finish "Revelation Ethics." The tree was not revelatory by mere physical appearance. It was the tree as selected and interpreted by the Word of God that had a special importance and place. Humans must hear from God if we are to know who we are and our purpose and limits.

This initial command of God, which begins with a generous invitation and permission to eat of every tree in the garden but the one prohibited, including the "Tree of Life," underlines the fact that Adam is a creature both beloved by God and under God. To be sure, Adam is made in the image of God and of great significance, but he is not God and is, therefore, still answerable to God. The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" defines good and evil. Good is to obey from the heart the good God; evil is to disobey the Lord and, thereby, to enter into the consequences of such disobedience, which is death.

Later in Scripture, we learn of the dimensions of the death spoken of here. Spiritual death is immediately actualized; physical death will begin immediately but will be consummated fairly shortly, and final death, which includes eternal suffering in the lake of fire, is one of the last or final things. After the Fall, shame or guilt before God, the loss of intimate fellowship with God and between Adam and Eve and a tendency to shift the blame of sin on to others now appear in the human story. It has continued to be so ever since.

There is much to be learned about the nature and power of sin from this extensive text quoted above. However, we must forego much that is of interest and focus upon what we can learn from the text concerning the relationship of men and women and its implication regarding the ordination of women.

These are the momentous realities of which this text speaks: the expressions of the proper and of the distorted or improper relationship between men and women as seen in this account of the Fall.

We turn now to look in more detail at the various pertinent aspects of the text from both pro and con perspectives.

#### **Pro Comments:**

##### *1) Eve was not alone, and Adam was equally complicit in the Fall from the beginning.*

Because the opening dialogue takes place between Satan (or the Serpent) and Eve, it is often assumed that Eve was alone and separated from Adam when she was tempted, deceived and fell. A closer look at the text does not support that interpretation. The first point to note is that apparently the serpent uses the plural "you" when he speaks. He is apparently addressing both Eve and Adam who is standing by her. This is reinforced by the second point. After she eats of the fruit, Eve turns to Adam and gives him some to eat. The text explicitly states that he was "with her." This is not always translated from the Hebrew as being self-evident, but it is there. They were together in this from the beginning of the Fall.

Several things follow from this:

- a) Because the woman did all of the responding and the man stood by in silence, it does not entail that an order of male headship and female submission is involved. It is more likely that being mutual partners, either could respond for both.
- b) Adam is complicit with Eve for at no point did he intervene to resist the devil. It would seem that he concurred with her step by step. How else are we to understand the fact that immediately after Eve ate from the forbidden fruit she handed it to Adam? He, without a word, received it and ate also. It appears he was already in agreement. We cannot, therefore, consider one of the partners to be guiltier than the other.

##### *2) Eve was not more gullible or deceivable than Adam*

It is true that Eve was beguiled or deceived by Satan's innuendoes and outright lies.



But if Adam was with her, so was he. If he were not deceived, how are we to understand his eating the forbidden fruit? Are we to understand that he simply ate in conscious, unflinching, flagrant disobedience to the command of God? That seems unlikely. Keep in mind Adam personally heard God declare "...on the day that you eat of it you will surely die," whereas Eve had only heard of it from Adam.

### 3) *The curses reflect pre-fallen conditions now distorted by the Fall.*

Every one of the curses or pronouncements of judicial consequence involves a pre-fallen situation now distorted by the Fall and now under the judgment of God.

In the narrative text, God begins with the source of the evil, the serpent, moves to the woman and culminates with the man in His judicial pronouncements.

- a) *The serpent (Satan):* Here, as in the other persons, what was good before the Fall becomes distorted and serves as a means of judgment. Before the Fall, the Serpent ate delightful food, but now he must eat the dust. Before he walked upright, but now he must crawl on his belly. Before the Fall, the Serpent was blessed, but now he is cursed above all animals. Before, the Serpent was in harmonious relationship with mankind, but after there is continual strife and in the end the "seed of the Woman" will destroy the Serpent. The severity of the curse and prediction of being crushed points to the presence of Satan in some way indwelling the Serpent who must in some way have consented to serve as his agent
- b) *The woman (Eve):* God did not accept Eve's shifting of blame upon the serpent. It is important to stress that the distortion of the marriage relationship between the man and the woman due to the Fall does not of itself assume a headship-submission order before the Fall. In fact, our interpretation of Genesis 2 made it clear there was no such order of Creation before the Fall. We must, therefore, conclude that the rise of the male governance in the family and Church and restrictions on women's spheres of ministry are consequences of the Fall and will be removed in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. This becomes explicit in Galatians 3:28 which will be interpreted below.
- c) *Adam:* God was not impressed with Adam's shifting of blame upon Eve and implicitly upon God Himself. Adam was surely fallen to criticize God. Adam's eating brought a curse on the ground so that after the Fall it would bring forth thistles and weeds. Adam was to continue his work of tilling the soil, but now he would eat by the sweat of his brow and his work would be very hard. God further reinforced his original commandment, "...the day that you eat thereof you will surely die," with the statement to Adam that he had come from the dust and to dust he would return.

The consequences of the Fall were devastating indeed. Were it not for the "seed of the woman" we heard about in God's Word to the serpent, there would be little hope. Mankind would be dead in trespasses and sins, far from God and without hope in the world.

**Conclusion:**



There is nothing in this text that would lead one to believe there was an order of male headship and female submission existing prior to the Fall. Rather, male governance and female submission can best be accounted for as arising from the Fall. That being the case, we can expect it will be removed in the redemption that is ours in Christ. Subsequent New Testament texts will bear this out.

### Con Comments:

We believe that a careful reading of this text will support the interpretation of Genesis 2, which we have given previously, and which asserts that male headship and female submission are an order of Creation and, therefore, existed prior to the Fall. The New Testament writings referred to above affirm this. We will show this to be true by examining the several features of this text that reflect that order of Creation as prior to the Fall.

- 1) Generally, the curses upon the serpent and the earth, as well as the consequences of the Fall for Adam and Eve which directly impact humanity as their seed, are all presented as affecting what was already in existence prior to the Fall. Eden or Paradise is prior to our being expelled from Eden. We now live "East of Eden." Paradise is no longer our home.
- 2) There is a specific pattern to be observed in this text concerning created relations and their subsequent distortions. The distortion is keyed to what it distorts. The judgments pronounced upon the man and the woman follow this pattern. Prior to the Fall, they ate of the fruit of the Garden; now they would eat bread by their labor. Prior to the Fall, the earth produced richly, but now the earth would produce thistles and thorns. Prior to the Fall, the man worked tending the garden; now he would raise crops only by exhausting work and the sweat of his brow. Prior to the Fall, the woman was created to bear children so mankind could multiply and fill the earth, and now the process of child-birth would be painful.

In each case, there is a distortion of what existed prior to the Fall. The same pattern applies to headship and submission. Prior to the Fall, the man was head and the woman was submitted to his care and oversight; now, because of the Fall, this care and oversight becomes domineering ("mashal" is the Hebrew word chosen which denotes harsh rule or domination). Her desire for her husband is now so intensified that she will not depart even from his distorted rule.

We do not find here the emergence of male headship and female submission as is claimed by some interpreters. Rather, we have the distortion of the faithful exercise of the ministries of headship and submission. This is in parallel with every one of the other consequences mentioned. Since that is the case, it makes sense that in the New Testament writings, as we shall see, male headship and female submission are redeemed and deepened in the love of Christ, not abolished. As the Church Fathers said, *"Grace redeems and perfects nature, it does not abolish it."*

- 3) We note that a most significant role reversal is found in the account of the Temptation and the Fall. The Serpent addresses the woman first and tempts her to disobey the Lord. This time the Serpent reverses God's order, for God always spoke first to Adam.

At the point when the Serpent is tempting Eve and lying to her, Adam does not step in and provide wise council and oversight. In this he fails his mandate given him by God to "keep and guard the garden" as well as to exercise appropriate headship with regard to his wife. The woman is deceived and transgresses the command of the Lord. In the end, the woman takes the lead, and the man follows her into transgression.

This very form of the Fall violates the created order of husband and wife. In taking the lead and acting without consultation with her husband, Eve became vulnerable, was deceived and fell. Had they both exercised their proper roles, they would have withstood the subtlety of the devil. This is the most likely understanding of what St. Paul is referring to in I Timothy 2:14. (See Part 3 for a fuller discussion of 1 Timothy 2:14)

When God sought out the couple after the Fall in Genesis 3:9, He first called out to Adam. It was His custom to address Adam first. This was prior to God's pronouncement to the woman that her husband would rule over her. So this practice on the part of God did not arise due to the Fall. It reflects the representative headship God had bestowed upon Adam in Creation.

Lastly, when the New Testament refers to the entrance of sin into the world despite the fact that Eve sinned first, the apostolic writers uniformly refer to the Fall as Adam's deed not Eve's. "*As in Adam all die*" (I Co. 15:22, 49); "*...just as through one man sin entered the world,...*" (Rom. 5:12); "*...if by one man's offense many die...*" (Rom 5:15).

In Romans 5:12-21, the history of mankind is described in terms of Christ and Adam. Adam, the sinner, and Jesus Christ, the new Adam who does not fall, but rather, in all innocence and righteousness, bears the curse of our fall and sets us in right relationship with the Father and on the road to glory and perfection. This manner of speaking reflects the headship of Adam which is rooted in Creation and his supreme culpability for the Fall. We note that the eyes of Adam and Eve were not opened until Adam sinned by violating the command of the Lord.

Up to that point the Fall had not been completed. One wonders what would have happened had Adam refused to eat? We can only speculate.

### **Conclusion:**

There is nothing in Chapter 3 of Genesis that would indicate that the realities of male headship and female submission arose as part of the Fall. If there were, it would place chapter 3 in contradiction to chapter 2 and in even more explicit contradiction to the New Testament writings. Just the opposite is true. All through this account of the Fall, we find reflections of male headship and female submission in the family and later in the Church, relationships that are rooted in Creation and distorted in the Fall.

### **3. Texts relating to men and women in Israel\_**

#### **Aaronic priesthood**

Exodus 28:1-5 (RSV)

<sup>1</sup> "Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests—Aaron and Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. <sup>2</sup> And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. <sup>3</sup> And you shall speak to all who have ability, whom I have endowed with an able mind, that they make Aaron's garments to consecrate him for my priesthood. <sup>4</sup> These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a girdle; they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests. <sup>5</sup> They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen."

### **General Comment:**

This text concerns God's establishment of the Levitical or Aaronic priesthood in Israel after God's miraculous deliverance of Israel from Egypt, His leading them through the wilderness to Mount Sinai, and the dramatic events of His making a covenant with Israel.

After manifesting His glory and power during those events, God makes provision to dwell in the midst of His people. He details the specific instruments of His meeting place (the Ark of the Covenant, the Table of the Bread of the Presence, etc.) and of the material and form of the Tabernacle that would contain these instruments, as well as the courtyard and its sacred objects. The glory and splendor of God is reflected in everything connected with this His dwelling place.

All of this also prefigures or serves as a type of Christ Who is to come, in Whom and through Whom God will dwell with His people. Having given these instructions, which make clear that God will be present and receive worship on His terms as the Lord and Holy One, God appointed those who would minister in the Tabernacle as priests before Him. Due to human sinfulness and to God's holiness, they will offer sacrifice and serve as mediators, representing the people before God and God to the people. God chose Aaron (Moses' brother) and the tribe of Levi to be priests before Him but chose no others. God then specified in detail how they as priests must be attired in order to reflect both God's glory and also the people of Israel whom they represent. The clothing is also typical of Christ Who is to come, the full and final mediator.

The life of the priest was to be an example of holiness to the people. Their priestly duties were numerous. Central to their duties was the responsibility to offer sacrifice in the holy place or places, and supremely in the Tabernacle. Later, this was concentrated in the Temple. They were to be guardians of and to conduct ministry in the holy places. They were to pray and serve as intercessors, to pronounce blessings, consult God through the urim and thumim, give judgment to the people, serve as physicians to a degree and teach the law to the people. In doing this, the priests were central to God's active relationship with His people and His people with Him.

The strong requirement and specificity of these instructions concerning the tabernacle and priesthood underline the fact that there was nothing casual about the relationship between God and His people. God is the Lord and holy; and his people, while beloved sinners, lived in fellowship with Him by His grace. They were called to obey Him and to put God first in their lives.

There is no great controversy about the salient features of this text. God established the priesthood as He chose. He chose only one tribe of the twelve. It was a male priesthood. None of the men from other tribes and no women were to serve as priests. This pattern never changes in the entire Old Testament.

The New Testament, however, finds the fulfillment of this Aaronic or Levitical priesthood in Jesus. He is the indwelling presence of God, the Mediator, the fulfillment of all sacerdotal (sacrificing) priesthood and the High priest. He offers Himself as the final sacrifice, the one on whom the Father has placed the iniquity of us all. He is the eternal High priest who never leaves office. He ever lives to offer intercession in heaven for His own on the basis of His propitiatory sacrifice completed on the Cross once for all. Christ having made the final sacrifice, there is no sacerdotal priesthood in the ministries of the Church as described in the New Testament.

The language of priesthood in the strict sense is applied only to Christ and to the Church as a whole with regard to its call to proclaim the saving deeds of God to the nations and to pray for the nations in the name of Christ. The tasks of the leadership, of worship and the teaching of the people fall into the hands of the elders, or pastor-teachers.

The word "priest" as used in the Anglican Communion after the Reformation comes from the Greek term "presbyteros" which is often translated "elder." It does not come from "hiereus" which refers to the Old Testament sacrificing priesthood.

#### **Pro Comment:**

It is instructive that Christ completes and fulfills the Aaronic priesthood in Himself. There is, therefore, no reason on the basis of the Old Testament priesthood to continue a restriction of the ordained priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate to males in the New Covenant.

Further, since the Church as a whole is referred to as "priestly," and since men and women are equal members of the Church, the Body of Christ, women are already priests in the same sense as are the men in the New Covenant. Why then would we wish to refuse the office of priest/presbyter to them.

#### **Con Comment:**

The main point to be made from the above text with reference to the question of the ordination of women is that there were no women priests in the Old Testament and no women elders in the New Testament. The practice is the same. God ordered and orders the specific ministries of His people as He sees fit and this, as the Old Testament priesthood makes clear, has not been on a "democratic" or "egalitarian" basis. If God restricts the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate to males, as we believe many texts make clear that He does, then making restrictions would not be unusual for Him.

In addition, to argue, as is done above, that since the whole of the Church is "priestly," therefore, its various members are individually priestly and suitable for ordination to the priesthood involves the logical fallacy of "composition." One cannot argue that the characteristics of the whole are necessarily the characteristics of the individual parts of the

whole. If that were true, one could argue that since an orchestra playing a concert makes a blend of tones including those of the flute, then every member of the orchestra was a flutist or played all of the instruments. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul makes quite the opposite point concerning the Church as the Body of Christ with its diverse members and gifts.

## Women in ministry

Judges 4:4-10, 5:7 (RSV)

*<sup>4</sup> Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. <sup>5</sup> She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment. <sup>6</sup> She sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, gather your men at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. <sup>7</sup> And I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the river Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.'" <sup>8</sup> Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go." <sup>9</sup> And she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. <sup>10</sup> And Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and ten thousand men went up at his heels; and Deborah went up with him....5: <sup>7</sup> The peasantry ceased in Israel, they ceased until you arose, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.*

### General Comment:

Some women did serve in key positions in Israel. Perhaps the most dramatic example is Deborah. We will take her as the representative of the three women who are referred to as prophetesses, as well as her own unique calling to be both a prophetess and a judge in Israel. She is particularly notable because she is a woman exercising leadership in Israel.

Deborah served as a judge in Ephraim. Her "office" was a palm grove somewhere between Ramah and Bethel. There the people would come to her for judgment, counsel, and adjudication of difficulties. However, a judge during the period of the Judges in Israel was not only one who administered "mishpat" judgment but was also a deliverer. A judge was called and enabled by God to deliver Israel from her oppressors. Our text describes Deborah in the midst of such a deliverance. She is clearly exercising leadership. In fact, the reference to her being the wife of Lappidoth (which means torches) could be translated not "wife" but "woman of torches" or a fiery woman, a strong leader. We never find the word "Lappidoth" referring to a personal name elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Deborah is also referred to as a prophetess (literally, "a woman, a prophet"). A prophet was one of the highest instruments of God's revelation in the Old Testament. A prophet was chosen by God to proclaim His Word to His people. God's Word through a prophet could be

an exhortation to repentance, to change behavior, or a warning of judgment to come, or a promise of future deliverance or an interpretation of some action of God in the past or present. It may well be that in this text we find Deborah having received a Word from the Lord concerning Israel's call to engage in military combat against an oppressive, superior force with God's promise of victory.

It is instructive that the general of the Israelites, Barak, would not trust her "word from the Lord" unless Deborah was willing to put her life on the line and go with him into battle. She chose to go but made it clear that the glory of victory would not go to him but to a woman. In the end, it went to a Kenite woman who slew the Canaanite general Sisera with a tent peg while he slept. This sealed the victory for Israel, and shortly thereafter they killed the Canaanite king who had oppressed them for 20 years. Deborah was indeed a "fiery woman" of God.

In the next chapter, we find Deborah referred to as "a mother in Israel" in the poetic "Song of Deborah." This refers to her strong leadership. Life in the villages had all but ceased due to invading marauders until Deborah rose up, called the people back to God and drove out the Canaanites who were afflicting them.

In addition to Deborah, Miriam the sister of Aaron (Ex.15:20), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14) and the wife of Isaiah (Isa. 8:3) are referred to as faithful prophetesses in the Old Testament. It seems that Noadiah (Neh.6:14) was really a false prophetess; and, therefore, she joins company with many unfaithful male pseudo-prophets in the history of Israel. Deborah is the only woman to be both a judge and a prophet in the Old Testament.

#### **Pro Comment:**

This text makes it clear that there was no absolute ban, even in the Old Testament period, upon women exercising leadership in and over God's people and in the prophetic calling to proclaim and teach the Word of God to His people. Now that the effects of the curse have been in principle removed by Christ, so should any ban upon women serving in corporate leadership in the Body of Christ be removed today. Just as Deborah received a call from the Lord, so women today are also sensing a call to ordained leadership.

#### **Con Comment:**

We agree wholeheartedly that women who receive a call to exercise a prophetic ministry and various forms of leadership in the Body of Christ should be encouraged to do so. As we shall note in our comments on I Corinthians 11, the Apostle Paul explicitly affirms it. In affirming it, however, he does ask for submission to those in authority and to the husband. He also speaks of women being co-workers in the Gospel with him.

It is important to note, however, that both the judges and prophets in Israel were charismatic ministries; they were raised up by the Spirit of God for peculiar purposes at specific times. They were not priests, kings or elders nor even heads of households. They were not settled offices given in Creation or appointed in the people of God. With reference to priesthood in the Old Testament and apostleship and eldership in the New Testament, it would seem that there is a clear ban on women exercising those ministries, just as the



husband is appointed to exercise a ministry of headship in the home.

## Women in the Family

Proverbs 31:10-31 (RSV)

<sup>10</sup> A good wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. <sup>11</sup> The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. <sup>12</sup> She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life. <sup>13</sup> She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. <sup>14</sup> She is like the ships of the merchant, she brings her food from afar. <sup>15</sup> She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and tasks for her maidens. <sup>16</sup> She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. <sup>17</sup> She girds her loins with strength and makes her arms strong. <sup>18</sup> She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. <sup>19</sup> She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. <sup>20</sup> She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy. <sup>21</sup> She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household is clothed in scarlet. <sup>22</sup> She makes herself coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple. <sup>23</sup> Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land. <sup>24</sup> She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers girdles to the merchant. <sup>25</sup> Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. <sup>26</sup> She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. <sup>27</sup> She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. <sup>28</sup> Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: <sup>29</sup> "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." <sup>30</sup> Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. <sup>31</sup> Give her of the fruit of her hand and let her works praise her in the gates.

### General Comment:

There is no need for Pro and Con comments on this text. It is included to make clear that the ministry of women in Israel was not a constricted one but was wide-ranging and involved the use of all of a woman's gifts and talents. This was true in the "household" which was her usual sphere of ministry and responsibility.

This text concludes the section of the Book of Proverbs and in many ways sums up the entire book, since the godly woman and wife embodies the principles of wisdom found throughout the book. She does this spiritually because she knows that *"the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* She does this in practical deeds as well as by evidencing a virtuous and charitable character.

These verses are an acrostic poem in which the first letter of each verse begins with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet; therefore, the virtues listed are not arranged in an order of value.

We want to underline the wide range of responsibilities and activities in which the virtuous woman is engaged. We need to keep in mind that the "household" was far more than the nuclear family. It was a complex, complicated economic and family unit. It included



servants, sons and daughters and their families, the family business, a food producing farm, etc. The godly wife is involved in management, business, marketing, production, real estate, farming, and other related skills. In all these areas, she seems to have had the right to exercise leadership, to make key decisions as needed. Her reputation and respect is known in the city or town to the benefit, encouragement and delight of her husband and family.

Today, many of these activities could only be done outside the immediate family circle. Here is a godly woman well and fully employed. In fact, if we are to take the nuclear family responsibilities seriously, one wonders how all of this could be done by one woman; but then, in biblical times, the family household was a community that afforded numerous helpers.

#### 4. Texts relating to Jesus and Women

##### Learning

Luke 10:38-42 (RSV)

*<sup>38</sup> Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; <sup>42</sup> one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."*

##### General Comment:

This text is found in St Luke's account of Jesus' final march to Jerusalem in a section of teaching on discipleship. Jesus, as the bearer of the in-breaking Kingdom of God, enables a new quality of life to be lived in His circle of disciples. In Him, women are accorded the dignity that is theirs by Creation as made in the image of God. The distortions of the Fall and curse that had affected women's place in society were being overcome.

In His treatment of women, Jesus boldly broke many of the restrictive conventions of the society of His day. At a time when some rabbis would not even be seen talking to women in public, Jesus openly welcomed them into his traveling band of disciples, received ministry from them and taught them.

His teaching of women is particularly significant. In that day women were able to hear the Torah in the synagogue services, but they were not encouraged or often permitted to study it. In addition, no one was encouraged to teach the Torah to them. Women were to focus their ministries primarily in the household and were not to mix with men in wider society. Should men and women mix outside of the family, the rabbis feared a neglect of the family and the household and a violation of chastity would take place. Jesus incurred criticism for his restoration of women to places of equal dignity with men in His fellowship.

In this text, Jesus specifically emphasizes the importance of the study of the Word of God.

In those days to "sit at the feet" of a teacher or rabbi was to learn from him, to study. The fact that He addresses this to Martha, who was perhaps making over elaborate preparations to feed the group gathered, makes two points at the same time. First, Jesus affirms that the Word of God is essential to and a top priority in our relationship with God in the Kingdom. Second, He makes clear that women also are to learn, to study, and to sit at the feet of Jesus quite as much as men. The responsibilities of the household, no matter how pressing, do not take priority over the place of the Word of God in the life and ministry of women. This is fundamental to the full partnership women have in the life and ministry of the community of Christ.

In openly teaching women, Jesus opens up a wider ministry of teaching to women. To be taught is to be prepared to teach. Later the Apostles exhort women to teach. The older women are to teach the younger women. Women are primary teachers of the children in the family. Women are even seen teaching men in informal settings in the New Testament. We recall that when Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos preach and teach, they drew him aside and together they instructed him more fully in the "way of the Lord." It is striking that in His providential plan, the Lord has women be the first witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

In this brief survey of key texts, we let this text represent numerous texts that show the restored dignity that women receive in the presence of Jesus and in His company, the Church. This has abiding significance for the present.

#### **Pro Comments:**

In Genesis 2 above, we found no male headship in the sense of oversight and no female submission, but rather equal and mutual respect and shared decision making. It was in Genesis 3 in the Fall and the curse pronounced by God that we hear of male domination of women and women "desiring the husband." It is, therefore, in the Fall that male oversight and female submission find their origin and not in the plan of Creation. Since that is the case, we find that in Jesus the primal dignity of woman is restored; and there should be no limits to women serving as pastors in the Church. Jesus' teaching of women makes this point strongly.

#### **Con Comments:**

We agree entirely that in Christ the full dignity of women as equal to men and as made in the image of God is affirmed and restored. We want to see any false limitations upon women using their gifts removed from the life of the Church and family and society. However, that in no way means that the ministries of male headship and female submissive partnership in family and Church are canceled. First, as stated above in our exegetical comments on Genesis 2, headship and submission are found in Creation in Genesis 2 and do not arise in the Fall in Genesis 3. Second, it is the distortion of those ministries that is removed in Christ, not the ministries themselves. In Christ, each ministry is done in loving, even sacrificial servanthood. Third, we shall find that there is some restriction on women teaching in the New Testament in texts that follow, but clearly not on all teaching by women.

#### **Jesus and the exercise of authority by disciples**

## Matthew 20:20-28 (RSV)

<sup>20</sup> Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him, with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. <sup>21</sup> And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." <sup>22</sup> But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." <sup>23</sup> He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." <sup>24</sup> And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. <sup>25</sup> But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; <sup>28</sup> even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

### General Comment:

This text is found in Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem and comes immediately after Jesus' third prediction of His Passion and Resurrection. It is particularly poignant after such a profound statement by Jesus of his self-sacrifice for others that the mother of the sons of Zebedee should ask for positions of privilege for her sons. This request irritates the other 10 disciples, most probably because they too had their eyes on such positions. Jesus' teaching of servanthood as the shape of life in the Kingdom of God is thus called for again. This text concludes with Jesus declaring that His coming and dying, by His drinking the cup of the wrath of God in our place, is a supreme act of sacrificial service. "...the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many." Service thus frames the concern of this text.

It is in this context that Jesus speaks of the exercise of authority in the Kingdom. Such ministry is to be for the sake of others. It is a service that is not to be done selfishly as it tends to be done by the rulers of the Gentiles. The Gentiles "lord it over" those over whom they have been placed. Theirs is not a service but an arrogant exaltation of self done in a self-serving manner and aim.

### Pro Comments:

The very concept of "ruling over" is hereby denied by the Lord. Therefore, male, governing headship is denied. "*It shall not be so among you,*" said the Lord. Those who see the ordained ministry in those terms, as reserved for males as governing heads, simply miss the revolutionary vision of Jesus. Men and women alike are called to serve. It is the very shape of the Christian life. There is, therefore, no reason why women, truly called, should not be permitted to serve as priest/presbyters and bishops.

### Con Comments:

Once again, we gladly agree that service is the very shape of the Christian life. We are to "*consider others better than ourselves*" as St. Paul puts it in Philippians. However, this

discourse by the Lord is concerned not with the abolition of all authority in the family and Church but with the proper exercise of authority in those ministries. The problem is not that Gentiles have structures of authority and accountability but rather that they exercise them in selfish arrogance and self-preoccupation. This is a tendency rooted in our sinful hearts and is a constant temptation to us, Christ's disciples. The request of the mother and the irritation of the disciples illustrate this. Jesus who is Lord serves in all He does, so we, in whatever ministries we are given, are to do the same by His grace and example.

There is nothing in this text that directly addresses the order of governing headship and submission. If taken to reject all authority to be carried out in Christ, it would make nonsense of many of the key texts to follow.

##### 5. A text relating to Pentecost and the new community in Christ Acts 2:16-21 (RSV)

*<sup>16</sup>But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out 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; <sup>18</sup> yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup> And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; <sup>20</sup> the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day. <sup>21</sup> And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'*

This text is a part of St. Peter's sermon at Pentecost in which he defends the events of Pentecost from the false interpretation that the believers were inebriated with wine. His defense is that it is but the third hour (9:00 A.M.) on a feast day when fasting is practiced until the fourth hour (10:00 A.M.); therefore, it is not a time when godly people gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost could be drunk on wine.

Peter offers a more dramatic and biblical understanding of these events at Pentecost (the roaring wind, the tongues of fire, all being filled with the Spirit, their preaching and being heard in diverse tongues) was at hand. The prediction of the Prophet Joel concerning what would happen in the "last days" was being fulfilled. The Spirit of God was being poured out upon God's people as promised. Jesus Himself bid His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until the Spirit was given. The hour had come. The global mission of the Church to preach the message of salvation in the power of the Spirit was beginning.

All had a part in this mission. The Holy Spirit had been poured out on young and old, male and female, leaders and servants. These traditional distinctions between people were not limiting boundaries to the Spirit. None would be left out. All were to speak out; all were to proclaim and prophesy telling what they had seen. All were needed. It was only as they spoke that people would know to call upon the name of the Lord and be saved, and this was of particular urgency now that the events of the final days were beginning to take place. *"All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."* (Ro. 10:13)

It is salvation that lies at the heart of the Prophet Joel's burden and its fulfillment at Pentecost--Salvation. God is calling sinful people to Himself through His people by the

empowering of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of His Word, with signs and wonders accompanying. The Spirit was being poured out on His followers by the crucified, risen and ascended Lord Jesus.

#### **Pro Comments:**

It is important to note that not once but twice it is stated that the Spirit is poured out upon women, upon “*your sons and daughters*” and “*on My menservants and My maidservants.*” Here is a clear emphasis. In addition, the particular purpose of this outpouring of the Spirit that is emphasized is prophecy. These two facts simply underline the full equality of men and women in the life of the Spirit and in the life, work and mission of the Church and, particularly, in the proclamation of the Word of God. Women are to serve in a ministry of the Word of God as well as men.

#### **Con Comments:**

We agree in large measure with the above comments made by those who favor the ordination of women. It is a wonderful truth and great privilege of the New Covenant that the Spirit is given to men and women alike. He indwells us all. In fact, no one can call Jesus Lord, in true faith, except by the Spirit, as St. Paul reminds us. In these last days in which we live, the days of the Spirit, we all have the empowering of the Spirit and all share in the call to make the name of the Lord known. That is a blessing and calling given all of us in Christ.

However, we must be careful not to make a text speak to an issue which it does not address. We would point out that the text does not address the matter of priesthood/presbyterate, eldership, episcopate, male headship and or in what complementary ways the Spirit will empower men and women to minister His Word. In the texts that follow, it is clear that the Spirit is given to all who put their faith in Jesus and that all are to prophesy as the Spirit gives utterance, but this does not imply that both men and women are called to be priests/presbyters or bishops. That implication is expressly denied us. All ministry of the Word of God and all prophecy is not ordained ministry in our present-day sense of ordination.

### **6. Texts relating to the Apostles and men and women in Christ**

#### **No distinction between male and female**

Galatians 3:26-29 (RSV)

*“<sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise*

#### **General Comments:**

This text is in a section of the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Galatians that deals with the

movement of God's people from being under the law to being in Christ. The Apostle had earlier declared that we are justified by faith in Christ and not by our works under the law, for the law could not deliver us from the guilt and power of sin. He went on to make it clear that with regard to salvation, the priority belongs to God's promise given through Abraham. The law through Moses some 430 years after the promise could not annul the promise. Having made clear what the law could not do, the Apostle turns in this text to make clear how the law serves our salvation in Christ.

He tells us that the function of the law may be compared to the work of a custodian or tutor with regard to the son of a family as was done at the time of the writing of this Epistle. The custodian had the responsibility of overseeing the general conduct of the young student and also of leading the student to the teacher, protecting him along the way. In a similar fashion the law presided over the general conduct of God's people, that is, helped them to avoid absorption into the surrounding peoples. The law also led them to Christ by making clear their accountability to a Holy God and their inability to keep the law. They were sold under the guilt and power of sin and needed the Promised Savior. The law could reveal sin but could not deliver people from the power and consequences of sin.

Therefore, when Christ came, when the Gospel could be preached and when faith was given in response, God's people could move from being under the law to being in Christ. It is with the coming of Christ, therefore, that the deepest significance of faith for salvation is revealed. Further, it is by believing and being baptized that believers are united to Christ as Savior and Lord. They received the benefits of His dying and rising for them and participated in an inner dying and rising in Him; they "put on Christ" and began to experience a transformation into His likeness. Justification was declared and sanctification began.

This movement from being under the law to being in Christ applies to all who believe and are baptized into Christ: to Jew and Gentile, to slave and free, to male and female. These distinctions are no longer a barrier between them because they are all one in Christ. Regarding their entrance into Christ and their unity in Him, it is as if these distinctions no longer existed. They all share in the supreme dignity of being sons of God, offspring of Abraham, heirs in Christ of the promise made to Abraham.

In summary, the positive role of the law was and is to lead us to this glorious place, to be and live in Christ.

The specific verse of this text that is frequently cited with reference to the question of the ordination of women is verse 3:28. *"For there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* The following comments will disclose the various implications that have been drawn from this verse.

### **Pro Comments:**

First, we find in this text, particularly in verse 3:28, a major theme of the Apostle Paul's witness to Christ. It is that of a new life in Christ, a new creation, a new order of being. The old has passed away and the new has come--a new humanity and a new unity in Christ in which the old divisions of Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female have been



overcome. Now all are one in Christ and all share the supreme dignity that is God's gift in Christ as adopted sons and daughters in Him. To introduce any sort of discrimination of status would be to deny the strong emphasis of this text.

Second, we note the mention of baptism in this text and in this connection. Baptism has replaced circumcision as the sign of covenant belonging in the New Covenant. It is the sign that all who come to Christ in faith receive, whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. What a sight that would have been to see these people standing side by side in the baptismal waters; people who had not stood side by side before. The fact that women were able to receive the sign of the New Covenant in their own persons was a sign of the new dignity and status given them in Christ as adopted sons, heirs and offspring of Abraham in Christ. Nothing in the life of the Church should reduce this dignity and status that pertains to all, and with respect to this report, specifically to women.

Third, if the above two points are true, must we not conclude that to limit the ministry of women on the basis of gender is to reintroduce a pre-Christian restriction into the new life of common dignity and unity which is ours in Christ? Would this not be to fall back into a common life still bearing the marks of the curse as if we were still under the law and not in Christ? We believe Christ has set us free from all these things.

#### **Con Comments:**

First, it is worth repeating that the implications drawn from a text need to have some clear anchor within the text. They must not directly contradict other texts made by the same author on the subject about which the implication is being made. Also, the implication should not lead us into an impossible state of affairs from a biblical perspective.

Second, we note that the concern of this passage has to do with salvation in Christ through faith and how the law serves that end and upon the wonderful unity salvation bestows on all who are in Christ. It does not address at all the different ways men and women are to live out their ministries in their common status and unity in Christ.

Third, it is one thing to say that the distinctions of Jew and Gentile, of slave and free and of male and female are of no consequence with regard to entrance in Christ or dignity and unity in Christ. It is quite another thing to say that these distinctions have been obliterated in the life of Christians altogether. Christians do not teach androgyny. Men remain men, and women remain women. In fact, the Apostle himself in other texts directly addresses the relationships of men and women in Christ in terms of headship and submission. Therefore, it is not discrimination to recognize that these distinctions remain and pertain within the new life in Christ.

We want to repeat that we believe there is a unity and a common dignity and status of men and women in Christ which needs full and free expression but that does not thereby cancel the complementarity of our being men and women in Christ.

#### **Men and Women in the family**

1 Corinthians 7:1-5 (RSV)



*<sup>1</sup> Now concerning the matters about which you wrote. It is well for a man not to touch a woman. <sup>2</sup> But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. <sup>3</sup> The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. <sup>4</sup> For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does. <sup>5</sup> Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control.*

### **General Comments:**

This text is part of a larger section in which the Apostle Paul is addressing questions on the subject of marriage that have been written to him by the Christians in Corinth. Earlier, in 1 Corinthians 5, the Apostle had discussed and rejected sexual libertinism. At the other extreme, here he is addressing questions that seem to come from an unbiblical, negative view of marriage and sex. It was a false asceticism that had very likely caused some Corinthians to misunderstand some of the Apostle's own teaching when he was with them.

He begins by saying that it is well or good for a man not to touch a woman. By this, he does not mean, as some seemed to have thought, that marriage and sexual intimacy within marriage were morally forbidden to Christians or that celibacy is a morally superior manner of life for Christians. The Apostle was considering the nearness of the return of Christ and the urgency and size of the world-wide mission confronting the Church and saying it is good, wise, practical and appropriate for one to remain single in order to give all to the mission of the Church. There was so little time and so much to do. The Corinthians, at least some of them, misunderstood him. He makes it clear later that only those gifted for the single life would be able to embrace this calling and that marriage for those not so called and gifted was far better than living life in constant, burning, sexual frustration or falling into acts of adultery and/or fornication.

Not only was marriage appropriate for Christians, indicated the apostle, but sexual intimacy was right and good as well. Times of sexual abstinence in marriage should only be brief, for times of prayer and as mutually decided.

It is in making this last point that the Apostle makes a very dramatic statement. He declares that each partner does not have authority over his or her own body, but one partner does have the authority over the other partner's body. The husband has authority over the wife's body that belongs to him, and the wife has authority over the husband's body that belongs to her. It is this assertion of authority of the wife over the body of the husband with concomitant duty of the husband to acknowledge that his body belongs to her practically that would have come as a shock to both Gentiles and Jews in that culture. No doubt, the idea of either husband or wife having authority over the partner's body is rather shocking to us today in our individualistic culture.

### **Pro Comments:**

First, in this text, we find one of the profoundest statements of mutuality in marriage that could be expressed. To say the least, it was counter-cultural at the time it was written and

remains so in many cultures today. It presupposes a oneness in Christ and a mutual sensitivity of the highest order. It also presupposes the full dignity and equality of women that has been restored in Christ and is to be lived out in the family and the Church.

Second, one must ask how this radical mutuality could be compatible with the continuance of a patriarchy in marriage. If, at the heart of the married relationship with all its symbolic meaning, there is mutuality, how can we think that in the rest of the relationship headship and submission continued?

Third, we need to be mindful that the wider life of the community of faith builds upon the life of the family. If mutuality reigns in the family, then it must also reign in the life of the Church.

Fourth, since the above is true, it seems clear that there can be no barriers in principle to the ordination of women in the life of the Church.

### **Con Comments:**

First of all, we agree that there is in this text a wonderful expression of mutuality and unity in marriage as restored and redeemed in Christ. This oneness and mutuality remains a promise, a gift and a challenge for us all today. The Apostle Paul's bold statements are to be taken seriously by us all.

Second, there is no reason to believe that the deep mutuality and union in Christian marriage removes the complementary ministries of headship and submission in marriage any more than the mutuality of the Father and the Son removes headship and submission from the life of the Trinity. What it does make clear, as the Apostle himself points out when he compares the unity of marriage to that of the unity between Christ and the Church, is that the exercise of headship and submission is to be carried out in the strength and after the example of the sacrificial love of Christ for us. He will make this point in Ephesians 5 as well.

Third, biblical headship has never been about preferring unilateral decisions or orders passed down. Joint decision-making in areas where both are affected is not a contradiction of, but rather, the most desirable way of living out headship and submission.

Fourth, this text neither denies nor contradicts headship and submission. Instead, it sets forth the unity, mutuality and caring sensitivity in which headship and submission are to be lived out. It does not contradict the various statements in Genesis either or those in the New Testament by the same author of this text which affirm headship and submission in the family and the Church. We cannot and should not, therefore, use this text as an argument on behalf of the ordination of women in the Church.

Ephesians 5:21-33 (RSV)

<sup>21</sup> *Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.* <sup>22</sup> *Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord.* <sup>23</sup> *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.* <sup>24</sup> *As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.* <sup>25</sup> *Husbands, love your wives, as*

*Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,<sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,<sup>27</sup> that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.<sup>28</sup> Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.<sup>29</sup> For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the church,<sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body.<sup>31</sup> "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."<sup>32</sup> This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church;<sup>33</sup> however, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

### **General Comments:**

This is an important text with reference to several key concepts that bear upon the question of the ordination of women. We will, therefore, give it somewhat more extended treatment.

Because this text cannot be interpreted without taking sides on this issue, the "General Comments" will be rather brief while the "Pro" and "Con Comments" will be longer.

This text is a portion of a longer ethical section, Ephesians 5:1-6:9, dealing with "Walking with the Lord." The subsections can be titled: 5:1-7, "Walking in Love; 5:8-14, "Walking in the Light;" 5:15-6:9, "Walking in the Spirit." This text is in the last section, "Walking in the Spirit."

The key verse in chapter 5 is verse 21. It is a transition verse that ties the first part of the section on being filled with the Spirit to the last part of the section that deals with living in the Spirit in the order and relationships of husband and wife, parents and children, and masters and servants.

We are concerned in this text with the order and relationship between husband and wife. Verse 5:21 is important because it supplies the verb for 5:22 that begins the section on marriage. Therefore, in order to see the relevance of this text for our question concerning the ordination of women, we will see how each position pro and con interprets the following:

- The meaning of "submitting to one another"
- Christ as Head of the Church
- The submission of the Church
- The headship of the husband
- The submission of the wife

### **Pro Comments:**

*1) The meaning of "submitting to one another" in verse 5:21*

We must always be careful not to assume that the New Testament writers used certain words in the same way that we use them in our present culture. This is particularly true with the words "submit" and "head," used as a metaphor in our text. They are concepts of authority for us today, but they are not used as such in our text.

In the New Testament, the word "submit" (*hypotasso*) usually refers to placing oneself under an appropriate authority in a given authoritative order or structure. In chapter 5:21, this is not the case. The verb "submit" is qualified by "one another." What is meant instead is that each member of the Body of Christ is to humbly seek to serve every other member of the Body.

St. Paul made the same point when he exhorted the Philippians, "In humility count others better than yourselves." (Phil. 3:2). Official structures of authority are not in view but rather mutual submission, a humble, caring, loving servanthood for one another. Taking note of this is very important because this meaning of "submit" is borrowed in the next verse that has no verb of its own. It, therefore, establishes the meaning of "submission" in marriage in our text. It also will influence how we understand Christ's headship of the Church. To miss this point is to miss the entire meaning of our text in Ephesians 5:21-33.

## 2) *Christ as Head of the Church*

When Christ is referred to as "head of the Church," the word "head" is being used figuratively. There is a great deal of discussion in exegetical literature today concerning what the figurative use of "head" means in the New Testament. The dispute is whether "head" connotes authority or connotes source. Does "Christ is Head of the Church" mean that He is its nurturing source or that He is its Lord? Dictionaries of the Greek New Testament list both meanings. We cannot hope to resolve that debate in this brief study, but we can look carefully at the context of the word in the letter to the Ephesians more widely and specifically in our text to see which of the connotations is intended. It will become clear when we do so that "source" is the meaning intended and not authority.

The Apostle refers to Christ as "head" in two previous verses of Ephesians: 1:22 and 4:15. In Ephesians 1:22, we read that God has made Christ sit in heavenly places far above all rule and authority and above every name. God put everything under Christ's feet and made Him head over all things for the sake of the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. Here the emphasis is upon the transcendence and exaltation of Christ and upon His providential care of everything for the sake of the Church. The Church is His body that he fills and nourishes. The head and body share a common life. There is no emphasis upon his Lordship and authority but rather upon his being the nourishing head or source of the Church's life.

The same emphasis is even more strongly made in Ephesians 4:15. Here also, Christ is the head of the Church and supplies its growth in love enabling it to grow into the fullness of the stature of Christ.

The same is the case in our text "*Christ is the head of the Church, his body and is himself its savior*" (Eph. 5:23). The connotation is that Christ and the Church share a common life and that Christ is the gracious, saving, nurturing source of the Church's life. Once again the emphasis is not upon authority but upon shared love, a reciprocal relationship between head

and body. It is this kind of headship that provides the model for the husband's headship in marriage.

### *3) The Church's submission to Christ*

We read that the wife is “to submit to her own husband as the Church submits to Christ” (Eph.5:24). Just as the headship of Christ is the pattern the husband is to follow in his headship, so the Church provides the pattern of submission that the wife is to follow in her submission. How are we, the Church, to respond to Him who loved us and gave himself for us and, in the Spirit, daily nourishes us? We are to respond in praise, gratitude and love in the Spirit. There is a mutuality of love between head and body. The tone is not that of authority but of mutuality and love.

### *4) The husband's headship*

Husbands are told to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and gave His life for her. They are to nourish their wives as one nourishes his own body because husband and wife are one flesh in a union so profound it can only be compared to and surpassed by the mystery of the indwelling of Christ and the Church in the Spirit. A profound mutuality in love is being urged by the Apostle. Sacrificial love, not authority, is emphasized.

### *5) The submission of the wife*

In Ephesians 5:22, we read in a literal translation “Likewise wives (the verb borrowed: “be submissive to one another”) your own husbands, as to the Lord.” The verb is understood from the previous sentence in 5:21, which is to submit to one another. A mutual submission is being called for, not that of a subordinate to one in authority over her.

In conclusion, we would argue that this text rightly interpreted makes it clear that the language of headship and submission have been so transformed by the coming of Christ as to no longer refer to authority but to mutual love and servanthood. This being the case in marriage, it is also the case in the body of Christ, the Church. There is, therefore, no barrier to women serving in positions of eldership in the Church for the old has passed away and all things have become new. We must not reintroduce old patterns that arose from the curse into the life of the body of Christ.

### **Con Comments:**

Perhaps, before we turn to exegesis, we would do well to state that we share the concern for mutual love and servanthood to be the manner in which all relationship and exercise of ministries in the body of Christ are to be carried out. About that there is no disagreement. It seems strange, however, to assume that there is an innate incompatibility between such a quality of relationship and structures of authority and accountability. This is an odd assumption for Christians to make who worship Jesus as both Savior and Lord Who is, along with the Father and the Spirit, both our Supreme Authority and our Nurturer. Headship can be loving without ceasing to be headship, and submission can be loving without ceasing to be submission. In fact, that is precisely the meaning of this text. We believe careful exegesis and attention to context will make that clear.

### *1) The meaning of "submitting to one another" in 5:21*

The verb "submit" (hypotasso) is used 40 times in the New Testament. In every case, it means to place oneself under the authority of another, whether in a given specific structure of authority or in the general sense of putting the well being of others over your own, that is placing yourself under the other as his servant. There are a number of reasons why the pro ordination of women exegesis is inaccurate when it asserts that to qualify "submit" by "one another" removes the note of authority.

First, the suggestion that to submit to one another removes the sense of authority from the word "submitting" simply empties the verb "submit" of its meaning. It makes it mean something other than submission. To submit, by its very definition, is to place oneself under authority.

Second, the suggestion that using submission as an exhortation to everyone which in effect removes all specific structures of authority from family, church and society is odd. It further contradicts the consistent use of the verb "to submit" in the New Testament. The New Testament speaks often of submission of specific people to specific authorities in the Body of Christ. Neither authorities nor accountability or submission to authorities have been removed.

Third, such an assertion is poor logic, because it draws an unwarranted conclusion. The Apostle is exhorting each member of the Body of Christ to submit appropriately to one another in whatever ways are called for in the ordered life of the Body of Christ. To every person, we are to submit as servants in love. To those placed in positions of authority over us, we also submit in love honoring their authority as they exercise their headship over us in love. There is no change of the meaning of "submission" in this.

Fourth, in the various structures of authority listed in the New Testament where submission is used--masters and servants, parents and children, pastors and members of the Church, husbands and wives--the roles or ministries are never reversed. Masters are never exhorted to submit themselves to servants, or parents to children, or husbands to wives. The truth is that the general qualifier "one another" has not removed either the responsibility of headship to exercise authority in a Christ-like manner or removed the place of submission to specific structures in the body of Christ. It simply places the specific structures of authority and submission, in the context of mutual submission, in the whole body of Christ. St. Peter makes this point very clearly and in almost the same language as St. Paul when he writes;

*"Likewise you who are younger be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5)*

Fifth and finally, from the parallel text in Colossians 3:18-19, the Apostle, in almost the same language, exhorts the wives to be "subject to their husbands as is fitting in the Lord," but he makes no mention there of "being submissive to one another." If he had intended that phrase "submissive to one another" to change the fundamental meaning of "submission" and, thereby, to remove all authority from the husband's headship, it would be a terrible omission. By failing to mention the qualifier "one another" to the Colossians, he would have left them in the "old" pattern of headship and submission. We also think of other New Testament writers, such as St. Peter, who speak strongly of submission of wives to husbands without this "one another" qualifier.

There are more than enough reasons to let "submission" remain "submission." There is no change of meaning of submission in the New Testament and specifically none in Ephesians 5:21.

What then is the meaning of Ephesians 5:21? As a transition verse, it asserts that the Spirit-filled life of worship described in 5:15-20 is to express itself in humble submission to one another in general as well as submission in the specific structures of authority such as husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants. The section beginning with



5:22 then continues on to discuss these specific orders and relationships. Our portion of the section, 5:21-33, deals with one of these, the order of and relationship of husband and wife within marriage.

## 2) *Christ as Head of the Church*

As we deal with this controversial word "head," we do well to remember that it is being used of Jesus Christ. His headship of the Church provides the model after which husbands should model their responsibility and ministry of headship.

The question is: Does the concept of Christ as head of the Church connote authority or source or both, and if both, which is the dominant emphasis? We assert that the answer is: both, with authority as the dominant emphasis in our text.

First, we need to note the fact that it is impossible for Christians to think of Christ as Head without the overtones of His Lordship being squarely in the picture. We are speaking of the One Who is the Lord of the Church as well as the One to Whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given. To love Him is to keep His commandments. He came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. It is not headship in the abstract, but the headship of Christ as head of the Church that is presented to us in the New Testament and in our text.

Second, He is referred to as Lord in this text. In 5:22, we read: "*Wives, be subject to your own husbands as unto the Lord.*" The Lordship of Christ is clearly in the Apostle's mind.

Third, the Church is to submit to Christ. Since, as we have demonstrated, submission retains its particular meaning of submission to authority, it refers to the authority of Christ as head. For the Church to submit to Christ as head is to submit to Him as The Authority. Headship and submission explain one another. One does not submit, in New Testament usage, to a source; one depends upon a source and is enabled by a source, but one submits to an authority.

Fourth, the other instances of Christ as head in Ephesians refer to His authority. In Ephesians 1:22, we have a clear reference to His authority. He is exalted above all authority, and all things are placed under his feet. This is not merely transcendence but rule. The same note is found in Colossians 1:18 and 2:10. In Ephesians 4: 15ff, the sense of nourishing, enabling source of the Church's life is more upfront.

In this text, we have both connotations of authority and source. The use of submission as the leading theme points to the authority of Christ's headship as the dominant meaning. It is both unnecessary and wrong to play one connotation of Christ's headship against the other. It is the same Lord Who died for the Church and rose victorious, Who was exalted and ascended, and Who at the same time saves, rules and nourishes the Church through His Word in the Spirit. Headship is a particularly apt word precisely because it contains both connotations and, therefore, allows expression of the uniquely Christian view of loving authority as modeled by Christ.

### 3) *The submission of the Church to Christ*

The simple declaration that the Church does submit to Christ, as well as the mention of Him as the Lord to Whom submission is due, takes the Church's submission to Christ as head for granted. It was obvious and not something about which there was any controversy.

Submitting in practice may prove difficult at times but that it should be done was beyond doubt. Since this submission is in the context of the headship of the Savior who loved the Church and gave Himself for her and Who nourishes and indwells her, the submission or obedience is to be a glad and thankful surrender to Him. It takes place in an indwelling and intimacy so profound that marriage can be compared to it as a reflection between man and wife of the greater mystery of Christ and the Church.

### 4) *The headship of the husband*

In verses 5:25-30, the headship of the husband is discussed and modeled after Christ's headship of the Church. The husband is called to exercise his headship in the same sacrificial, loving manner that Christ did and does. The husband is to have as his aim helping his wife grow in Christ-likeness and helping her grow in grace. His ministry is clearly a servant ministry of leadership and provision, sensitive to her needs, her gifts and equal dignity with himself. In fact, the two are part of one another as being one flesh, one body. Just as a man cares for and nourishes his body, so a husband should care for and nourish his wife. The Apostle sums this up in these words, "...however, let each of you love his wife as himself." Eph.5: 33

### 5) *The submission of the wife*

In Ephesians 5:22, we read, "*Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord.*" That is, wives depend upon, support and follow your husband's leadership in love and joy with the same whole-heartedness as you give to the Lord. As the Church submits to the loving Headship of Christ, so the wife is to submit to the loving headship of her own husband. Harmony and peace will then fill the household.

This, of course, does not mean that a wife should follow the lead of the husband if he should walk in ungodly paths. The wife must obey the Lord in all things moral. Further, this does not mean that the wife is to be silent in the home and not participate in the decisions that affect the family and her own desires. It is not that "vigorous" fellowship in the home will never occur. Surely, as equals, both made in the image of God, joint decision-making by husband and wife and reaching consensus is the aim and rule. However, in those rare cases when such consensus cannot be reached and a decision cannot be delayed, then it is the husband who must accept the responsibility of leading in love with the well being of the wife and family in mind. The wife is to accept the responsibility of following, in trust, the lead of the husband in love without bitterness or recrimination. (It no doubt will mean, at times, that the wife will pray all the more intensely for the Lord to guide her husband and to enlighten his mind and heart.)

## Conclusion:

Patterns or structures of authority and submission exist not only in society in general but also in the body of Christ. The new life in Christ does not remove them but transforms the way or manner in which they are lived out. This is true of the order and relationship between husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and servants. Christ's exercise of authority as Savior, Lord and Nurturer of the Church provides the example and context for the exercise of all headship and submission on the part of the members of the Church with one another.

There is nothing in this text that removes the order of the relationship of wives and husbands given in Creation (Genesis 2) and corrupted in the Fall. This relationship has now been restored and is being deepened in Christ. Nor is there anything in this text that would suggest it is appropriate for women to serve as ordained elders (priests/presbyters or bishops) in the Church.

I Peter 3:1-8 (RSV)

*<sup>1</sup> Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, <sup>2</sup> when they see your reverent and chaste behavior. <sup>3</sup> Let not yours be the outward adorning with braiding of hair, decoration of gold, and wearing of fine clothing, <sup>4</sup> but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. <sup>5</sup> So once the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves and were submissive to their husbands, <sup>6</sup> as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are now her children if you do right and let nothing terrify you.*

*<sup>7</sup> Likewise you husbands, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered.*

*<sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind.*

## General Comment:

This text is part of a larger section, I Peter 2:11-3:12, in which the Apostle Peter emphasizes the importance for believers to submit (hypotasso) to appropriate authorities, such as an emperor, masters or husbands. Believers are to submit even in the face of persecution and unjust treatment, just as Christ did, leaving them an example to follow. Such innocent suffering will provide a witness to the fact that Christ's Spirit is resting upon them and be a sign of blessing to them. To "turn the other cheek" will lead some non-Christians to conversion, and those not converted will one day acknowledge their good deeds when the Lord returns in glory.

In this context, the Apostle exhorts the wives of unbelieving husbands to lovingly submit to their own husbands and, thereby, to show them by their Christ-like behavior the power of the Gospel in their lives. This submission would do far more to lead their husbands to Christ

than repeated, aggressive, verbal evangelism or resentful rebellion would do. Such submission is not a new thing in the people of God. Sarah had exemplified it when she submitted to Abraham, calling him "lord." Her sisters in the faith should likewise be submissive.

In addition, such behavior expresses the true beauty of a wife. True feminine beauty consists of supportive, Christ-like behavior and godly character and does not consist primarily of ornate clothing, elaborate hair-dos and precious jewels.

Just as in Ephesians 5:21-33, the exhortation to the wife to submit to her own husband is matched by an exhortation to the husband to honor his wife and to be considerate of her. Here, the Apostle mentions that the husband should specially keep in mind that the wife is of the "weaker" sex. Indeed, inconsiderate husbands should have no expectation that God would attend to their prayers.

In addition to the above reasons for the husbands to honor their wives, the Apostle mentions their equality with their husbands. This equality of the husband and wife is brought out by mentioning that a Christian husband and wife are joint heirs of the grace of life.

#### **Pro Comments:**

This text, just as Ephesians 5:21-33 by its dual exhortation, calls for a mutual consideration of one another by the husband and wife in living out their marriage. It deals with the special circumstance of a Christian wife married to a non-Christian husband. Its wisdom remains pertinent today.

When the Apostle refers to the woman as being the "weaker" sex, he no doubt is referring to the fact that, physically, women are typically of smaller frame and are less heavily muscled. Since ordination does not generally require large frames and heavy lifting, this should prove no bar to ordination for women.

#### **Con Comments:**

The Apostle Peter has submission as a major theme in this epistle. He refers to it five times. In 2:13, he calls for Christians to submit to every human institution, to the Emperor, or the governors under him. In 2:18, he tells household servants to submit to their masters. In 3:1, it is wives who likewise are to submit to their own husbands. In 3:22, he states that angels, authorities and powers are submitted to Christ. Finally in Colossians 5:15, he exhorts young men to submit to the elders and all of us to one another. In every case, these are relationships in which one has oversight over others and in which submission is called for. Submission always implies or assumes "taxis," an order which involves one in authority under whom others are to submit themselves or to be subject to. This is true in this epistle in the family, in the Church and in society.

This text simply agrees with the other New Testament texts that affirm the ministries in the family and Church of male headship and female submission. It, of course, exhorts that these ministries are to be done in a Christ-like manner and as between equals. The text fits well into the argument for an all-male priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate.

## Men and Women in Ministry

(additional texts and exegesis relevant to the diaconate will be found in Part 4)

### 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 (RSV)

<sup>2</sup> I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you. <sup>3</sup> But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. <sup>4</sup> Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, <sup>5</sup> but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled dishonors her head—it is the same as if her head were shaven. <sup>6</sup> For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her wear a veil. <sup>7</sup> For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. <sup>8</sup> (For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. <sup>9</sup> Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.) <sup>10</sup> That is why a woman ought to have a veil on her head, because of the angels. <sup>11</sup> (Nevertheless, in the Lord, woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; <sup>12</sup> for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.) <sup>13</sup> Judge for yourselves; is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? <sup>14</sup> Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him, <sup>15</sup> but if a woman has long hair, it is her pride? For her hair is given to her for a covering. <sup>16</sup> If any one is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God.

### General Comments:

There is much in this text that is difficult to understand and even the most learned commentators differ or admit ignorance about a number of the details. We will not try to deal with all of these details in any extensive manner. Fortunately for our concerns, however, the main argument is clear.

This text is concerned with how women and men should conduct themselves in public or corporate worship. The Apostle was responding to a crisis that had arisen among the saints at worship in Corinth, because some women had begun to pray and prophesy without wearing a shawl or head cover, which was the Jewish and Gentile practice in the culture of that time and place. It may also have been the case that women in pagan temple worship did pray and give so-called prophetic utterances bare-headed.

Why did these Christian women refuse to wear the head coverings? The usual assumption is that they felt the new freedom, restored dignity and equality given them in Christ no longer required that men and women should be different in this matter. Perhaps they also thought that since men and women will not be given in marriage in heaven, and thus be like angels, that worship in Christ should already reflect that final stage.

In any case, by failing to wear the veil or shawl, they symbolized to the culture and the congregation that the distinction between men and women no longer mattered and, thereby, brought shame on their husbands and the elders. They misled, divided and offended the congregation (knowingly or unknowingly) and also obscured the difference

between Christian worship and pagan temple worship.

The Apostle exhorts them to return to wearing the head covering when they come to public worship and to pray and prophesy, because the distinction between men and women, which is grounded in Creation, persists in redemption. It abides therefore in corporate worship. They had drawn the wrong implications. Neither the Apostle nor any of the other congregations allowed such behavior. Even the Gentiles, whose customs are partially guided by God's revelation in and through nature, know better. Such are the broad lines of the argument.

We will look Pro and Con at those sections of the text that have a bearing on the question of the ordination of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate as follows:

- 1) The nature of headship in verse 3
- 2) The statement that man is the image and glory of God but woman is the glory of man in verse 7
- 3) The reference to Genesis 2 in verse 8
- 4) The interdependence of man and woman in verses 11-12
- 5) Nature's teaching in verses 13-15
- 6) The Apostle's declaration in verse 16

#### **Pro Comment:**

The focus of this text is not upon the roles of husbands and wives per se but upon the proper way for men and women to engage in corporate or public worship. In fact, the concern is predominantly upon men and women and not primarily upon husbands and wives, although, of course they are included. This general concern is made clear when the Apostle speaks of "every man" in verse 3 and of "any man or woman" in verse 4. His references to Creation in verses 8-9 and 12 and to "nature" in verse 14 also have reference to every man and woman. This text, therefore, is not directly addressing the order and ministry of husbands and wives, although implications may perhaps be drawn from it if they are carefully done.

#### *1) The nature of headship in verse 3:*

In this text, as in Ephesians 5, "head" refers to source, to nourishing origin and not to hierarchical authority. The clear clue about this is the order in which the Apostle lists the various heads in the verse. First, he states that Christ is Head of man; then man is head of the woman; and then God is Head of Christ. If authority were the concern, the order would have been God as Head of Christ, Christ as Head of man and man as head of the woman.



What then is the meaning of the order that St. Paul writes? It is the chronological order of the sources. At Creation by the Word or Son, Christ becomes Head of man. At the Creation of Eve from Adam, the man becomes the source or head of Eve. Lastly, at the Incarnation of the Son, the Father becomes the Head of the incarnate Son, Jesus the Christ. Only when viewed from the perspective of source does the order make sense.

The point of verse 5:3 is to state the principle upon which the Apostle will exhort the women to return to wearing the veil or shawl. The principle is this: We are to behave in public and in corporate worship in a manner that gives honor or brings glory to our Head and evidences our grateful response for the initiation and nurture we receive. Since our Head has called us into being and nourishes us as men or as women, this honoring of headship on our part will give evidence of and due respect to our maleness or femaleness.

## *2) Man as the image and glory of God and woman as the glory of man in verse 7*

If we are to evidence our distinctness as men and women in Christ in public worship, then it is important to anchor that difference in God's purpose and plan. The Apostle does that in two ways. In verse 7, he points out that we give glory to our respective heads when we worship. Keep in mind that it is to God ultimately that supreme glory is given in worship by both men and women, for all prayer is addressed to Him and from Him all true prophecy comes.

The Apostle distinguishes to whom we are to honor or give glory in the sight of the public or congregation by the state of our head when we are praying and prophesying as we enter into the presence of God and the angels in corporate worship. As the image and glory of God, the man's head is not to be covered in God's presence as he prays and prophesies. This glorifies God as his Head. As the woman prays and prophesies, her head is to be covered to symbolize her giving honor or glory to man as her head or source. As created from him, she is his glory and gives glory to him.

This leads to the second way the Apostle anchors our difference as men and women in God's purpose and plan: Creation as mentioned in verse 8.

## *3) The reference to Genesis 2 in verse 8:*

The uncovered head of man reflects the directness and priority of man's creation by God. The covered head of the woman reflects her being created from man by God so that being created second and from him, the man becomes, under God, her source or head. Thus, the pattern of creation, the manner of origination and the nourishment of being, underlies headship and glory. In this, men and women are different, distinct and complementary.

## *4) The interdependence of men and women in verses 11 and 12*

The Apostle does not want to be misunderstood by his anchoring the difference between men and women in terms of glory and the pattern of Creation in Genesis 2. He does not want to be thought in any way to be suggesting that there is less that equality between

men and women both made in the image of God. Therefore, he brings to a climax the main argument of the text with this declaration of the interdependence of men and women. If woman first came from man, it is now true that all men come from women. Mutuality, interdependence and equality are the characteristics of men and women in Christ, not independence or inferiority.

#### *5) Nature's teaching in verses 13, 14 and 15*

God reveals His purpose and plan in a measure in Creation, in earthly nature and in human nature. The customs of the Gentiles, in part, reflect this awareness. The way we dress reveals a distinction between men and women. The Apostle appeals to Jewish and Gentile Christians to judge by an inner intuition that the distinctness of men and women is to be respected and symbolized in worship. Therefore, a man's head should not be covered and a woman's head should be.

#### *6) The Apostle's declaration in verse 16*

If anyone wants to be contentious and chooses to go on doing what is not fitting in this regard, then let it be known that the Apostle does not permit or recognize such behavior, nor do any of the Christian congregations. Because it will mislead the congregations and produce harmful consequences, such contentious behavior will be disciplined by the Apostle.

#### **Conclusion:**

Most important of all in this text, with regard to the question of the ordination of women is the fact that the Apostle has no problem with women praying or prophesying in the corporate worship of the Church.

It is evident that corporate worship is the context of this text for several reasons:

- 1) The Apostle's chief concern is what the action of failing to wear a head covering at corporate worship by some women was communicating to the congregation.
- 2) While prayer can be a private affair as well as a corporate action, prophecy, unlike a word of knowledge, cannot be simply private by its nature; it is a spiritual gift given for the benefit of some part or all of the Body.
- 3) Chapters 11-14 of this Epistle deal with questions and errors arising in corporate worship.
- 4) The gifts of the Spirit are discussed by the Apostles largely in terms of their use in corporate worship. It is important to note that they are not distributed by the Spirit along sexual lines. (Joel 2:28ff.)

Therefore, this text makes it clear that whatever "silence" with regard to women may refer

to in other texts to be considered later, "silence" cannot here mean that women are not to pray aloud or prophesy aloud in the corporate worship of the people of God.

We must keep in mind that the freedom and equality given to women in Christ does not in any sense damage or deny the distinctness of our being men and women. We are interdependent and complementary. That being the case, is it not evident that an ordained ministry of priests/presbyters and bishops that includes both men and women would best symbolize and give expression to our equality and interdependence in Christ? "Judge for yourselves" as the Apostle put it.

### **Con Comments:**

We concur that this text is concerned with the assembled or corporate worship of the Church and that the Apostle expects women to pray and prophesy in the corporate worship of the Church. The gifts of the Spirit are, to be sure, not distributed by sex, as the Prophet Joel made clear (Joel 2:28) and the early Church experienced. (cf. Acts 21:9)

In basic terms, the Apostle declares that in corporate worship men should participate bareheaded and women with heads covered. What is significant for us is not the cultural custom, but rather what, in that culture, the custom symbolized regarding the relationship of men and women in the Church. Customs may vary from culture to culture, but the fundamental principle so symbolized might well be trans-cultural. We believe the Apostle teaches that it is. His appeal to Creation makes that clear.

#### *1) The nature of headship in verse 3*

In Ephesians 5:21-33 and I Peter 3:1-8, the emphasis was upon the order of husband and wife in the family. Here the emphasis shifts to the common life and worship of the Church and to the relation of men and women in that life and worship, not just husbands and wives. This is made clear by the reference to every man and every woman in verses 3 and 5. It is not just husbands or wives who pray and prophesy in public worship. Also, the reference to Creation in Genesis 2 involves all men and women, not just husbands and wives.

How are we to understand the meaning of "head" in this verse, given the order: (a) of Christ as Head of man, (b) the man as head of woman and (c) God as Head of Christ? Some have suggested this is a temporal order of initiation; and, therefore, "source" is the only connotation present in the text. But that is far from evident and in the end will not hold. It could just as well be that the Apostle wished to place the headship of man and the submission of the woman in the bracket of Christ's headship and Christ's submission for it is Christ Who is our model and enabler of both. In that case, both authority and source would be involved in the use of "head."

Further, as we mentioned in our comments concerning Ephesians 5:21-33, it is impossible to treat the figurative use of "head" with reference to Jesus as if it had no connotation of authority. Jesus is Lord and His authority is ever part of the Church's relationship with Him.

Most significantly, within our passage we can see from verse 11:10 that authority is on the Apostle's mind when he speaks of "head," because he states that the woman should have the sign of authority on her head during corporate worship. The word for authority is "exousia" which is the most common term for authority in the New Testament.

The reference to the veil or shawl as a sign of authority probably has a double reference. It symbolizes the woman's submission to proper authority, i.e. husband or elders; and, therefore, as a woman in good order in Christ, it also signals her right or authority to pray and prophesy in the corporate worship of the Church. Not to be veiled or not to have her head covered would be a sign of disorder and of her unwillingness to be in submission to those in proper authority over her. It would also offend the angels who are considered to be the guardians of the order of Creation (Job 38:7, I Co.4:8-9, I Tim.5:21, and Heb.1:14).

We conclude that headship in this text, as is usual in the New Testament, has both meanings of source and authority, but the dominant meaning is the authority of the head and the submission due to the head. That alone makes sense of much in this text.

We want to add that since the Son is submissive to God the Father while being fully equal to Him, the Christological context makes it clear that men and women are considered fully equal in this text as well. That is part of the meaning of locating the man's headship and the woman's submission in the center of the order set forth in this verse.

## *2) Man as the image and glory of God and woman as the glory of man in verse 7*

This verse cannot mean that the man is made in the image of God, but the woman is not made in the image of God but only in the image of man. The Scriptures are very clear that both are made in the image of God. Their dignity is equal. This verse, therefore, makes best sense if it is seen as referring to the created order of governance and submission. We all give glory to God by submitting to Him in our respective manner. The man gives glory to God or honors Him by exercising his headship in the manner of Christ's love for the Church. The woman gives honor to the man by exercising her submission and support of the man in the manner of Christ's submission to the Father.

## *3) The reference to Genesis 2 in verse 8*

While Paul is speaking of a particular custom of men not covering the head and of women covering the head in public worship, he is referring to an underlying order of Creation. This is found in the account of Creation in Genesis 2. He emphasizes two facts: first, he states that the woman was created from the man. He was first and she was second. She was created from him; and, therefore, he is her source under God and thus "head" in that sense. Second, she was created for him, to be his helper; and so he is her head in the sense of his having the ministry of oversight or leadership. Her role is one of supportive submission. It is important to take note that the Apostle understands Genesis 2 to involve, prior to the Fall, a created order of governance and headship between man and woman which applies in family and Church. He will appeal to this created order again in I Timothy 2:9-15. There is

consistency in the New Testament in this view of Genesis 2 and its significance for life in Christ. The New Testament writers never appeal to Genesis 3, the account of the Fall, as a basis for submission.

#### *4) The interdependence of men and women in verses 11 and 12*

The Apostle does not want his references to "headship" to be construed as if the man were in some way independent of the woman or as if the man were superior to the woman. While it is true that man, under God, is the source or originating cause of the woman, the woman is, under God, the instrumental cause of man from Creation on, for man is born of woman. Equality, harmony and mutuality are to prevail in the body of Christ. Of course, if authority and submission were not a dominant emphasis of this text, this disclaimer would not have been necessary.

#### *5) Nature's teaching in verses 13-15*

Paul draws this section toward a conclusion with an additional appeal to God's general revelation in earthly nature and human nature which he believes underlies the common practice, even in Gentile circles, of women being veiled in public, covering their long hair, and of men going bare-headed and with shorter hair. This general revelation and common practice in itself should be sufficient for people to judge for themselves whether the Apostle's teaching about this matter is sensible and true.

#### *6) The Apostle's declaration in verse 16*

The Apostle concludes with an apostolic declaration that he recognized no other practice in the Church and neither do the various congregations of the Church. He is referring to a universal practice. For women to insist on praying and prophesying with uncovered heads or men to do so with covered heads is to be contentious and to stand outside the agreed upon apostolic practice of the Church. It will not be permitted, and discipline will be forthcoming.

### **Conclusion:**

There is nothing in this text that would lead one to think that it is appropriate for women to exercise the authority of headship in the congregation, quite the opposite. Not only does the Apostle appeal to the order of Creation once again, but he is clearly quite adamant that male headship and female submission is an important matter of order in the Church, particularly in the corporate worship of the Church, and that he will countenance no departure from it.

1 Corinthians 14:31-40 (RSV)

*<sup>31</sup> For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged; <sup>32</sup> and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. <sup>33</sup> For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, <sup>34</sup> the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law*

says. <sup>35</sup> *If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.* <sup>36</sup> *What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?* <sup>37</sup> *If any one thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord.* <sup>38</sup> *If any one does not recognize this, he is not recognized.* <sup>39</sup> *So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues;* <sup>40</sup> *but all things should be done decently and in order.*

### **General Comment:**

This text is pertinent to our study because it addresses the role of women in the corporate worship of the Church. These verses are part of a very long section running from Chapter 12 through Chapter 14 dealing with the proper use of spiritual gifts. The more immediate context is the use of the gift of prophecy uttered in tongues and then interpreted in the corporate worship of the Church. The verses preceding this text have spoken of silence. If there is no one to interpret the message in tongues, then the one receiving the message is to remain silent. If there are several messages given, then they are to be given in order; each one taking turns while the others wait in silence. The congregation, other prophets or the elders are to weigh or judge the message being given. All are encouraged to prophesy, including women, but to do so in order because God is a God of order and only so can the whole congregation be edified.

Now, in seeming contradiction to his teaching on women prophesying in the Church, the Apostle states that women are not to speak in Church. He asserts that it would be contrary to the law and shameful for them to do so and that this is the universal practice of the Church. He even states that this is a command of the Lord. He then continues in the passage with a general appeal for all to desire to prophesy and not to forbid the speaking in tongues but to do all in order.

A number of questions pertinent to our concern about the ordination of women arise. How do these verses agree with the Apostle's instruction in Chapter 11 given to the Church about the manner in which women should be covered when prophesying in the worship of the Church? What sorts of speaking are the women not to do? What is the nature of the silence they are to keep? Where in the law is it forbidden women to speak so? Finally what implications does this "command of the Lord" have for women being ordained as priests/presbyters and bishops?

### **Pro Comments:**

There are two approaches to this text that are favorable to the ordination of women in all of the ordained offices in the Church. We will consider them both.

- 1) The first "Pro" approach can be called the "opponent's quotation" approach. This view sees the words of our text as simply too opposed to all of the other places where the Apostle Paul teaches regarding the role of women in the Church to be the Apostle's own words. These are, therefore, the words of Paul's opponents in Corinth; therefore, words that he



is quoting and rejecting.

We may consider the words of our text as coming from legalistic Jewish Christians, Judaizers, who feel that Paul is far too willing to depart from the law or the customs of the Fathers. In particular, they do not want women to prophesy in the assembly or corporate worship of the Church. Women are to be silent and to listen in Church, as they have always done in the synagogue. They are to be submissive to the elders and to ask their questions in the privacy of their homes where their husbands can discuss things with them if they are interested enough to ask. It is shameful when they speak out in the Church's corporate worship.

The words of our text contrast strongly with what the Apostle is saying in this letter. Notice the framing of our text. In verse 3:31, Paul says, *"For you can all prophesy..."* and he ends the section in verse 3:39 by stating, *"So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy..."* It is clear that Paul wants any in the Church, men or women, moved by the Spirit to be permitted to prophesy and this definitely includes the women. Earlier in this letter in chapter 14, he discusses at some length the reason that women should have their heads covered while they prophesy. He assumes that they will be bringing prophecies. Therefore, this text is not the Apostle's own view but a view that he is determined to reject and remove from influence in the congregation.

In response, St. Paul simply declares with all of his apostolic authority that all should prophesy. He tells the Judaizers that if they are truly spiritual they will recognize the truth of what he is saying and that it is a "command of the Lord." If they do not recognize it to be such, they will not be recognized in the worship of the Church. This either means they must be silent in the worship assembly or more likely that they would be excommunicated.

In the light of this argument, the Apostle, having rejected this false teaching, strongly affirms the right of women to speak out in the corporate worship of the Church. This being true, therefore, women could fulfill the role of pastor-teacher. There is nothing in this text that would stand in the way of women being ordained as priests/presbyters or bishops.

2) The second "Pro" approach might be called the "insensitive women" approach. This interpretation of our text sees it as the words of the Apostle Paul, but does not see it as setting forth a universal principle that all women should not speak in the corporate worship of the Church. Rather the principle the Apostle is concerned to state and apply is that in corporate worship everything must be done "decently and in order" so that the entire body of Christ might be edified. He states this principle time and again, and it is uppermost in his mind as he describes to the disciples in Corinth how they should use the gift of tongues and prophecy.

The strong words of the Apostle are directed against one of three groups that must be silent in the assembled worship of the Church:

First, a prophet who senses he or she has a Word to be given in tongues is to remain silent if there is no one to interpret the message to the congregation.

Second, if several prophets sense that they are to bring a word of prophecy to the congregation, then they must be silent until it is their turn to speak because they must not all speak at the same time.

Third, and chiefly, there are the insensitive, married women of our text. They too are to be silent. These women are interrupting the worship of the Church by asking too many questions as well as inappropriate questions for that setting. They have mistaken their new freedom in Christ for license to act in a self-centered manner, as if the Word of God were primarily addressed to them and not to the whole body of believers. True, they may prophesy, but they must do that decently and in due order. In all things, they are to be submissive to the elders directing the worship of the Church. If they have questions, they must wait until they are home to discuss them with their husbands. If they are spiritual Christian women, they will recognize that what the Apostle requires is a "command of the Lord" and comply. If they do not, they will be disciplined.

The concern here is stopping their disturbing behavior so that all will be done decently and in order and the entire Church will benefit from the words spoken in the worship of the Church. The issue is not male headship and female submission. That issue arose with the Fall and has been done away with by the coming of Christ.

In either of these approaches, the "opponent's quotation approach" or the "insensitive married women" approach, there is nothing in this text that stands against the ordination of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate.

### Con Comments:

- 1) The idea that the Apostle Paul is quoting his opponents in this passage is not convincing. Why? What he says in these verses is not in contradiction to Paul's earlier statements; actually, it is very much in agreement with what he has said elsewhere. There is no shocking contrast. He repeats the same thing each time he addresses the issue of the relation of men and women in Christ and the role of women in the corporate worship of the Church.
- 2) The view that the Apostle is only concerned with decency and order and is, therefore, seeking to discipline some wives who have gotten out of order is insufficient to account for the strong language of the text. If he were speaking of just some wives, he would have said so. Rather, he declares that it would be *"shameful for women to speak in Church"* or that *"women should keep silence in the Churches"* and are *"not permitted to speak but must be subordinate."* Nor would that view of the Apostle's concern account for the terrible threat of excommunication that follows our text, if the women do not comply with "the command of the Lord." Neither would a local problem require a statement that all of the Churches have the same rule or the need to call for an appeal to the Law.

Also, if the Apostle's concerns were only a matter of people speaking out of turn and speaking too often, then that would apply to single women as well as to married women

and to unduly talkative men as well as to women. Something far more important is taking place here than a local problem of too much speaking on the part of some married women, although that may in part be what raises the deeper issue. What then is the deeper concern of this text?

- 3) The issue is not that some women spoke too much and interrupted the flow of the worship of the Church. The issue, according to Paul, is that they spoke at all. We are concerned with an area where women are simply not to speak in the corporate worship of the Church. We know that the Apostle affirms women are to prophesy. The question then arises as to what sort of “speaking” he is referring to? What sort of speech is not being permitted to women if the concern is not that women are asking too many questions that can be better dealt with at home?
- 4) The clue is given to us in these words, *“For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, even as the Law says.”* (14:34). What is not permitted is a speaking that contradicts the Law. The “Law” referred to here most likely refers to the Old Testament and particularly the account of the creation of man and woman in Chapter 2 of Genesis. This concerns the subordinate role of women in the family and Church. It is a speaking that is shameful in that it violates the due order of things as established in Creation. Here, as in every other time, he addresses the role of women in relationship to men. The Apostle is concerned with God's ordering of the man as head and the woman as supportive and submissive to his leadership. The “Law” referred to here is most likely the Old Testament and particularly the account of the creation of man and woman in Chapter 2 of Genesis.

Submission in this text refers to women submitting to the elders of the Church as well as to their husbands with regard to speaking in the Church.

- 5) Can we be more specific? What sort of speaking by women in the corporate worship of the Church contradicts male headship? Since this text appears in a discussion of the right use of the gift of prophecy, some have suggested that women are not to speak when the elders weigh a prophecy to see if it is in agreement with the known Word of God. Women are to keep silent at that point, for judging a prophecy is an authoritative, governing function. It is an act of governance or headship.

Others have suggested that the silence refers to women not giving formal, authoritative teaching in the worship, for faithful teaching and passing on the faith is a major concern of the Apostle in the pastoral epistles.

It would seem best to say that women are free to use all of their gifts in the corporate worship of the Church, but they are not to speak in areas where the elders are appointed to speak as leaders of the congregation under Christ.

- 6) In our contemporary context, that would mean that women are not to speak as ordained presbyters/priests or bishops who are set apart to speak officially for the Church. Women are full members of the Body of Christ who are to learn, teach, and bring prophecy, but

they must do it under the governing oversight of the elders of the Church and in due submission. It would seem clear that this text does put a limitation on the role of women in the Church; it does not permit them to be ordained as priests or bishops or serve as rectors of congregations.

1Timothy 2:8-15 (RSV)

*<sup>8</sup> I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; <sup>9</sup> also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire <sup>10</sup> but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion. <sup>11</sup> Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. <sup>12</sup> I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve; <sup>14</sup> and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. <sup>15</sup> Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.*

### **General Comment:**

This text is one of the most discussed and debated passages regarding the ordination of women because it can be interpreted as making a clear, apostolic prohibition of the ordination of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate.

This passage is part of the Apostle Paul's letter to Timothy, his convert and apostolic delegate whom he left back in Ephesus. Timothy, even though young, was there to see that worship and prayer were being offered in accord with the Gospel. He was to combat the inroads of heresy that had invaded the congregation, to address some issues that were being raised by some women in the congregation and to see that the widows were rightly organized. Above all, he was to make certain that godly leaders were being educated, trained and put in positions of leadership.

This particular text concerns the behavior and position of Christian women. Women have had their dignity restored in Christ and have found new freedom in Him. Some women, it seems, came from wealthy, pagan backgrounds and brought views of femininity and beauty with them that were not in accord with the Word of God. Other women had fallen victim to the false teachers and their false doctrine which led them to act in ungodly ways. This false teaching and the resultant behavior caused dissension in the fellowship of the Church and in the corporate worship of the Church in Ephesus. Here we have the Apostle's guidance to Timothy as to what He is to teach and require.

First, the men are to pray in all the gatherings of corporate worship, but they are to pray without being angry or quarreling. Likewise, the women are to pray (understood), but they are to come to corporate worship in modest attire, aware that true beauty lies in a godly life of good deeds and not in extravagant clothing or expensive coiffeurs. Then the Apostle, writing in the imperative, commands that women should be permitted to learn, but they must learn in quietness and full submission. He states that he is not permitting women to teach or hold authority over men. As the basis for this, he appeals to Genesis 2 and 3. He concludes with a statement that women will be saved through childbearing.

The verses from 2:11 to 2:15 are subject to various interpretations; they require clarification. Is the apostle referring to wives or women? To what sort of silence is he referring? To what does "full submission" refer? Why does he say, "*I do not permit...*" in the present continuous sense? What sort of teaching is not permitted to women? What sort of authority does he have in mind that women should not hold over men? In what sense are women saved through childbearing? Having interpreted the above, we need to ask, how would that be applied in our situation?

### **Pro Comments:**

#### *1) There is a basic approach to this text that supports the ordination of women*

The basic approach asserts that some women had fallen victim to bad teachers and bad teaching and, consequently, had engaged in inappropriate behavior. Perhaps they had mistaken their Christian freedom with the final, heavenly state of things beyond marriage and the usual patterns of this life. They had, consequently, adopted a false asceticism and engaged in insubordination to elders and husbands. Both practiced and taught false doctrine in the congregation. They needed to repent and be properly educated before they could be permitted by Timothy and the elders to teach.

The concern and principle that the Apostle is asserting is that only the godly, properly educated and officially recognized or authorized people can teach in the congregation. He is not excluding women from teaching per se but requiring them to fulfill the proper requirements of a teacher: i.e., godliness, education, orthodoxy, submission to congregational authorities, and official permission.

#### *2) This interpretation of the text is supported by a number of features in the text*

- a) "*Let a woman learn in silence...*": Note that the Apostle commands that women be permitted to learn and that they seize the opportunity to learn. This command extends far beyond women merely listening to the Word in worship settings; it implies serious study. The word Paul uses for "silence" (*hesuchia*) is not a word that intimates total silence but rather refers to a quietness and an attitude that is appropriate for learning. As rabbinical students sit at the feet of the Rabbi to learn, so the women are to do the same with the teachers in Ephesus. Paul is far from wishing to retain and observe the pre-Christian synagogue traditions regarding women in the Church that would neglect or discourage their study of the Word of God.
- b) "*In full submission*": This is Paul's requirement that women respect those set in authority over the congregation.
- c) When Paul states, "*I do not permit. . .*," he puts it in the present continuous tense. It could better be translated, "I am not now permitting." This seems to imply that at a future time, when conditions had been met, he would permit women to teach.
- d) "*to teach*": This refers to teaching in a formal manner in the worship of the Church. Often when the Apostle speaks of teaching, he exhorts the whole congregation to teach one another (Col. 3:16). But here, as in the pastoral epistles generally, more

formal teaching in the context of worship is in view. Only qualified people are to teach.

- e) "...to have authority over men": Paul does not use the traditional word for "authority" (exousia) but rather a word that is used only once in the New Testament, "authentein." It can be interpreted to mean to usurp authority or to "lord it over" another. Paul does not permit women to grasp the authority to teach away from those placed over the congregation and thereby usurp their authority. This simply leads to chaos and error.
- f) Paul refers to Eve in Genesis 2 and 3 and says to the women, "Look at what Eve did and you are following in her steps. Being created second, she was not as well instructed as Adam. She listened to a false teacher, Satan, and was deceived and thus spread error to her husband and all humanity subsequently. Do not take Eve as your model.
- g) Verse 3:15 is difficult to understand. It may be that the reference to Eve is the clue. There is a sense in which Eve is connected to salvation through child-bearing, because she bore the line of the seed of Genesis 3:15. The Seed (Jesus Christ) who crushed Satan came finally through Mary; and, therefore, through her faithful childbearing, all women and men who believe in Christ and live in the fruitfulness of that faith will be saved.

3) When interpreted carefully, we can see that the Apostle is consistent throughout his teaching on the full dignity and equality of men and women in Christ and that mutuality rather than headship and submission is his emphasis. Galatians 3:28 is the best key to understanding his teaching. This particular text does not stand in the way of women being ordained but rather commands women to be permitted to learn. When they are properly qualified and have a call, they should be ordained. The application to our situation is obvious: ordain women as priests/presbyters and consecrate them as bishops!

### Con Comments:

This letter of the Apostle Paul is written with wider intent than just the situation in Ephesus. He writes later in the letter,

*"<sup>14</sup> I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, <sup>15</sup> if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth."*

It is teaching and behavior for "the household of God" everywhere, for the universal Church, which he is applying to the situation in Ephesus. This is important because the basic principles of this teaching apply to us today. That applicability includes this section on women in verses 3:11-15.

- 1) We concur that the Apostle begins with a strong affirmation of the new dignity and freedom that women find in Christ. By placing *"Let a woman learn in silence..."* in the imperative mood, he makes the point that women are to learn the Word in the fullest sense.



We agree as well that the "silence" referred to is the respectful silence of a student listening and only asking questions in appropriate ways, places and times. It may well also exhort the women to repentance who were causing trouble by seeking to learn or even teach in inappropriate ways. Still, it remains a general statement and instructs the whole Church in Ephesus and beyond.

2) The Apostle adds a second qualification to the manner of a woman's learning. In addition to learning in silence, she is to learn in full submission, "all submissiveness." It is instructive that the Apostle Paul always brings up this matter of submission or submissiveness when he discusses the relationship of men and women. We have seen this time and again in our exegesis of these various texts (c.f., Ephesians 5 and I Peter 3). It is important to note the fact that he applies this only to women and not to men, and to all women whether they are women causing difficulty or not. This submissiveness cannot refer only to the teacher-learner situation because that would apply to men as well as women. What the Apostle has in mind is women's submissiveness to those in authority in the congregation. He may also have in mind their learning from their husbands as well as their teachers.

3) The Apostle states his primary concern and the principle upon which he addresses it in verse 2:12. *"I permit no woman to teach nor to have authority over men; she is to keep silent."* Several aspects of this need careful attention.

- a) *"I permit no woman to teach."*: This is, as already noted, in the present continuing tense. It could be translated "I am not now permitting a woman to teach" which might suggest that at a later point he might be willing to allow a woman to teach. It could also mean "I do not now nor will ever permit a woman to teach." which would assert an absolute refusal to women to teach. The context points in this latter direction because: (i) The mention of submission points to male headship and female submission that St. Paul does not believe is a temporary matter, short of the Second Coming of Christ, as we have often seen. (ii) He will appeal to Creation in the next verse, and we are all part of the continuing order of Creation.
- b) *"To teach"*: What sort of teaching and what sort of audience is a woman not permitted to teach? It cannot mean that a woman is to be utterly silent in the corporate worship and public life of the congregation. In 1 Corinthians 11, we listened to the Apostle instruct women in the manner in which they should be veiled when bringing a prophecy. Later in this Epistle, the Apostle tells older women to teach younger women. In many places, teaching is considered the task of the whole body of Christ, both men and women. Therefore, it must be some specific type of teaching in which women are not permitted to engage. Since this applies only to women, and since the Apostle appeals to the order of Creation by referring to submission and by appealing to Genesis 2, it most likely refers to that form of teaching which is reserved for the elders of the congregation, for the "presbyteroi/episcopoi." This is confirmed by the second prohibition *"nor to have authority over men."*

- c) *"nor to have authority over men"*: The word for authority here is "authentein" which appears only here in the New Testament. Some have suggested it is a particular kind of authority the Apostle has in mind such as a usurped authority. They suggest that if he had authority in general in mind he would have used "exousia," a term he uses more frequently. However, two things indicate that it is simply governance or basic authority that the Apostle intends: 1. It is difficult to say that the Apostle uses "exousia" usually for he only uses it three times in all of his writings, which is too little usage to read a great deal into his writing a different word. 2. Linguistic study of the use of the word "authentein" in the culture of St. Paul's day indicates that it does not mean "usurped authority" but simply "authority."

What St. Paul is saying is that women are not to exercise headship or governance over men in the congregation or in the family. The point is not that ungodly, untaught women should not teach or domineering women should not usurp authority over men but that women per se should not teach authoritatively, nor should they serve in positions of headship over men in the congregation. When it comes to areas where the elders are exercising authority, the women are to learn in silence and in all submission. This interpretation is confirmed by the Apostle's appeal to Genesis 2 and 3.

- d) The appeal to Genesis 2 and 3 in verses 2:13 and 14 states the basis for the Apostle's prohibition of women in teaching and serving as elders. Chapter 2 of Genesis grounds the headship of man, for Adam was created first and Eve was created for him. Genesis 3 makes clear that when the proper order of headship and submission is abandoned, bad things happen. It is not that Eve is less intelligent, but that though she was to follow Adam's lead, she took the initiative and was thereby made vulnerable to Satan's deception and fell. Adam was in a sense even more culpable for failing to protect her and for following her lead. (See our comments on the exegesis of Genesis 2).
- e) *"Saved through childbearing"* in verse 15 is a difficult verse. St. Paul teaches that we are saved by grace through faith and not by works of our doing. That would exclude childbearing as a work earning salvation. What might he have in mind given this context? Perhaps the Apostle does not want to end on a note of Eve and Adam's failure. Faith remains the link that receives the saving grace of Christ. Women, believing in Christ, will surely find all of the grace necessary to work out their salvation. They can expect God's sustaining hand in childbearing and to find in themselves the sanctifying Spirit producing the fruit of a godly life

How would this apostolic imperative and prohibition be expressed in our situation? It would be satisfied by making certain that the women of the Church are studying seriously the Word of the Lord and using their gifts in all manner of ways in the life of the Church. They can and must be permitted to do anything that a lay male can do including teaching mixed groups or even preaching as lay women under the authorization of the rector. The one thing, however, that women must not do is to be ordained as presbyters/priests and bishops

and in that capacity through regular authoritative preaching and teaching and governance decision making, to exercise authority over men in the congregation.

1Timothy 3:1-7 (RSV)

<sup>1</sup> *The saying is sure: If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task.* <sup>2</sup> *Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher,* <sup>3</sup> *no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money.* <sup>4</sup> *He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way;* <sup>5</sup> *for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church?* <sup>6</sup> *He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil;* <sup>7</sup> *moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*

Titus 1:5-9 (RSV)

<sup>5</sup> *This is why I left you in Crete, that you might amend what was defective, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you,* <sup>6</sup> *if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate.* <sup>7</sup> *For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,* <sup>8</sup> *but hospitable, a lover of goodness, master of himself, upright, holy, and self-controlled;* <sup>9</sup> *he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it.*

### General Comment

These verses, which we will treat together because they are so similar, comprise the chief statement of the qualifications for and duties of the presbyterate/episcopate in the New Testament.

The context of these passages is the Apostle's concern for godly, faithful leadership in the young, growing Church. One of the challenges is the presence of teachers with unworthy motives who want to be leaders in the Church. The Apostle gives to Timothy his advice as to the kind of men for whom he should be looking and those whom he should avoid placing in leadership.

We find the following necessary qualities for a presbyter/overseer listed by the Apostle:

- There must be some desire to do this work or noble task.
- They must be "above reproach," that is, have nothing in their lives that could discredit their person and witness. This phrase tends to summarize all of the qualities that are to follow.
- They must be "the husband of one woman," that is, a "one-woman man." The apostle is referring not to the issue of divorce or polygamy but to a man's being faithful to his wife. Recent exegesis has tended to reject views that the

reference is either to polygamy or divorce.

- They are to be temperate, that is, not given to rash decisions and actions, balanced and sober in temperament.
- They are to be sensible men, balanced in judgment.
- They are to be dignified or respectable, that is, one who is stately and fulfills his duties in an orderly manner.
- They are to be hospitable. This was especially important at a time and in a culture where inns were few and far between and often not very safe.
- They are to be apt to teach. This gift and skill was very important for the elder/overseer had to pass on the faith and defend it as well as drive out all false doctrine by his teaching and preaching.
- He was not to be a drunkard or addicted to wine.
- He was to be gentle and not violent. Good leadership will at times require patience and forbearance. Neither verbal nor physical abuse would fit with the example of Christ.
- He is not to be quarrelsome; he is to be a peacemaker rather than an aggressor in personal and corporate relationships. He is not to be a lover of money. Greed is both one of the seven cardinal sins and a temptation to a leader who may have to oversee financial matters. Honesty and generosity, as well as a willingness to share and give sacrificially are called for in a Christian leader. Greed is mentioned as one of the characteristics of the false teachers in Ephesus. (1Tim. 6:5-10)
- "He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way." If the overseer is to manage the household of God, the Church, he must have a decent track record of being able to do it on a smaller scale, the household of which he is the head. Keeping the children in some order is also an important text because an overseer will have to discipline members of the Body of Christ.
- He is not to be a recent convert. When people are given too much responsibility and status too quickly, the temptation to pride is great. In addition, there is need for some maturing experience and an observable track record if a person is to be chosen to lead. The best prediction of future performance is past behavior. Timothy is to put leaders into leadership, not people he hopes might become leaders.
- He is to be well thought of by outsiders. If the Church is to commend the Gospel to the local community, it will be important for the leaders to be respected and not ill regarded by that community.
- In Titus, the Apostle adds this to the list, "He must hold firm to the sure word as

taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to refute those who contradict it." Orthodoxy is essential.

#### Pro Comments:

- 1) The need for biblically sound and effective pastor-teachers was of key importance then and remains of crucial importance today.
- 2) Christian women have proven that they exhibit the gifts, abilities and qualities of character to satisfy this list as fully as do Christian men.
- 3) While women are not included in this text, there is nothing in the text that would explicitly exclude women from ordination.
- 4) Since Christian women are being prepared and qualified by meeting the above standards, and since there is great need for Christian leaders with the gifts of teaching and leadership; therefore, we must ordain them as pastor-teachers and commission them to do what they are ready, willing and desirous of doing.

#### **Con Comments:**

- 1) We note that this text sets very high standards for presbyter/bishops and that there are no grounds given for ordaining and commissioning unqualified male persons. Just the opposite is true. Warnings are given not to ordain and commission those who do not qualify.
- 2) It would appear that the assumption behind these texts is that God has men who are ready and able to meet the above criteria. It was the responsibility of Timothy then and of us now to seek them out and call them to positions of leadership.
- 3) At no place in these texts do we find an indication that women could appropriately be ordained as presbyter/bishops. The references to elders in these texts are always to male elders. In fact, given what the Apostle had written earlier in this letter (1Timothy 2:8-15), it is clear that he would not permit women to be ordained to either of these offices.
- 4) This is just one more text that makes it clear, though women may do all that a male lay person can do, there is a limit placed on their ministry concerning headship in the family and Church.

## **Part 4: The Diaconate**

#### **General Comments:**

In this part of the report we discuss the appropriateness of ordaining women as deacons. We currently have two types of deacons in the Church: the transitional deacon who is called to the priesthood and will eventually become a priest and the "permanent" or "vocational" deacon who is called to this particular servant order and will remain a deacon. For the

purposes of this Report, we are primarily concerned with the latter.

It is best to retain the name "deacons" for this abiding expression of the diaconate and to regard it as an office in itself, while finding some qualifying name for the diaconate as it is retained in the priestly and Episcopal orders.

### **1. The history and nature of the diaconate:**

The order of deacons has its origin in the New Testament period and has gone through extensive historical development. It was modeled after the seven disciples, with Stephen as leader, who were called, chosen, and commissioned with the laying on of hands to take care of social needs so that the Apostles could be free to pray and proclaim the gospel. They illustrate by their activities that the diaconate is a different ministry from the priesthood and stands alongside the Apostles. Irenaeus (c.185) was the first to call the Seven deacons.

Usually associated with the bishops in the Church and often elected bishops in the past (the most famous of which was Gregory the Great), the diaconal office was considered highly symbolic of the servant ministry of Christ. The five centuries from 100-600 A.D. was its Golden Age when the order flourished in numbers and importance (Barnett 43). The order diminished in function for a period of time and split into two classes: deacons and deaconesses, but these roles were limited.

With the emergence of lay ministry and the theological principle that "ministry belongs to all Christians..." there developed a "confusion of orders," and the Roman Catholic church examined the reinstatement of the order of deacons in 1971 in "A Report on the Restoration of the Office of Deacon as a Lifetime State." (Barnett 138). The permanent diaconate was restored in the Catholic church and later in the Anglican Church, and the pre-Nicene functions of the diaconate were also restored.

The order of deacons, as we have it in the Anglican Communion, is presently asked to serve in three broad areas: liturgical, pastoral and social/charitable.

This Order is a crucial and highly symbolic order in the life of the Christian Church. It symbolizes assisting servanthood. The diaconate holds before us the fact that all ministries in the Body of Christ, lay and ordained, are servant ministries. Perhaps nothing is so graphic an expression of this as the role of the deacon in the Eucharistic liturgy when the deacon sets the table for the celebration of the Eucharist and, after the communication of the faithful, removes the vessels.

#### **Duties:**

This humble, supporting service is expressed in all the duties of the deacon. Here are some of the ways:

*1. In the liturgy:* As mentioned, the deacon sets the Eucharistic Table and clears the



elements away upon conclusion of the rite. The deacon also reads the Gospel to the congregation, leads the congregations in the prayers of the people, functions as a chaplain to the diocesan bishop and visiting bishops and other dignitaries, and gives the final words of dismissal at the end of the Eucharistic Celebration. When a priest is not available, the deacon may preside at baptisms, weddings and funerals and assist in other liturgical matters.

*2. In the pastoral area:* The deacon may be called to instruct the youth of the congregation. Typically charged to seek out the sick, poor and needy of the congregation, the deacon then makes those needs known to the Church, as well as helping the Church meet those needs. Although serving under the authority of the bishop, the deacon is to also render assistance to the rector in whose congregation the bishop may have placed the deacon. The deacon may serve on Diocesan staff if so placed by the bishop.

*3. In society:* The deacon is particularly oriented to the world, especially to the local society. It is the deacon's calling to see to the needs of the community, "churched and unchurched," and to interpret those needs to the congregation and diocese. The deacon also helps enable the Church to serve those in need and to connect resources of all kinds with those who need those resources. Since many deacons have full time jobs in the secular world, there is a natural link or bridge formed that enhances the deacons' work and gives opportunities to model servanthood to the lay members of the congregation. Informal evangelism takes place naturally in the work of a deacon.

*4. Structure of accountability:* Generally speaking, a deacon serves where the bishop appoints. The deacon is directly answerable to the bishop. However, in most cases the deacon is placed in a congregation and serves under a rector and on the staff of the congregation, sharing in the congregation's life and work. In that case, there is usually a contract made between the congregation and the deacon so that expectations on both sides will be clearly stated. In that community, the deacon is also answerable to the rector whom the deacon is assisting.

*5. Standards:* In Appendix 4, we have listed the personal qualities that the Prayer Book sets forth as required for one who is to be a deacon. These are also found in I Timothy 3:8-13 which we will discuss shortly. At this point, we mention only that the deacon is one who has responded personally to the Gospel of Jesus Christ receiving Him as Savior and following Him as Lord in the fellowship of the Church. The deacon has sensed an inner call to the work and office of a deacon and that sense of calling has been examined and affirmed by the Church in a manner set forth by the bishop and diocesan authorities. The bishop will also have established educational requirements that fulfill the national requirements for the ordination of a deacon. When these standards have been met and with the approval of the bishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese, acting for the whole Church of God, the bishop will ordain a person a deacon in Christ's One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

### **Our Concern:**

Our particular question is: Is it appropriate to ordain women to the office of deacons,

as Anglicans understand that office? We are considering this question somewhat separately from the question concerning the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate because the diaconate is not an office of governance, nor do deacons preside over the Eucharistic celebrations of the congregations. Rather, the deacon is above all an assisting, supportive ministry, a focal symbol of servanthood in the Body of Christ.

## **2. The Arguments for and against ordaining women as deacons**

### **Pro Arguments:**

- 1) When we begin to look carefully at the Scriptures, we may be surprised that there is not more material on the diaconal order in the New Testament. However, what data we do find is clearly compatible with women serving in the diaconate and actually points in that direction.
- 2) Women are sensing the call to serve as deacons. They are coming forward for that call to be tested. They have gone through serious preparation and have met all of the stated standards. Women have been ordained as deacons in Anglican bodies and have shown themselves to be very effective. Unless there are serious biblical grounds for saying "no," we must surely see the call of God and the work of the Spirit in these women and ordain them.
- 3) By including women in the diaconate, we give visible witness to the fact that the gifts of God are given to the whole Body of Christ. They are not distributed according to gender (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17). By ordaining women to the diaconate, we give witness in the sphere of ordained ministry to the restored dignity of women in Christ. We also affirm the importance of the feminine metaphors and comparisons with which God revealed Himself to us in Scripture. This is particularly important if women are not ordained to the priesthood/presbyterate.
- 4) The biblical ground of male headship, which some see as barring women from being presbyters or bishops, simply does not apply to the order of deacons, because it is an assisting and supporting ministry. That very fact indicates that women are uniquely suited to the order of deacons, as the more traditional perspective sees it.
- 5) There is nothing in Scripture that would lead us to concur with the Roman Catholic Church's teaching that there is a sacramental unity of Holy Orders that would bar women from the diaconate. This is a later development and seems at odds with the teaching and practice of the New Testament. (See the exegesis to follow).

### **Con Arguments:**

- 1) Since the office of the deacon is not clearly defined in Scripture, we cannot expect a clear Word on this matter in Scripture.
- 2) Since there is no clear mandate from Scripture to ordain women to the diaconate, we

do not have sufficient grounds to change the historic practice of the Church.

- 3) While it is true that the office of the deacon is not to govern, it is also true in the history and life of the Church that deacons have often exercised great power and influence. There is no guarantee that this will not happen again.
- 4) Some of us hold, on exegetical grounds, that there is essentially one apostolic ministry, flowing from the Apostles; and if women are excluded from being priests/presbyters and bishops, it follows that they should not be deacons.
- 5) If we ordain women to the order of deacons, we will encourage women to keep on lobbying for ordination to the priesthood and episcopate which, we believe, is not permitted by the teaching of Scripture.
- 6) To ordain women as deacons would have disastrous ecumenical effects. The Roman Catholic Church has recently denied women the right to become deacons on the grounds that in the early history of the Church the rites of initiation and the duties of deacons and deaconesses began to differ. For us to ordain women as deacons would simply deepen the separation with those ecclesial bodies that do not permit women to be deacons.

### 3. Interpretation of the relevant texts concerning the diaconate

*Acts 6:1-6 (RSV)*

*1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2 And the 12 summoned the body of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the Apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them.*

#### General Comment:

We deal with this text first because in it we find the earliest origins of the order of deacons. Here the Apostles are addressing a practical problem that grew out of the rapid growth of the Church in Jerusalem.

Hellenists, that is, Greek-speaking Jews from outside the Holy Land, had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. A number of them as well as local Jews had become converted at the preaching of Peter after the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. They all stayed in Jerusalem awaiting the return of the Lord and others were added. This led to a need for

food and for the distribution of food. Some of the Hellenistic widows complained that they were not getting a fair portion of the aid. The Apostles responded by delegating the oversight of this distribution to seven Hellenistic leaders of the Messianic believers. Stating that they were called to the ministry of the Word and prayer, the Apostles said they were not called to "serve tables." The verb "serve" (diakonew) and the noun "servant" (diakonos) give us both the name of deacon and the emphasis upon service and the meeting of needs that has remained central to the office of deacon ever since.

#### **Pro Comments:**

- 1) It is important to note that this is a ministry that was called into being to serve the community and to assist the apostolic leaders who were overseeing the Church.
- 2) This ministry is a crucial ministry and lies close to the heart of Christ (Mk.10:45, John 13:5ff).
- 3) There is nothing in this text that would bar women from serving in the diaconate.

#### **Con Comments:**

- 1) We note that there were no women appointed among the seven Hellenistic leaders. It is, therefore, not self-evident from this text that women should serve in the diaconate.
- 2) We cannot assume that just because the apostles found it impractical at that moment for them to serve tables, that such servanthood is not part of their apostolic ministry. Indeed all ministry in the Body of Christ is servant ministry. There is but one apostolic ministry. The Church from earliest times has seen the diaconate as a complementary and inherent part of the ministry of priests and bishops, and we should not so distinguish the diaconate as to separate it from the three-fold order. It is all of a piece. If, therefore, women may not be priests and bishops, it follows that they may not be deacons as well.

#### **Romans 16:1-2 (RSV)**

*1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae, 2 that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well.*

#### **General Comment:**

At the conclusion of his letter to Rome, the Apostle gives special commendation to the bearer of the letter to the Romans. He refers to her as "*our sister*," as "*a deacon of the Church of Cenchreae*" and as a "*helper of many and of myself*." He asks the saints in Rome to stand by her and give her any help she needs. These are strong words.

### Pro Comments:

- 1) The usual word for "deacon of a church" is used to refer to Phoebe. The word "deacon" (diakonos) can mean simply a servant, or a person who has a servant's heart. However, when it is connected to "of a Church," then that tends to point more in the direction of the deacons of that Church, a group in ministry (See Phil. 1:1).
- 2) When the Apostle speaks of Phoebe as *"helpful and needing help,"* he uses words that are different from "servant." He restricts the term "servant" (diakonos) used in this more formal sense to Phoebe.
- 3) Phoebe is referred to in verse 2 as a "prostates." While that is often translated "helper," it can also be translated as "benefactor or even leader." It seems that the Apostle is underlining her place in the Church.
- 4) If Phoebe is a deacon in the congregation in Cenchreae, then women can be deacons in congregations today.

### Con Comments:

- 1) It is unclear from this text whether Phoebe was a deacon or a servant-hearted person who had greatly served the congregation and St. Paul as well. "Diakonos" is often used in the more general sense (Ro. 13:4, 15:8, 1 Co. 3:5).
- 2) This text, therefore, provides insufficient evidence to suggest a change in the historic practice of the Church. Mere "possibilities" are not sufficient to justify ordination.
- 3) Should we not make a distinction between the order of deacons and the deaconesses of the early Church? Is it not probable that Phoebe was a deaconess and not a deacon?

Philippians 1:1 (RSV)

*"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:"*

### General Comments:

This opening line of address in the Apostle's letter to the Philippians makes clear that there are two groups worthy of being mentioned in the address: the bishops and the deacons. The bishops were the overseers of the congregation, the elders. The deacons assisted them and served.

### Pro Comments:

- 1) This early letter of the Apostle Paul makes it clear that the order of deacons is a biblical order in its roots and existed in the early, apostolic Church.
- 2) This text corroborates the phrase in Romans 16:1 which referred to Phoebe as a deacon of the Church of Cenchreae and thus gives additional evidence that she was a deacon in orders.

#### Con Comments:

- 1) This text does give evidence of the existence of the order of deacons in the early Church.
- 2) There is nothing in this text that suggests that women were included in that order.

#### 1 Timothy 3:8-13 (RSV)

*“ 8 deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; 9 they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. 11 The women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons be the husband of one wife, and let them manage their children and their households well; 13 for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*

#### General Comment:

This text is the most extensive passage in the New Testament concerning the diaconate. It is part of a larger section on "Faithful Leadership that Serves God's Truth" (I Tim. 3:1-4:16). The emphasis throughout this larger section is upon character. Some duties are mentioned, others are suggested. After the Apostle considers the overseers (bishops), he turns to discuss the deacons.

In the first part of our text, 3:8-10, he sets forth similar qualifications to those of the bishops. He tells us that the Church must first test those who are sensing a call to be a deacon before permitting them to serve as such. Abruptly in verse 3:11, the Apostle turns to speak of women, *"The women likewise...."* The word "gunaikas" can mean either "women" or "wives." The context must make its meaning clear. Those for the ordination of women to the diaconate see the context calling for "women" while those opposed to the ordination of women to the diaconate read it as the "wives" of the deacons. It is of some interest, however, that there is no similar section on the wives of bishops. In verses 3:12-13, however, the Apostle clearly speaks of the qualifications of male deacons.

With regard to the duties of deacons, a few observations can be deduced. We read that deacons are not to be *"greedy for gain."* That admonition might imply some administration of funds or goods. They were to be good managers of their households. Here too, administrative gifts are in order. The deacons were not to be double-tongued or slanderers.



Could that envision pastoral visitations in the congregation and community for which purpose such discretion would surely be needed? We noted in the text in Acts 6 that a concern for human need and the doing of works of mercy have always been part of the work of the deacons.

It is noteworthy that ruling or governance is never mentioned in this passage in connection with the work of the deacon, nor is the gift of teaching mentioned.

### **Pro Comments:**

- 1) The word "gunaikas" refers to "women" in verse 3:11 for the following reasons:
  - a) The Apostle introduces verse 3:8 with the word "likewise," and he repeats it at the beginning of verse 3:11. This suggests that he is thinking of a similar body of ministers, of women deacons and not the wives of deacons;
  - b) The Apostle could have made it clear that he was speaking of wives simply by adding "of deacons" after the word "gunaikas," but he did not do so. We assert that He did not do so because he was thinking of women deacons and not wives;
  - c) The Apostle did not have a section on the wives of bishops. Surely if he were thinking of a need to speak about wives, he would have spoken about the wives of bishops who had an even more prominent role.
- 2) Since the Apostle is speaking to female deacons in verse 3:11, it is clear that women served as deacons in the early, apostolic Church. If that is the case, then there can be no objection to women serving in the diaconate today.

### **Con Comments:**

- 1) It is not at all clear that 1 Timothy 3:11 is referring to women deacons. In fact, the opposite case is made in this text. We believe that the translation of "gunaikas" as "wives" (of deacons understood) fits the context better for the following reasons:
  - a) I Timothy 3:12 we read "Let deacons be husbands of one wife." We do not find any clear reason to think that the reference of the word deacon had changed in the text. Nor do we find anywhere in Scripture, *"Let the deacon be the wife of one husband."* It seems that all through this text, it is male deacons that are in view;
  - b) If both men and women were able to serve as deacons, why was there any need to have a separate verse addressed to women? It seems far more likely that it is wives of deacons who are being addressed;
  - c) If deacons were making pastoral visits in the community, and if their wives were accompanying them, it would be important that they not be slanderers and be able to keep quiet about sensitive matters. This would account for the need for verse

3:11 addressed to them.

2) It remains unclear that women served as deacons in the early Church. Verse 3:11 surely does not make that clear, and in our opinion, does not point in that direction at all. Therefore, we remain without the clear, biblical evidence sufficient to mandate so great a change in the historic practice of the Church.

### Conclusion:

The material concerning the diaconate is less abundant in Holy Scripture than we might have expected. Still there is sufficient material to get a sense of its early existence, importance and something of its nature and duties.

We believe we have stated the crucial arguments for and against the ordination of women as deacons. We have reviewed the key texts from both pro and con perspectives. It is the responsibility of the reader to draw the conclusions to which he or she believes the evidence points. This judgment will need to be a part of the overall evaluation and judgment made on the question of the ordination of women to the episcopate, the priesthood/presbyterate and the diaconate.

This next part of the Report, Part 5, will discuss the eight basic options envisioned with regard to the question of women's ordination.

## **Part 5: The applications and findings of the study in the Anglican Mission of America**

### **Introduction:**

We have considered the chief arguments for and against the ordination of women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate. We have looked at the various pertinent texts of Scripture from both perspectives. In this, we have sought to make as strong a case as possible from each perspective. We have also considered the less controversial case of the ordination of women to the diaconate in a similar fashion. Having done this, we are called to ask to what conclusions and applications can this material lead us?

In the case of the Anglican Mission in America, we are charged by our sponsoring Archbishops to make our conclusions known to them in order that we might respond to the question of the ordination of women in one of eight ways, as they give us direction and permission. It may be that the sponsoring Archbishops will have a different plan for us than we have envisioned or considered.

The chief alternatives that have come to our minds are as follows:

### **1. Women are to be ordained in all three orders: deacon, priest and bishop.**

This would be embraced if one is convinced that the Scriptures require the ordination of women (or that the Scriptures allow it) and that the arguments for the ordination of women were clear and convincing in order to permit the Anglican Mission to embrace what the Scriptures permit and call for under the present circumstances.

## **2. Women are not to be ordained in any of the three orders: deacon, priest or bishop.**

This would be endorsed if one were convinced that the Scriptures do not permit women to serve in these orders or if the permission is weak and the arguments against the ordination of women are sufficiently strong enough to say no to this change in the historic practice of the Church.

## **3. Women can be ordained as deacons or priests but not as bishops. They may serve as rectors of congregations.**

This view assumes that if the bishop is male, that is sufficient to affirm the biblical teaching on male headship and female submission. It does not put a great deal of stock in the symbolic character of the ministry in authority and its relation to the doctrine of God, particularly with respect to the celebration of the Eucharist.

## **4. Women can be ordained deacons or presbyters but not bishops; nor can they serve as rectors or heads of a congregation.**

This position holds that the Scriptures teach male headship in family and Church. It distinguishes, however, between the order of priest/presbyter and the function of governing. It holds that women may be deacons, priests or presbyters but not fill governing or oversight roles and must serve under a male rector or on the staff of a bishop. This view does not find the argument concerning the symbolic nature of priestly/presbyteral ministry as called to reflect the male metaphors and pronouns God uses of Himself in special revelation sufficiently compelling to bar women from the assisting staff ministries.

## **5. Women may be ordained as deacons but not as priests or bishops**

Those who hold this position believe that the Scriptures are not clear and convincing so as to envision or permit women to serve as priests/presbyters or bishops. These are positions of governance and oversight and also have symbolic connotations called to correspond to the way God has revealed Himself in Holy Scripture. They, however, see no serious reason why women may not serve as deacons, and, in fact, see the diaconate as particularly suitable for the supporting role of women. They find no reason to tie the diaconate to the office of priest/presbyter and bishop in a manner that would require only men to serve as deacons.

**A general ecclesiastical comment:**

Positions 6 and 7 which follow are positions that can more easily be held by those who hold that the unity of the Church lies chiefly in her Scriptural, Creedal doctrines and Gospel sacraments, particularly those pertaining to salvation. Church order, however highly regarded, is secondary to that. This would allow differences about women in Orders to be embraced within communion, even if it would be somewhat impaired communion. Such would be seen as preferable to total division.

**6. Some bishops would ordain women to serve as deacons and as priests/presbyters in the congregations affiliated with them and some would not. Women could serve as bishops.**

This position might be favored by those who believed the biblical teaching and the arguments pro and con to be indecisive and that equally strong arguments could be advanced on both sides. Or it might be held by those who believed that differences on this matter are not sufficiently important from a biblical perspective to divide the Church; and some such accommodation as this should be made. Only men would preside over the Eucharist at those occasions when joint gatherings and joint celebrations would take place so that all might receive.

**7. Some bishops and the affiliated congregations would and some would not ordain and/or receive women in the priesthood. Only men would serve as bishops.**

This position is the same as 6, only it holds that a woman could not serve as a bishop. This would allow for the fact that some in the more "catholic" tradition of Anglicanism hold the "impossibilist" position. This position holds that a woman cannot be a priest or bishop; because if a woman served as a bishop, those men whom she ordained would not be truly ordained. This would, in effect, make it impossible to know if the man presiding at the Eucharist were truly ordained. Practically speaking, option 6 would force impossibilists out of the Body, which would be very undesirable.

**8. The Anglican Mission in America should maintain its present moratorium on the ordination of women, at least to the priesthood and episcopate, until a consensus emerges within the Anglican Communion that can be declared to be such by a Lambeth Conference.**

It must be remembered that the Anglican Mission in America is not an independent Church but is the mission of Rwanda sponsored by two Archbishops within the Anglican Communion. It is, therefore, not appropriate for a mission outreach to adopt practices that the sponsoring Province and sponsoring Archbishops do not themselves practice. It is far better to wait until the matter is solved on a Communion-wide basis.

Since there is at present no moratorium on the affiliation of already ordained women, this is a matter that would need further clarification and a decision should this option be chosen.

Women affiliated with the Anglican Mission in America who are priests may continue to exercise their priesthood, as promised. Should the decision be for women not to be ordained as priests/presbyters, it is unlikely that any women seeking to affiliate with the Anglican Mission in America in the future would be permitted to serve as priests but rather would be asked to serve as lay women or as deacons if the decision is made to ordain women as deacons.

After this Report has been duly studied, a procedure of discerning the mind of the Anglican Mission in America on this matter will be employed, and a report of that will be made to the sponsoring Archbishops seeking their guidance.

## Appendices

1. Bibliography
2. Solemn Declaration, Proposed Constitution and Canons (portions)
3. Priesthood of all believers
4. Priesthood/presbyterate
5. Anglican hermeneutics

### Appendix 1: Bibliography

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## Appendix 2: The Solemn Declaration, Proposed Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Mission in America (AMiA)

### SOLEMN DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

#### Preface

We, the members of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church in the Anglican Missionary Province of North America, trusting in the guidance of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, do hereby set forth and solemnly declare the following as the unalterable doctrinal norms and formularies under which the Anglican Missionary Province is to be governed and to which the Constitution and Canons must conform:

#### ARTICLE I. The Supreme Authority of Holy Scripture and its Proper Interpretation Section 1-

##### The Supreme Authority of Holy Scripture

In solidarity with the Anglican Communion, with historic Anglican doctrine, and with the bishops gathered at Lambeth 1998, we believe that Holy Scripture is the supreme authority in the Church, that it is the Word of God written and contains all things necessary to Salvation. The Church is neither to add anything to it nor to remove anything from it. It is proper for the Church to set forth rites and order its life in the light of Scripture; it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written.

##### Section 2- Proper Interpretation of Holy Scripture

With regard to the interpretation of Holy Scripture, we affirm the clarity of its plain sense so that it may and can be understood by ordinary readers. We hold to the importance of the scholarly interpretation of Scripture by a faithful use of responsible historical and grammatical scholarship. We affirm that the original meaning of the text is to be given its due primacy. Further we believe in the unity and harmony of its various books and two Testaments so that one place of Scripture may not be expounded so as to be repugnant to another. Also, it is only by referring to the whole Canon of Scripture that Scripture will be allowed to interpret Scripture. We hold to the sufficiency and trustworthiness of Scripture in bringing unbelievers to Christ and nurturing and sustaining believers unto eternal life. By following these principles of interpretation, the Church will interpret Scripture in accord with its nature as the Word of God written.

#### ARTICLE II. The Book of Common Prayer and Worship Section 1 - The Book of Common

##### Prayer

The official Book of Common Prayer has doctrinal authority in this Church. It shall be used in this Church at such times, and with such liberty as the Canon on this subject shall prescribe; but no Canon shall ever make its use imperative on all occasions, or forbid the use of extempore or other prayer at suitable times.

For Anglicans, this tradition of common prayer, which has been an integral part of our

identity since the first Prayer Book of 1549, is most cogently summed up in the Book of Common Prayer issued in the Church of England in 1662. All subsequent editions of the Prayer Book derive from this Book and should be understood and interpreted in a manner consistent with it

## Section 2- Freedom in usage

However, strong as is our dedication to ordered and orthodox worship, nothing in our understanding of it necessarily excludes approaches to corporate worship which are freer and more accessible to those just making their first acquaintance with the Body of Christ at prayer. The Ordinary (The bishop's Standing Committee when the office of bishop is vacant.), therefore, may authorize alternative rites and uses "so long as the Faith be kept entire" in accord with the doctrinal norms, formularies and guidelines of this Church.

## Section 3- The Holy Spirit and Charisms in Corporate Worship and Teaching

The Holy Spirit operates today as He has done throughout history. Therefore, the gifts (charismata) and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are still present in the Church.

While St. Paul makes it clear that we should not forbid speaking in tongues (1 Co. 14:30), he also makes it clear that worship should be done decently and in order (1 Co. 14: 40). Both his enthusiastic endorsement of the "Word" gifts (1Co. 14:5,18) and his tight prescriptions on their use in corporate worship (1Co. 14:13-33) must be taken seriously. The exercise of pastoral authority will both glorify God and protect the conscience of Christian brothers and sisters (Romans 14: 1-8; 1Co. 14:26). Further, obedience to the Word demands that pastoral authorities test the "spirits" using Scripture as the guide, to determine whether it is the Holy Spirit Who is acting or a demonic spirit or only a manifestation of a psychological force. (1 John 4:1)

## Section 4- Alterations or additions to the Book of Common Prayer

Once adopted, no alterations or additions shall be made in the Book of Common Prayer of this Church unless the same shall be approved by a two-thirds vote in one Provincial Synod and finally ratified by a three-fourths vote of the next succeeding Synod.

## ARTICLE III. Further Doctrinal Norms and Formularies Section 1- The Undivided Church

With the ancient Church, we affirm the three Ecumenical Creeds: the Nicene Creed, the Apostles Creed and Athanasius' Creed, and the dogmatic definitions of the first seven general councils (the last three being seen as the workings-out of the first four).

## Section 2- The Formularies of the Church of England

### a. The 1662 Book of Common Prayer and Ordinal

The theology set forth in the 1662 edition of the Book of Common Prayer and Ordinal shall be the theology to which alternative liturgical texts and forms will conform.

### b. The Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England

This Church subscribes to the teaching of the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion of the Church

of England. These are to be interpreted, as ordered in the Declaration which prefaces them in the English Book of Common Prayer, "in the full and plain meaning thereof" and "in the literal and grammatical sense." Further, it is understood that there are places in the Articles (i.e. Art. 37) that assume past and present political structures in England which do not directly apply to this Church located as it is in North America.

### Section 3- The Lambeth Quadrilateral

In consort with the Anglican Communion, we affirm the 1886/1888 Quadrilateral as giving guidance for ecumenical dialogue, discussion and cooperation. The Quadrilateral is not in and of itself a sufficient statement of the teaching of this Church.

### ARTICLE IV. Subscription

All candidates for Holy Orders and all clergy shall annually subscribe to the theological norms, formularies and guidelines of this Church. In addition, the same shall be required of all vestry members and deputies to Diocesan and Provincial synods while they are serving in those ministries. They shall subscribe using the following words:

*"I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation. I further affirm the catholic creeds, the dogmatic definitions of the General Councils of the undivided Church, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal, 1662, the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion of the Church of England in their literal and grammatical sense, and the Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888, since the same are conformable to the Scriptures; and I consequently hold myself bound to teach nothing contrary thereto. Therefore, I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrines, Discipline and Worship of the Anglican Missionary Province in North America."*

### ARTICLE V. Unalterable Nature of the Solemn Declaration

The teaching of this Church is defined by adherence to the doctrinal norms and formularies found in the Solemn Declaration, consequently we make no provision for their alteration by addition or subtraction. Should this Solemn Declaration be altered by any means, this Church would thereby cease to exist. Any money or property owned by the Province per se would be returned to the donors or their heirs and where that was not possible it would be sold and given to an orthodox Christian missionary society as soon as possible.

## CONSTITUTION

### Preface

Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, has called out and consecrated a Church with the three-fold commission to proclaim the Gospel to the lost, to assist its members to grow in holiness, and to offer Him right and worthy praise. He has ordained and established a Faith and an Order by which this commission may fully and faithfully be accomplished by endowing His Church with the gifts of the Holy Scriptures, the Ancient Creeds, the Sacraments of the New Covenant, and the Ministry in the Apostles' Teaching and Fellowship. Within the compass of this Faith and Order, institutions are established in

various ways among various peoples according to the needs of their times and cultures. We, the members of The Anglican Missionary Province in North America, trusting in the providence and protection of Almighty God, do hereby set forth this Constitution for the ordering and government of the Province.

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## ARTICLE I. Provisions for Transition

### Section 1- The Question of the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood and Episcopate.

In ECUSA the ordination of women was initiated without a serious provincial study and in disregard of the existing resolutions of General convention. This has led to a continuing practice of the imposition of the ordination of women in ECUSA on those who are convinced theologically that it is not in accord with Scripture nor found supported in tradition. For this reason, the Anglican Missionary Province will not initially ordain women to the priesthood (presbyterate) or episcopate in any of its Dioceses or Missionary Jurisdictions.

However, this is a time of examination and reception of the ordination of women in the Anglican Communion. Thus, within a two-year period from the beginning of the Province, a serious and widespread study of the appropriateness of the ordination of women will be undertaken on all levels of the Province. This study could take a lengthy period since it cannot begin with this particular question, but must be conducted on the basis of a shared commitment to and understanding of the authority of Scripture. In other words, before we can hope to discern and agree upon an answer to the question of women's ordination, we must examine and come to a common mind on such things as the nature of Scriptural authority, the nature of the Church, the doctrine of man and woman in Christ and in the Church, and the doctrine of the ministry and the ordained ministry in accord with our theological norms and formularies. At the conclusion of the study, the Province as a whole will take a position on the matter through action of its highest governing body expressed in a two-thirds vote at Provincial Synod and confirmed by a three-quarter vote at the next meeting of the Provincial Synod.

The practical diversity existing on this question during the period between the formation of the Province and the final decision on this matter will have the following limitations:

(a) No Diocese or congregation will ever be required to receive, license or ordain anyone against theological conviction and

(b) In gatherings where Dioceses and/or congregations which do and Dioceses and/or congregations which do not affirm the ordination of women are participants, celebrants of the Eucharist will be male so that all may receive.

In the event that the decision of the Province is that women may not be ordained, those ordained women already working within it may elect to remain in place until they retire, or to accept ministries which do not require ordination. In any event the Province will ensure that they undergo no material deprivation as a result of its decision and particularly will ensure that they are fairly provided for in its retirement systems. In the event that the Province determines that the ordination of women is appropriate and in what specific

manner that they may serve, those clergy that remain theologically opposed may remain in place or choose to leave the Province with no penalty. Such clergy, whether they remain or leave, may remain in the retirement program as long as they wish and are able and willing to meet its financial requirements.

## Section 2- The relationship of the Anglican Mission in America to the Provinces and Dioceses of the Anglican Communion

### (a) Communion

The Anglican Mission in America will be in communion with that part of the Anglican Communion which upholds and propagates the historic Faith and Order of the Book of Common Prayer and Ordinal (1662) and embraces the Resolutions of Lambeth 1998 on The Authority of Scripture (III.5) and Human Sexuality (I:10) and not otherwise.

### (b) Supervision

In the Anglican Mission in America, the Council of bishops of this Mission will be supervised by at least two Primates of Provinces of the Anglican Communion that recognize this Mission until such time as the supervising Primates determine the Mission is mature enough to be recognized as an autocephalous Province.

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## Appendices to the Solemn Declaration, Proposed Constitution and Canons

### Appendix I. Official Theological Elucidation on the Solemn Declaration, Articles I, II, III and the Constitution Article I

#### Article I: The Supreme Authority of the Holy Scripture and its Proper Interpretation Section

##### 1. The Supreme Authority of Holy Scripture and its Proper Interpretation

In solidarity with historic Anglican doctrine, with the bishops of Lambeth, 1998, in Resolution III:5, and in the words of the Book of Common Prayer, we believe:

*"The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation." (BCP), and that our Blessed Lord. . . caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning" (BCP), and that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an Article of the Faith..." (BCP) and that "the Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of Faith: yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and keeper of Holy Writ, yet as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation." (BCP)*

This is in accord with Scripture's self-definition, that *"the word of God is living and active.*

*Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12) and that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness..." (2 Tim. 3:16).*

The Church is subject to the Scriptures. The Church does not make the Scriptures to be the Word of God by receiving them as such any more that it makes Jesus Lord by receiving Him as such. Jesus is the Lord and the Scriptures are the Word of God written.

## Comments related to Article II The Book of Common Prayer and Worship

### Section 1. The Book of Common Prayer

From very early times, it has been the practice of the Church to set forth, by authority, approved texts and forms of common prayer to be used in public worship. These serve to safeguard the accurate and complete transmission of the Faith given to us against the tendency of fallen mankind to ignore those elements of the Faith that are inconvenient and to supply what he sees to be deficiencies in it. They are intended to ensure that those that worship in the congregation of God's faithful people are formed by the pure Word of God and the sacraments of the New Covenant into a temple fit for his inhabitation.

### Section 2. Freedom in usage

However, strong as is our dedication to ordered and orthodox worship, nothing in our understanding of it necessarily excludes approaches to corporate worship which are freer and more accessible to those just making their first acquaintance with the Body of Christ at prayer. As Saint Augustine perceived God as that Beauty which is unchanging yet ever new, so we recognize that the eternal truth of the Faith brought us in Christ must speak newly to each generation. So long as those engaged in planning and leading these freer forms of worship consciously strive to conform them to the Faith presented in the Book of Common Prayer, there should be no problem in these different approaches co-existing in harmony. The Ordinary (The bishop or standing committee when the office of bishop is vacant.), therefore, may authorize alternative rites and uses "so long as the Faith be kept entire" in accord with the theological norms, formularies and guidelines of this Church.

### Section 3. The Holy Spirit and Charisms in Corporate Worship and Teaching

The Holy Spirit's primary work in the world is to turn hearts of stone into hearts of flesh and then to turn those hearts to repentance and faith in Christ (Rom. 8: 9) Within the Church (the Body of Christ) the primary role of the Holy Spirit is to lead believers in Christ into all truth, guiding them into a faithful and true interpretation of the Scriptures.

In solidarity with historic Anglican doctrine, it is our conviction that the Holy Spirit leads the Church to submit to the Scriptures, not vice versa. The Holy Spirit operates today as He has done throughout history. Therefore, the following manifestations of the Spirit are still valid: The Spirit-enabled offices of the Church (apostle or missionary church-planter,



prophet, teacher/pastor, evangelist), The gifts of the Spirit (administration, service, craftsmanship, etc.), The so-called "Word" and healing gifts of the Spirit (tongues, interpretations, wisdom, knowledge, prophecies, healing, etc.), and other manifestations of the Spirit that accord with Scripture and serve the cause of Christ (Rom. 15: 18-19).

While St. Paul makes it clear that we should not forbid speaking in tongues (1 Co. 14:39), he also makes it clear that worship should be done decently and in order (1 Co. 14:40). Both his enthusiastic endorsement of the "Word" gifts (1 Co. 14:5,18) and his tight prescriptions on their use in corporate worship (1 Co. 14:13-33) must be taken seriously. It is, therefore, unwise to go beyond Scripture in attempting either to promote or regulate the ecstatic gifts in public worship. Godly authority within the Church will neither grieve the Holy Spirit nor will it elevate one gift above the others. The exercise of such authority will both glorify God and protect the conscience of Christian brothers and sisters (Rom. 14:1-8; 1 Co. 14:26).

## Comments related to Article III Further Doctrinal Norms and Formularies

### Section 2. (b)

It is understood by this Church that subscription to Article 25 of the Thirty Nine Articles encourages the primary use of the consecrated elements in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be that for which they were ordained, that is to be taken and eaten in faith. The Article, however, does not expressly forbid extra-Eucharistic practices that some Anglicans treasure. It is, therefore, possible for the Ordinary to give permission to a congregation to engage in these practices under the Ordinary's supervision when they are conducted and interpreted in a manner that accords with the clear teaching of the Articles, particularly Articles 28, 29 and 31.

### A general remark on Doctrinal Development:

Doctrinal development is inevitable and important. Therefore, this commitment to the doctrinal norms, formularies and guidelines of this Mission does not mean that we declare all deeper understanding of doctrinal expression and appropriate application of the truth therein to have ceased. We do seek appropriate doctrinal development. However, faithful development must find significant roots in the Scriptures; and the doctrine, when developed, may not contradict the clear teaching of Scripture. Further, the public teaching of any doctrine that is perceived to be in uncertain relationship to the norms, formularies and guidelines of the Church must first be examined by, and when found to be in accord with them, be authorized for public teaching by the sponsoring Primates of this Mission.

## Appendix 3: The Priesthood of All Believers

1. Introductory remarks
2. Spiritual giftedness
3. From gifts to ministry
4. Serving God through lay ministry
5. Serving the Body in Christ

6. A light for the world
7. Conclusion

## 1. Introductory Remarks

When we speak of the “priesthood of all believers,” we are referring to a biblical concept found in several Scripture verses (Ex. 19.6; Isa. 61.6; Rev. 1.6; 20.6 et al) signifying that all Christians, lay and ordained, of all genders, who through faith have been united to Christ, can be called “priests of God.” Their function as a royal priesthood in that context is to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2.5; Ro. 12.1). He then will use them to serve Him and His people to spread His Word through acts of praise, thanksgiving and selfless service and by the use of spiritual gifts as given, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Heb 13.15-16). In other words, all members of the body are gifted for Christian ministry within the common life of the Church as well as in the home, the local community and the workplace.

Today, instead of emphasizing the “priesthood of all believers,” we tend to refer to the non-ordained as laity or “laos” (meaning the people) in contrast to the ordained (meaning the clergy). The Church also tends to separate and set aside the ordained alone for leadership and ministry rather than encouraging and viewing all the people “hierateuma” (body of priests consisting of all believers) as continuing the servant ministry of Jesus Christ to the Church and the world. It is not that the laity assists the clergy in the ministry of Christ but that the clergy assists the laity by equipping all the members of the body to work together. The classic text concerning this is in Ephesians 4:11 where we read,

*“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ...”*

If you are reading this, therefore, you have a ministry in Christ and for Christ; you are gifted for it and you are to be equipped for it, released in it and exercising it.

Even the Book of Common Prayer emphasizes that the “ministers” of the Church are lay people first, then bishops, priests, and deacons (BCP 1979 p.855). It also affirms the ministry of the laity, *“is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship and governance of the Church.”*

Unfortunately, lay ministries in many congregations are often limited to traditional church tasks such as Sunday School, altar guild and choir, important as they are. Yet we see believers all through the New Testament who were preaching, teaching, and discipling others. Ministry was not only to be the work of those commissioned to leadership, then bishops, elders and deacons, but also to the whole body of believers.

Some astute church leaders recognize the value of lay Christians and allow them to serve in areas that may require additional responsibilities or specialized training, such as pastoral care, evangelism, counseling or the ministry of the Word, but not necessarily requiring seminary training or orders. They acknowledge, as Jethro did with Moses, that the ordained can't do it all and shouldn't (Ex. 18.17-23). The entire congregation is meant to share in the ministry of one to another, not just the ordained people, and maybe do it even more effectively.

The first century Church, as pictured in Acts especially, was very active with everyone involved in prayer, sharing, loving, teaching and giving. Sometimes it got messy, and they needed to be reminded that God is a God of order not chaos. The Apostle Paul recommended order in the use of spiritual gifts, but never do any of the Apostles discourage them from serving God in ministry.

## 2. Spiritual Giftedness

Recognizing that the laity also have a responsibility to serve God in ministry, we affirm the need for all people of God to learn what their spiritual gifts are and how, where and when to use them for the edification of the Body and in their day-to-day lives. The laity can be much more effective than the ordained anyway in ministering in the world and the workplace with Christ's love and salvation message, because they are more accepted in that environment.

This is especially effective when they are trained and encouraged to do so. Having structures in place to aid in discerning gifts, and clear guidelines for how to use them, would be highly beneficial to equip lay people for ministry. Providing opportunities within the life of the congregation is the optimum place where equipping for ministry can be done.

*1 Corinthians 12.1,4-7 (NIV) "Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant..... There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good....All these are the work of the same Spirit and he gives them to each one just as he determines."*

Every believer in Jesus Christ has at least one gift given by the Holy Spirit as He determines the need of the body or community of which that person is a member. Gifts are distributed according to the needs of those God has appointed to specific tasks and to the grace given that person (Ro. 12.6-8). The Lord is faithful to equip us for whatever He calls us to do. We don't always realize we're being equipped, however, until the call breaks through to our consciousness; and we are faced with some awesome task or adventure and step out in faith to fulfill it.

Often a cluster of gifts is given in order to better facilitate the use of the main spiritual gift, such as a word of wisdom or knowledge teamed with the gifts of discernment and teaching. Not everyone has the same gifts, nor does anyone have all the gifts, but whichever one(s) we have are to be used in love and service, following the model of Jesus

who came not to be served but to serve. (See further comments under “Responsibility...”)

The gifts given to us to use can change with the circumstances and the need the Lord wants to fulfill in that Body or Community. Although we may focus on the gift and skill of administration in one environment, we may find ourselves being used more often in another gift if we have to move away or take on another ministry.

How do you know what your gifts are? There are simple tests that you can take which examine your potential giftedness, but what your gift or cluster of gifts are can also be determined by what your passions or interests are, how you like to spend your time, or where God puts you in the Body of Christ.

For instance, if you have a hunger for God’s Word and spend a great deal of time reading and studying it and also have a strong desire to share what you learn with others, your most obvious gift could be teaching, rightly discerning the Word of God. But it could also be combined with exhortation, prophesy or preaching for use in specific situations.

Determining where your gift can best be used will take the discernment of your spiritual leader or advisor and the Christian body, as well as the needs of the Church community and your experiences in that Body.

Spiritual Gifts are as numerous and as varied as the need and the vision God gives. They tend to fall into general categories: Service, Teaching, Exhortation, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Helps, Administration, Apostleship, Evangelism, and Pastoral Care. See Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 for descriptions of some of the main functions or offices in the Church. A list of possible gifts or ministries is attached, but it is not meant to be exhaustive.

Some gifts are quiet, unobtrusive and known only to the Father, and some are more “upfront” and recognized and applauded by others. Regardless, all gifts are essential for the well being of the Body of Christ no matter how insignificant they may seem to the gifted. To house and transport one visiting missionary is just as important as conducting an evangelistic crusade for hundreds. The evangelist may not have the gift of hospitality and appreciate having a stranger in his home or even be available to take care of the needs of the missionary. By the same token, the one with a gift for hospitality who gladly offers his home to others might be terrified at the thought of speaking in front of a group. Yet each believer has been given the gifts appropriate for where God wants to use that person. To insist on functioning in a ministry that you are not gifted for is at best ineffective and at worst could be destructive.

### 3. From gifts to ministry

#### Responsibility for Developing Your Gift(s)

These spiritual gifts are not for our possession, though we have use of them. They are given out of love from the Father and the Spirit to us for the benefit of the Body of Christ as well as ourselves. When we pursue developing them by using them whenever called upon or when opportunities are presented, the effect on us is growth in our faith and intimacy with

Our Lord. Corporately, we are drawn to each other and respected in the community of believers when we are known for using our giftedness, not for our own reward, but for the benefit of others. The Church body quickly learns to acknowledge and appreciate this giftedness, which in turn also increases our faith and courage to use them again.

Those who devote themselves to continually using and practicing their gift(s) and seek ways to develop them through seminars, training sessions, and studying will be recognized as having a ministry. For example, someone who has an expository gift may begin teaching a weekly home Bible study, take on a brownie or cub scout troop, and then agree to teach an adult education series at church. In order to better use her gifts in teaching, she finds herself signing up for a seminar that focuses on exploring new and more effective ways of communicating. This person will soon be recognized as one who has a teaching ministry. A true ministry eventually becomes a way of life, an attitude or response that often permeates every other life situation for the gifted person.

#### Accountability in the Use of Gifts

To misuse or abuse a spiritual gift not only displeases Our God but may result in His withdrawing His calling upon the believer to use that gift. It also is likely to result in being warned and disciplined, for God disciplines those he loves who are going astray. Not only are we accountable to God in exercising our gifts and ministry, but we are also to be accountable to those in spiritual authority over us.

There is biblical precedent for the use of spiritual gifts and the exercise of ministry such as noted by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14.1-40, especially 26-40. *“All these must be done for the strengthening of the church.” “Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”* Those with the responsibility of pastoral or liturgical leadership have a vested interest in making sure gifts are used properly in a way that edifies not divides. It can be embarrassing and painful being corrected, held back or even reprimanded when we go astray out of ignorance or even sin, but if we submit and trust in God to show us the way and teach us what we need to know, we will come out stronger and wiser for the discipline.

#### 4. Serving God through lay ministry

Everyone has a place in ministry. God’s Word says, *“And you will be called priests of the Lord; you will be named ministers of our God.”* (Isa. 61.6) “Will be” not “may be.” Of course we know that resisting God’s call is not a wise idea as Jonah and Moses discovered. The Scriptures are ripe with lay ministers who were in the right place at the right time and stepped forward bravely and boldly when the call came, even though those characteristics were not theirs normally.

It often seems, however, that those whom God calls are the most unlikely people, as we saw in the book of Samuel when he chose David, a simple herder, out of a family of more attractive prospects (1 Samuel 16.1-13). But God is not adverse *“to choosing the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak to confound the mighty.”* (1 Co. 1.26-27) God’s idea of appropriate ministers is quite different than we expect. Whether we are

worthy or not doesn't matter. We don't even have to be beautiful, strong, talented, powerful, or highly educated.

God's people are assured those whom He calls to a ministry, He equips. What really matters is how we respond to the call. Are we willing, available, and open or have we grasped something so tightly or filled our schedules so much we cannot receive a new thing from God? When God says, "...new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you." is our first response that we don't have time—time to listen, to change, to learn something new, to fit God into our schedule? (Isa. 42.9)

Whether or not the Lord reaches out to us at a convenient time, when He does, humility and obedience are desired and anticipated. When we walk in these characteristics of Jesus Christ, we are modeling Him to the world. The Christian misses out on the joys and wonders of serving God in ministry when he/she walks in pride and arrogance instead.

### Lay Ministry as a Form of Worship

Lay ministry is so rich, varied, and fulfilling that people who have been living into their ministry, exercising their gifts in appropriate and edifying ways, find it an important part of their worship of God. To feel God's pleasure such as Eric Liddell expressed in the movie *Chariots of Fire* is to experience the joy of the Lord in new and intimate ways.

Many a music minister has expressed the profound sense of intimacy and personal worship experience in the midst of their leading music at a service or gathering--so have youth who serve as acolytes. One young man revealed to his mother in awe that when he was scheduled to serve as an acolyte, he felt he was "right up there with God!" Teachers also speak of the experience the power of the Holy Spirit moving them to worship as they share God's Word with others.

Serving faithfully on the altar guild for many years, a devoted member of a small church spoke of the intimacy and joy she experiences being with Jesus when she prepares the table linens and polishes the silver. It is a holy time for her, a time when God meets her and loves her personally. It can be for each one of us too if we use our gifts for His glory instead of our own.

### 5. Serving the Body in Christ

*Ephesians 4.7-16 (NIV) "But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it....It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and*



*held together by every supporting ligament, grows, and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

If there is some hierarchy of spiritual ministries, as it appears there is in the lists of 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4, at the top of the list would be the ministry of the Word so that the Body of Christ is not thrown about *“by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.”* (Eph. 4:14) Typically this ministry is primarily expressed through those who are ordained but is not limited to such people because so much of the faith and doctrine of the Church depends on the right teaching of the gospel. To edify the Body of Christ is of primary concern to all of us.

Lay people need to be well read, discerning, and active in making sure God’s Word is taught accurately because clergy and seminaries can err badly in handling Scripture. To be able to test what we hear is critical in this age and culture. Therefore, in every congregation there is a need to equip lay members functioning in a variety of ministries of the Word of God to hear how to rightly handle the Word of Truth. We all need to daily feed upon this Word written so God may speak to us personally and directly, but how are we to do all we are called to do if we are biblical illiterates? And how can we spread the gospel to others we come into contact with if we don’t know what it means or where to find it or how it fits into our lives?

### Growing a Christian Family

The first place to start using our gift(s) and ministry is with our families. To the extent that they will receive, it is all believers’ responsibility to teach the children what they believe and to know why they believe it. God’s Word commands us to *“Train a child in the way he should go...”* (Prov. 22:6), taking advantage of every opportunity to teach them to obey the Scriptures and to receive the love of God at a level they can understand. At certain ages parental wisdom may guide us to turn over the teaching to those we trust and to whom they will listen. We are, nevertheless, to model the love of Christ in all we do, always being ready to express the hope that is in us.

Concerning an unbelieving spouse, however, the Scriptures encourage us to maintain a gentle and quiet spirit. The first place where we carry out the principles of a godly character should be in our own home, keeping in mind that the Holy Spirit alone can change hearts. When we use our gifts in concert with the Spirit, with faith and integrity, and with respect for our spouse, God can move with power in his/her life even if we cannot see what He is doing.

The same holds true with our extended family. They are watching what we do: our consistency, the way we handle crises or blessings, and how we respond to their needs and questions.

### 6. Being a Light for the World

It should be clear by now that we are not to leave our spiritual gifts at the door of the nave



on Sunday afternoon; we are to take them into the marketplace, the neighborhood, and the workplace. Lay ministry doesn't have to be limited to the church. Jesus said that whenever and wherever we have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick, showed hospitality to the stranger or counseled those in prison, we are ministering to Him. (Mt. 25.40)

Helping a colleague in unexpected ways, bringing food to a forgotten person in the neighborhood, teaching literacy in a community center, engaging a stranger in conversation while on an adjacent treadmill at the gym—all this is ministry if you do it with a heart toward God. It's especially effective if it's done in the area of your giftedness. Reaching out beyond to those on the fringes, in the boardroom, the grocery store or your favorite restaurant will be serving and representing Christ, not only in your particular calling, but in the marketplace as Jesus did in Jerusalem.

We have special opportunities to do so in our career path. A godly doctor, for instance, impacts his patients in spiritual as well as physical ways when that person prays for them, takes time to listen to them, and treats his staff with compassion and grace. A plumber, carpenter, roofer or landscaper can leave behind more than a hefty bill when they do their job well, diligently and honestly as if they were serving the Lord. An honest car salesman or home realtor pleases God when he/she leads their clients to the best home or vehicle they can afford and is right for them. Being a legal advocate for those who are unjustly imprisoned, sold into slavery, or abused in child labor, as happens in other parts of the world, is a godly use of an attorney's or politician's gifts and skills, impacting not only the person assisted but the gospel message in the lives of those who would not have listened under normal circumstances. No matter what we do to earn a living we can offer all our efforts, gifts, and training to God for his glory and seek ways in the midst of our work week or our vacation time to draw the people we come into contact with to God.

In the darkness of this world, our light will shine forth in ways we don't expect or anticipate. Sometimes the effect will be negative for us personally in that we'll draw criticism and anger, but other times we'll find a receptive heart in the strangest of places just waiting to find out where our light came from. If we are truly following Christ and living out His principles, we will be different from those around us even if we don't think we are having any effect on our environment. The task of the lay minister is to keep on going, to faithfully live out and obey God's commands, and to consistently model the love of Christ as best we can to all those we interact with.

Naturally, we are not able to do this without being in God's Word daily, praying about all the needs he presents to us, being open to the Holy Spirit's promptings and drawing on His power.

## 7. Conclusion:

Lay ministry is crucial to the work of the Kingdom, spreading the Gospel, serving God's people, and becoming one with Christ. Not everyone is called to ordained ministry, nor should they be; but everyone who is a follower of Christ is called to the priesthood of all

believers to serve as His hands, feet, mouth and body in the Church and the world, expressing His call to salvation, serving in His power to try to fulfill their numerous needs, and modeling for all who watch and listen what pleases the God of all Creation. We have been given gifts and called to ministries, not only for our own pleasure or profit, but to be empowered to serve in those gifts and to fulfill that call.

As Lay Ministers we can be a light to the world day to day wherever we are in whatever we are called to do if we offer each day to the Lord, study His Word, trust and obey Him and respond to the needs around us as Jesus would have.

### Various Ministries

**Ministries of the Word:** Lay preachers, lesson readers, Sunday School teachers, Bible study leaders, adult education classes, evangelists, youth workers, and group leaders of all kinds are all involved in the ministry of the Word. Equipping, training and encouraging lay people to serve in these capacities according to their specific gifts will ensure sound doctrine is put forth correctly and faithfully.

**Ministries of Service, Pastoral Care, Mercy, Helps:** These are ministries where the felt needs of the community are often met in direct ways that clergy do not have time or energy to respond to individually and immediately, especially in a large congregation. These lay ministers are ready and able to respond quickly to someone in the hospital, a family in distress, or in need of prayer. They are best at befriending the lonely or greeting the newcomer, preparing food for the hungry, or responding to the many other needs that members of a congregation, the community or your own neighbors face each day. Their ministry makes a powerful statement about the God whom they serve and his mercy and compassion.

**Ministries of Giving:** To share what one is or has with others whether that is money, time, energy, or talent is another way of representing Christ to others, and inviting them into the Kingdom. Generosity is a rare thing today and people who lovingly and selflessly give of themselves and their resources are noticed, often providing an opening to share the hope within them.

**Ministries of Exhortation:** This is a calling forth of the best in others--encouraging, admonishing, advising and inciting people to be the best they can be, to live a life of high integrity and faithfulness and to take those difficult steps towards maturity and growth. All this, when done in love and with gentleness and skill, can be the impetus for people to make the difficult decisions or take the steps forward needed for a fulfilling life in Christ.

**Ministries of Administration:** Finance, planning, vestries, councils, administrators. Where would church governing boards, businesses, or organizations be without those gifted in administration exercising their gifts in the Church and the world? Who would assume oversight of a building campaign, execute a program, plan a church function, handle the finances, or prepare the newsletters and bulletins if we didn't have these ministries?

Essential to the smooth running of every organization, religious or secular, administrators are in a key position to share their faith in obvious or subtle ways to those they come in contact with.

**Ministries of Apostleship:** Those lay people who are called to go out and send forth, spreading the gospel by word or deed, or work in a particular area of outreach could be called apostles (small “a”). This person(s) might start up a home for the disadvantaged, a new church plant, a widows program, prison ministry, or any form of mission work. Those who are in this ministry are typically the ones who reach out beyond the church borders or comfort zone but with the intent of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

(Adapted from Kuhn. The Whole Lay...Catalog)

## Appendix 4: Priesthood/Presbyterate

An outline of this treatise:

1. Introductory remarks
2. Common convictions on priesthood
3. Emphases of the three streams, which not all share
4. Conclusion

### 1. Introductory Remarks:

Some have thought that we should have a common set of terms and frame of reference when we speak of priesthood in the Anglican Tradition if we are to discuss and come to a decision concerning the ordination of women to this office. While we do not believe that we all do have or will have the same doctrine of priesthood, we do have a great deal in common. We can and need to understand the various perspectives people hold and why they believe as they do. As far as we can tell, Anglicans have never had full and explicit agreement upon an extensive doctrine of the priesthood/presbyterate. We do hold in common some basic convictions and common practices, plus we reject certain ideas that the Roman Catholic Church holds that lead them to deny the validity of our orders.

It seems wise, therefore, that we not attempt to do the impossible by requiring more agreement among ourselves than Anglicans have produced to date. There is sufficient overlap in our views of the diaconate, of the priesthood/presbyterate, and the episcopate and of our common practice as Anglicans to enable us to address the issues of women's ordination without asking any of the three traditions to give up their distinctiveness or for all of us to agree in all particulars.

### 2. Common Convictions on Priesthood

In our Anglican Practice, in the Ordinal, and in the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion we find a number of convictions that we all hold in common:

a. The Anglican Practice of the Christian Faith is a constituent part of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church founded by Jesus Christ. Article VIII establishes the Nicene, the Apostles and the Athanasian Creeds as elements of our faith. In these Creeds, and in the baptismal covenant, we declare our participation to be in this one visible body.

b. God has instituted in His Church an Office of Word and Sacrament "jure divino" in and through the Apostles and through which Christ by the Spirit continues to minister to and through His Church. The example of Jesus and the Apostles, as well as the synagogue, provided the basic pattern for the oversight, preaching and teaching in the New Testament period. Paul went about in all of the congregations setting apart elders. In this conviction, we disagree with those Christian Bodies such as the Quakers and some of the Brethren that have no ordained ministry or those bodies that see the authority of the ordained ministry arising solely or primarily from the congregation.

c. There have been in the Church since the beginning the orders of bishop, presbyters/priests and deacons. It is true that the words "presbyteros and Episcopos" referred to the same group initially, but soon the expansion of the Church led to a division of those common responsibilities into separate orders and offices. In fact, we can see in Timothy, who is under an Apostle and placed over a region of congregations, an early emergence of the beginning of a distinct episcopate.

Most scholars hold that by 180 AD, the Church was almost universally ordered in the pattern of the three-fold ministry. Anglicans have always seen this to be a godly development in accord with Scripture, expressing what was implicit in the beginning. Anglicans have not all held this developed form of the ministry of Word and Sacrament to be essential to the Church or even to be of the fullness of the Church, but we have all consistently maintained it and treasured it. Anglicans have regularly commended it to the wider ecumenical Church wherever it has been lacking in other bodies as desirable and as containing nothing superstitious as it is set forth in our ordinal to the wider ecumenical Church wherever it has been lacking in other bodies.

d. According to our Formularies (I refer to 1662 Ordinal and Articles.) the following may be affirmed about each of these offices:

1. Of a priest

(a) He must be of godly character, converted and given to reading the Scriptures and prayer.

(b) He must be truly called by those in the Body appointed to do the same.

(c) He must believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God written and be of sound learning.

(d) He must preach and teach the Word of God and drive out from the Church all false and erroneous doctrine contrary to the Word of God.

(e) He must administer the Sacraments rightly in accordance with the Word of God expressed in the rites of the Church. (i.e., he must not seek to offer Christ

bloodlessly for merit at the Lord's Supper nor withhold the cup from the laity. (Arts. 30 & 31). *This is the chief ground of Rome's not recognizing Anglican orders.*

(f) With reference to the ministry of Word and Sacrament, the priest does share with the bishop in the ordination of fellow priests who will exercise the ministry of Word and Sacrament with and under the bishop's oversight.

(g) He must exercise the discipline of the Church duly.

(h) He must seek Christ's sheep that are presently lost and bring them home.

(i) He must obey his bishop and those rightly in authority over him.

(j) He must be the husband of one wife.

## 2. Of a bishop

(a) All of the above affirmations also apply to the bishop.

(b) In addition, the bishop confirms, consecrates other bishops, and ordains priests and deacons.

(c) The bishop's ministry of Word and Sacrament and his exercise of the discipline of the Church are over a wider sphere of responsibility.

(d) The bishop serves as a link with the wider Church in time and space through collegiality in conference, convention and council.

(e) He is accountable to the authorities and instrumentalities set over him in the Church.

## 3. Of a deacon

(a) The deacon must share in the same character and marks of piety that characterize the priest and bishop and also must be duly called and ordained by those appointed in the Church to do the same.

(b) The deacon is charged to read the Scripture to the congregation assembled.

(c) The deacon is to assist the priest in the administration of the Holy Communion.

(d) The deacon is to instruct the youth of the Parish (Parish here involves both Church and region.) in the catechism.

(e) The deacon is to seek out the sick, poor and needy in the parish (again both in the congregation and civic community) and to help the Church see to their needs.

(f) The deacon, when the priest is absent, is to baptize and preach when licensed by the bishop.

(g) The deacon is to obey the bishop and those under whose authority the deacon

serves.

In addition to the above commonalties, we are aware that the ministry of Word and Sacrament has until recently been exercised only by men. The ordination of women to any of these orders and offices is very recent and has not yet been permitted by the great majority of Christians. Especially it has not been permitted by most of those Churches ordered in the historic three-fold ministry. We, therefore, approach this matter with the common conviction that the burden of proof falls upon the innovation; and we can approve of the ordination of women only with a clear conscience only if it is not in contradiction to the principles and teaching of Holy Scripture.

Some have suggested that we should not make any recommendation apart from the concurrence of the Roman and Orthodox traditions. That does not seem a viable suggestion for two reasons:

First, as Anglicans we have already acted in disagreement with the Roman tradition in the light of Scripture. We do not write Rome a blank check though we would be foolish to ignore her reasons for not ordaining women. Also we should be cautious not to deepen division in the Body of Christ unnecessarily.

Second, the Anglican Communion is in a period of considering the reception of the ordination of women, and we need to take our responsible role in that active process of discernment. The question then before us is this, "Given the description of the ministry of Word and Sacrament above, is the ordination of women in accord with Scriptural teaching and, therefore, is it appropriate to ordain women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate?" We will deal with the order of deacons separately since the issues raised by priesthood and episcopate are not raised in the same way or to the same extent by the diaconate.

### 3. The Three Streams

In addition to all that we hold and practice in common, there are the specific emphases of the three streams: Catholic, Evangelical and Charismatic. These will color an approach to the issue, so it is important to state some of the leading characteristics of each. This outline is in no sense exhaustive. We are primarily concerned with features in their several views of the priesthood/presbyterate that impact the question of the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate. Particularly, we want to highlight where the difficulties concerning the ordination of women arise.

#### a. The Catholic Tradition

1. Priesthood is viewed in the context of the Apostolic Succession of the Church. The Apostolic Succession of the Church involves more than the succession of bishops in the historic episcopate. It includes the canonical Scriptures, the Ecumenical or Catholic Creeds, the Chief Sacraments of the Gospel in faithful liturgical forms, and the faithful ministry of Word and Sacrament and oversight as well as the continuity of the witness of all of the faithful. These are all expressions of continuity with the life and witness of the Apostles and serve the continuation of the Apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers and mission in and through the Church.

2. In ordained ministerial succession, the central figure is the bishop who, according to historic succession, is the link to the common ministry of the wider Church. He has the authority to give pastoral care and oversight to the Church under his care as well as to consecrate bishops and ordain priests, who will, by his delegation and appointment, share in his ministry. As the successor to the Apostles, the bishop ministers in the authority given to him through them, that is in the name of Christ. The exercise of his authority is in the Church and is exercised in conjunction with the whole Church but is not primarily derived from the Church but from the Lord.

3. The bishop in historic succession from the early Church is, therefore, both an expression of and also a servant of the unity of the Church Catholic. There is little or no chance that any other form of ministry would gain the recognition of (and be the bearer and servant of) the unity of the whole Church, particularly when one thinks of the Roman and Orthodox Communion.

The "catholic" perspective upon ordained ministries arising at the Reformation that are not in historic succession is that they may be blessed and used by God but are not part of the historic ministry of the Church. They are, therefore, of a temporary nature. It is important to realize that the Catholic tradition always has a strong concern for the ecumenical unity of the Church and has both the Roman and Orthodox Communion ever in view.

4. Ordination by the bishop conveys entrance into the given order (of bishops, priests or deacons), that gives the ones ordained the authority to act when installed in a given cure. Accompanying the authority of ordination is the grace given to exercise those virtues necessary to the faithful exercise of the office to which one is called and ordained.

5. The priestly order and office centers in the celebration of the Eucharist. In this, the priest offers the sacrifice of the Eucharist, that is, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, recalling the completed sacrifice of Christ. He leads the congregation in offering itself, soul and body as a living sacrifice to the Lord in response to the Lord's completed gift of Himself for us and His present gift of Himself to us. The Holy Eucharist is not, however, to be celebrated privately nor without preaching and teaching.

At the altar during the Eucharist, the priest represents both the congregation to the Lord and the Lord to the Church; he is therefore a mediator, an icon of Christ in that setting. This iconic character which has wider symbolic implications along with the example of Christ's appointing only men to the apostolate, as well as various biblical texts in the Apostolic writings, lead most Anglo-Catholics as well as Rome and the Orthodox to believe the Church has no authority to ordain women to the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopate. The Catholic tradition is not as clear about the diaconate, and people hold views both pro and con with regard to the ordination of women in the diaconate.

6. Along with the above, the priest alone is authorized and commissioned on behalf of the Church to absolve sinners in the Name of the Lord, and pronounce the Lord's



Blessing. As "Pater Familias," he exercises discipline and pastoral care for the welfare of the congregation committed by the Lord through the bishop to his care.

b. The Evangelical Tradition:

1. The Evangelical view of the presbyterate/priesthood has as its starting point less the developed views of the ordained ministry, which took shape in the early centuries of the undivided Church, but more in the biblical teaching and practice of the ministry of elders. This is understandable when one thinks that at the Reformation the "Ecclesia Anglicana" was in the process of testing and reforming the traditions of the Western Church by the standard of Scripture. It was repeatedly stated that no one ought to be required to hold any doctrine as necessary for salvation that could not be proved by or clearly deduced from Scripture.

This being the case, appeals to the tradition of the early Fathers were primarily to show that the Fathers were scriptural and that the Evangelical tradition stood with them within the historic Rule of Faith in accord with the great Ecumenical, Catholic Creeds. Appeals to later traditions that did not contradict Scripture or to traditions that could not be seen to derive from Scripture, while often held to be important, have less authority in the Evangelical stream than they do in the Catholic stream of the Church.

2. Being aware that *"faith cometh by hearing and hearing cometh by the preaching of the Word of God,"* the Evangelical tradition places the preaching and teaching of the Word at the center of the calling, authority and work of the presbyterate. It is by such means that the congregation is built up in faith, that justification and sanctification occur and that the mission of the Church flourishes. It is also by such means that false doctrine contrary to the Word of God is driven from the Church. False teaching can never be undone by discipline alone, for falsehood must be countered by truth. Both true teaching and ecclesiastical discipline are needed.

3. The Sacraments of the Gospel, particularly Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are held in high regard and with St. Augustine seen as "verba visibilia." They are the visible, enacted Word in and through which Christ Himself by the Spirit ministers to the faithful. The presbyter/priest sees himself not so much an icon of Christ as he is the servant of the Risen Lord Who Himself is present as the Host at the Table, and as the One who baptizes. It is all done in "His Name." The focus is not on the presbyter representing the Lord but on the Lord as present in the Sacrament and in the Word.

Since both of the Gospel sacraments center in the Cross and since the Cross is the once for all, fully sufficient and completed or finished work of Christ, the Evangelical is leery of sacerdotal language about the presbyteral order as if somehow the presbyter were thought to be offering Christ anew (Art. 31). One notes that not once in the New Testament is "hierus" (Gk.) or sacerdos (Lat.) used of those referred to as presbyteroi /episcopoi or for that matter of any ministry in the Church except that of Christ Himself or of the ministry of the whole Church viewed collectively. The Evangelical presbyter does not so much "offer the Eucharist" as preside over the congregation's celebration of the Eucharist.

4. Along with a central emphasis on the Worship of the congregation and preaching the Word, leadership in evangelism, mission and edification by Bible study in small groups has been a strong part of the presbyter/priest's exercise of headship in the congregation.

5. A concern for the proper exercise of headship in authoritative preaching, in ordained leadership and the exercise of discipline and the emergence of the question of the ordination of Women has led to a renewed concern for understanding and protecting the biblical teaching of "male headship" in family and Church. This too has been seen as having wider, symbolic significance connected as it is with the names of the Father and the Son in the self-revelation of God.

These concerns have led many Evangelical people to wonder if the ordination of women to the presbyterate and episcopate is contrary to Scripture. This, along with the example of Christ in not appointing women to the Apostolate and various texts of Scripture, has raised "an amber if not red flag" for a number in the Evangelical tradition. The biblical teaching on "male headship" and its practical application will need careful examination and clarification before our study can be completed.

6. The ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament is seen as called to equip the saints for the work of ministry. At the Reformation, the focus of the ministry of the priesthood of all believers was conceived with an eye toward the service of Christ in the various secular vocations in which the saints of the congregation lived and worked. Some of this emphasis has been lost in recent years. The Church has come more and more into a counter-cultural stance and the spiritual gifts that are to be used within the Body have been recovered and emphasized by the Evangelical, Charismatic and Catholic streams.

7. The unity of the Church is seen in the Evangelical perspective to lie fundamentally in faithful agreement with the teaching of the Apostles. To put it more accurately, both Right Doctrine and Right Order are seen as expressions of and servants of the unity of the Church; but a priority is given to the Truth. As one Evangelical put it, "There is a succession of Judas as well."

This emphasis on the Word as the root or foundation of the Church is reflected in the practice of the Lambeth Fathers. Lambeth Conferences have always referred to those Churches that do not have the historic episcopate as Churches, thereby considering them to be Churches if they have affirmed the Faith and have the Scriptures and the Gospel Sacraments while at the same time commending the historic episcopate to them.

#### c. The Charismatic Tradition:

1. The recent recovery of the "charismata" in the life of the Church has taken place in the context of an Anglican Communion where strong Catholic and Evangelical traditions concerning the priesthood/presbyterate were already present. It is, therefore, no surprise that in the Charismatic stream one can find either Evangelical or Catholic viewpoints or a combination of both along with the Charismatic

emphases.

2. The Charismatic tradition adds to the other traditions a new openness to the exercise of the "spiritual gifts" in the leading, life and ministry of the congregation and in the corporate worship of the Church. The priest/presbyter is called to teach about these gifts and see that they are exercised in a biblical and orderly manner. Since we live in a secular age which is anti-supernatural on the one hand but open to all sorts of "spiritual phenomena" on the other, the role of the priest both in leadership and in discernment is key.

Without teaching and leadership, the "charismata" will not be understood or permitted in the life of the congregation. Without discernment and discipline, permission will be given to that which is not biblical, and the extremists will take over and drive out the cautious and tender. One bishop in the Episcopal Church has said, "The three greatest congregations in my diocese have been renewal congregations and the three most problematic congregations were also."

3. The recovery of spiritual gifts has led to a new awareness that the ministry of the Body includes all of the members, for each has been given a gift or gifts to use for the up-building of the Body and the exercise of its mission. In this respect, the priest is to equip the saints and to orchestrate and oversee the discernment and use of gifts in ministry by the whole Body. All of the saints are to be involved in the Gospel ministry, not just the ordained saints. As noted above, this understanding of the priesthood of all believers is somewhat different from the emphasis at the Reformation and is more Body-oriented. Both views of the priesthood of all believers are needed and both are biblical.

4. There is a new sense of the unity of the Church found in the manifestation of the gifts in ministry, a rediscovery that cuts across denominations and traditions. The "sense of kinship in Christ" this gives is a fresh contribution of the Renewal Movement. We do well to appreciate it along with the Catholic and Evangelical contributions concerning the unity of the Church and the work of the priesthood/presbyterate. Unfortunately at times, this leads people to a sort of warm-heartedness that undervalues the significance of true doctrine and godly order.

There does not seem to be any additional objection to the ordination of women to the presbyterate/priesthood raised by this stream per se. The focus lies more on the ministry of the whole Body using the spiritual gifts in the present power of the Spirit.

### 3. Conclusion

In response to the thought that we need full agreement on priesthood and episcopate to move ahead, we would say the following: the traditional Formularies of Anglicanism as embraced and understood by the Anglican Mission in America allow for all of the above views of the priesthood/presbyterate and episcopacy. While there is great overlap, the views are not precisely the same. Each does affirm, account for and interpret the common

practice of Anglicans regarding ordination.

Objections and issues concerning the ordination of women are raised as noted above and will need to be carefully addressed. This is fundamentally a study approached in the light of Scripture, to which all three traditions or streams give chief priority. Therefore, there is a clear necessity to address the pertinent texts of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation to see whether the overall teaching of Scripture will allow and even encourage the ordination of women or whether Scripture excludes it. The Bibliography attached addresses that concern.

We are to keep in mind, however, that it is not the books we read, but the Scriptures themselves that are our final authority. In the light of Scripture, we will also reflect on the tradition and experience of the Church as we move ahead in this study.

Each of us will need to test our own tradition's understanding of the priesthood/presbyterate by the Scripture as we move through the study, and we will need to listen to and learn from one another. When all is said and done, I do not see that we need to make the detailed doctrine of the priesthood/presbyterate a topic of separate and lengthy study and discussion except as it arises from the texts per se. The lines of our understanding of these offices are clearly drawn and decades of ecumenical discussion have not produced a view of the ordained ministry that removes the differences of emphasis and understanding. The closest thing to a common view is found in the "Lima Document" section of the World Council of Churches, which took some fifty years to produce. It commends something like the Anglican Way of common practice with a common core of convictions and differing emphases or so it seems.

## Appendix 5: Anglican Hermeneutics

1. Introductory remarks
2. Scripture as the Church's Book
3. Scripture as God's Word written
4. All Scripture is God-breathed
5. Scripture is full and clear in essential matters
6. The humanity of Scripture
7. The application of Scripture

### 1. Introductory remarks

As we in the Anglican Mission in America have begun our study of the issue of the ordination of women, it has become evident that not all of the books we have been reading interpret the Scriptures in a manner that we believe to be consistent with the nature of the Scriptures. While we cannot do much about the hermeneutical practices of those authors, we can and must agree as to the rules of interpretation that we will follow in understanding

and applying the Scriptures to our study. We have listed the following basic guidelines that we believe are required of us to be faithful to the Anglican formularies to which we have submitted. Most of us are aware of these guidelines; but it seems wise, at this early stage, to refresh our memories and to affirm our agreement.

## 2. Scripture as the Church's Book: The Rule of Faith (Art. 8)

It is foreign to the nature of the Scripture and a right understanding of it to interpret it as if it were not first addressed to, kept by, treasured and interpreted by the Church. In one sense it is the Church's book. Interpretation of Scripture is not essentially an individualistic act but a communal act done in, by and for the Church. That being the case, we understand the Rule of Faith held and confessed by the Church initially guides biblical interpretation.

Keeping this ecclesiastical character of interpretation in mind, we note that there are certain assumptions one brings to the act of interpretation:

- a. We assume that the Christian faith is unique for it rests on God's redemptive, revealing work in Christ, given to a particular chosen people in and through historical events, including events that are sometimes miraculous.
- b. We assume that the Scriptures are "the Word of God written, that is, the inspired, faithful, authoritative canonical writings given by God to the Church.
- c. We assume that the Church's Rule of Faith, found in its formularies, is a faithful interpretation of Scripture and our interpretation is guided by the Rule of Faith.
- d. These assumptions will be tested in the very act of reflecting upon, and interpreting the texts.

## 3. Scripture as God's Word written: The authority of Scripture (Art. 20)

Since Holy Scripture is God's Word written, it bears His authority; and we read it to hear Him in order to know, trust and obey Him. Proper interpretation of Holy Scripture is a sacred responsibility. Scripture's authority (or God speaking through Scripture) in the Church is supreme and it norms all lesser norms or formularies that have subordinate authority in the Church. This is the Anglican meaning of "Sola Scriptura." Scripture is alone on its level, but it is not isolated from lesser authorities. This relatedness to lesser explanatory norms is the meaning of "Scriptura Suprema" with reference to Holy Scripture.

## 4. All Scripture is God-breathed: Canonical interpretation (Arts. 2, 7, 20)

"All of Scripture is inspired and profitable for teaching..." (2 Tim.3: 16-17) There is a central message in Scripture concerning God's salvation of sinful man. Seen in that context, all of Scripture has its part to play. Canonical interpretation consists in letting all of the pertinent passages in the Canon speak to any given issue. While there is variety in terminology and development in Scripture, there is no contradiction; instead there is an underlying harmony.

This is due to the fact that Scripture, unlike any other writing, has dual authorship. While

being written by and in the words of men who have been chosen and inspired by God, it is at the same time the very Word of the One God. His mind, speaking through the many human authors, forms and assures us of its unity and coherence. It is, therefore, "not lawful to so expound one part of Scripture as to be repugnant to another."

#### 5. Scripture is full and clear in essential matters: The sufficiency and clarity of Scripture (Art 6)

"Sufficiency:" Nothing may be required of anyone for salvation that is not required in Scripture or that may not be logically deduced from its clear statements.

"Clarity:" In matters of doctrine, the clear texts will be used to cast light on the less clear texts that pertain to the topic under consideration. In general, later statements will interpret earlier ones. Descriptive or narrative sections will need interpretation from texts asserting a clear command, statement of doctrine or principle. It may also be the case that a text may be clear as to its central point but may contain references that are not entirely clear. In such cases proper caution is to be used in interpreting those less clear portions and due humility toward one another and any differing interpretations in secondary matters is appropriate.

#### 6. The humanity of Scripture: the historical-grammatical aspect of interpretation

Scripture is the Word of God written in the words of men who were chosen from among the people of God in differing times and places. Since these human authors wrote at specific times and in specific situations to specific recipients, we must consider and take into account word usage, grammatical form, literary types, literary context as well as cultural, historical contexts and situations as far as we can determine them. In so doing, we approach the Sacred Writings as we would other human writings when seeking to understand them. By taking such care we seek to let the texts bear their message in their original sense to us. It is in that original sense as part of the entire canonical harmony of Scripture that we hear the Lord's address to us.

#### 7. The application of Scripture: interpretation as obedience

We understand God's Word only when we stand under His Word, when we see how it is to be heard and obeyed in our situation. Sometimes this will be easy to understand even if not easy to do. In one sense, human nature has not changed much down through the ages. Generally speaking, understanding an appropriate application or applications comes easily.

In some places, however, Scripture may prove more difficult to apply due to changes in situation and culture. We do not want to universalize and bind on the Church today merely cultural practices of a bygone period and culture. Therefore, we will need at times to distinguish the doctrine or principle that God is speaking to us from its application at the time of the original reception of that Word in another cultural setting.

This raises the question as to how we will be able to discern those applications in Scripture that are limited to a past culture. We cannot assume that everything in Scripture that contradicts our culture is culture-bound and now irrelevant. To do so could mute the Word that the Lord is speaking to us. We would thereby treat as relative a principle that God

intends to be absolute and universal in every culture and, therefore, to be obeyed by us in our setting. How then do we make this judgment?

Here are some of the ways that we can use to determine when a principle or application is absolute or trans-cultural:

We should treat any declaration or command of Scripture as universally binding:

1. When the text itself does not indicate it is limited in application.
2. When it is grounded in the unchanging character of God.
3. When it is grounded in the nature of Creation, the "ordo creationis"

We can conclude the application found in Scripture is not transcultural or directly applicable to our cultural situation when:

1. It is clearly stated to be limited.
2. It has been expressly fulfilled and ended by Christ.
3. It is unable to be implemented in our situation, showing that it is incapable of universal application.

Caution is needed here on this last point for "unable to be implemented" is quite different from being counter-cultural. We will often be called to be counter-cultural in a fallen society. You may have additional suggestions concerning this point; this is an important and delicate matter. Missiologists wrestle with this much of the time, as do Bible translators and preachers, as must every Christian reading his or her Bible.

However, having said that, the truth is that most of the Bible is very clear and clearly applicable. We recall what Mark Twain once said, *"It is not what I do not understand in the Bible that troubles me; it is what I do understand."*

--- The Rt. Rev. John H. Rodgers, Jr.

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